

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

Tattoos and the Bible

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

"Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD" (Lev. 19:28).

This verse is pretty clear in the English that we're not to "print any marks" upon our bodies, or in modern vernacular- tattoos are a no-no for Christians. When we go into the Hebrew, the word used here is singular in the Old Testament and the only time it is used in this form. Basically



the root word means "to write" and it is used many times in the Scriptures as folk, and even God wrote upon stone tablets (10 Commandments), doorposts and papyrus. But the word used in Leviticus 19:28 forbids God's people "to write upon their flesh."

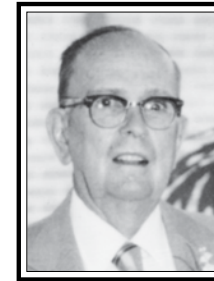
Why does God forbid this here?

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Our Inheritance at the End of Apostasy

By E. G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)

Before we consider our inheritance at any given time let us consider the over all picture of our inheritance. When did it begin, and when will it come to an end? Since there is no room for speculation, theorizing, or conjecturing in the matter, let us go to the Book for our answer. In Hebrews 9:15 we read, **"And for this cause He is the mediator**



of the new testament (covenant), that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament (covenant), they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

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The Journey Is Too Great

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto



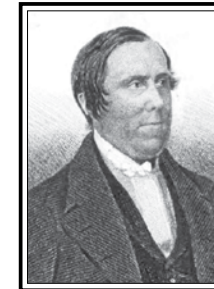
him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched

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A Pastor to His Church

By James Smith
(1802 - 1862)

MY DEAR FRIENDS, ---As we are only sent into this world for a short period, it is of great moment of enquire, "What am I placed in this world for?" As creatures, it is to glorify God. As sinners, it is to obtain salvation. As saints, it is for the good of others, and the honour of Christ. But do we keep these things prominently and permanently before our eyes? Let



me entreat you to accompany me for a few moments into private, in order to examine seriously before God one question, namely, "What am I living for?" What is the distinct object which I have in view in my life? Do I live for Jesus? That is, to

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Hypocrites will serve God while God serves them.

Yes, and they will just as soon serve the Devil if it answers their purpose better. They are mere traders in the market, and they will buy or sell as the price may happen to go.

"For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul" (Job 27:8)?

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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.

Tattoos and the

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And is it just for the Israelites under the Mosaic code? Or is it still incumbent upon God's people today to refrain from tattoos? Selah! Think about it!

First of all, let me state that God believes in tattooing. We can not deny it! **"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel"** (Rev. 7:2-4). We see here that God sends His angel with a "seal" to "mark" His sign of authority on His people. I picture here a cowboy heading out to the pasture with a hot brand to mark his sign upon his cattle. He is going to write on the flesh of the cow; he is going to tattoo them.

Now whether, this "seal" is an actual physical seal that can be seen by all, or only seen by spiritual vision, it really makes no difference, does it? God can see it, and from the context, the ANGELS will be able to see the "seal/tattoo," so as to avoid "hurting" or "harming" these sealed/tattooed ones. Selah! Think about it!

Perhaps these "markings" are something that other believers might be able to see, as well, and in the fierce persecution of the Great Tribulation, it will be a bond between these beleaguered believers, to ensure safety and protection from the constant

betrayals in this terrible time of Jacob's trouble.

God is not the only one that tattoos in Scripture, however. Satan, the great imitator, will also brand, mark, or tattoo his people, as well. **"As many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he (Satan) causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six"** (Rev. 13:15-18).

This "mark/tattoo" for SURE is going to be visible to others. Merchants will be checking for it, before making any sales or transactions. Sometimes, as we see technology progressing toward these "RF chips," etc..., we think it might be "scannable marks," and that may be true. Going back to our text, the initial form of tattoos, is "cuttings in your flesh." For the dead? Yeah, still the same, because it will be propagated and instigated by the spiritual dead of our society.

Most people today and down thru the ages would argue that they are not branding, but rather that it is a form of art or in the case of our text- religion (pagan art). It is impossible to deny that IN ITS PRIMARY USAGE, branding or writing on the flesh is a "sign of ownership." We think we OWN our own bodies, and that we can do whatever we want with them. This is the base excuse that ProChoice Planned Parenthood and others give as the reason that

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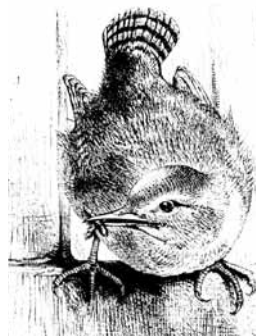
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women can forsake their young babies in their wombs, because it is my body and my tissues and so it is my choice.

But, selah! Think about it! Is that really the case? Where does the gift of life in the woman's womb come from? Certainly, nobody has the right to end life, except the One who gives life. That is not the mom or the dad, or a combination of mom-n-dad. It is God, and God ALONE, that can create life, even in the mother's womb. Further, to the current point of tattooing, God and God ALONE is the preserver of life in "our own" bodies. **"I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men"** (Job 7:20)? **"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe"** (I Tim. 4:10). Job recognizes the preserving attribute of our God and the Apostle Paul goes even further down this avenue making a distinction, that yes, God is an ESPECIAL Saviour of the believers, but also is undeniably the Saviour, or preserver, of ALL men, women, boys and girls. What was it someone said about the frailty of our existence? "I am but one step or one breath away from eternity." In reality we are at God's pleasure and disposal. Not just our souls, but our bodies (physical existence) and spirit (eternal existence), as well.

And that is why God is forbidding any form of "branding/tattooing" in the text. And that is also why it is still applicable today. Not just an Old Testament doctrine, but it is an eternal proposition, that we are created, ordained, and the workmanship of God!

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Because we are "owned" by God, we do not have the right to "inscribe on our flesh" (Eph. 2:10). **"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"** (I Cor. 6:19-20).

Tattooing is an outward sign of rebellion against the authority of God. Undeniably, the vast majority of tattooers are lost people. We could go so far as to say Satan-worshippers, and it would be true, but the main thrust of tattoos is rebellion. Rebellion against the authority of God's ownership of our bodies. Tattoo parlors are not frequented by faithful Christians, but by outright rebels against God. Birds of a feather will flock together, and the tattoo parlor is no different than the honky-tonk bar, the whorehouse, the smoking den and every other worldly, carnal establishment. If you are running away from God and His judgments, that is where the rebels will be. I would exhort you to head to church if you want to find and hang out with God's people. It is really a simple matter, is it not? God will bless the one, and will curse the others. Selah! Think about it!

But, what if someone wanted to mark their body for Christ? Maybe a cross, a wedding ring, or some imagery that would allow them to be a testimony for their Saviour? Well, the second commandment rules out any imagery. **"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or**

any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God" (Ex. 20:4-5). Let us not try to add anything physical to the spiritual worship of our God. To try to contain God in a box or an image is foolish, at best, blasphemy at worst. **"To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him"** (Isa. 40:18).

As we meditate upon this reasoning, even writing Christ's name on our bodies verges on blasphemy, does it not? Taking it a step further, let us examine the body of the Apostle Paul and his "tattoos." **"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus"** (Gal. 6:14, 17). Selah! Think about it!

How arrogant, presumptive, and foolish it is to "mark with tattoos" our own bodies with some cheap imitation of the tattoos of the precious saints gone by. God is ABLE to "mark" us HIMSELF. If by faithfully standing for the truth God would allow persecution to come into our lives to mark the Lord Jesus indelibly upon our mortal bodies, then give Him the praise. How insolent and arrogant it would be to do it ourselves without being worthy of the marks. Beloved, let us save the tattooing for God! Selah! Think about it!

End conclusion? "Tattooing/branding" is a sign of ownership. God owns everybody, but how much more particularly does He own His people that He saved

with His own precious blood? If, by the grace of God, we are allowed to enter eternity with the stripes of a cat-o-nine-tails across our backs, or with the scars of persecution tattooed across our bodies, then, we can show our prized tattoos for all of eternity, as the "marks" and "brands" of our heavenly Father and precious Saviour Jesus Christ! **"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"** (Eph. 2:7).

All "marks/branding" of this world will be removed forever at the great transformation of the Rapture and the First Resurrection, as this mortal puts on immortality and this corruption puts on incorruption. As a saint of God, if we have ever, by presumption, gotten a tattoo in this life, it will be erased, forgiven, and forgotten. Praise the Lord! But, I think those God-given tattoos, like the ones spoken of by the Apostle Paul: **"for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus"** will remain! Surely, the touch of God upon our bodies is not a temporal marking. It was not for our Saviour. **"The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And**

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Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God” (John 20:25-28).

Yes, tattooing is scriptural, but it is in the hands of the Maker that we should leave the tattooing. **“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (Isa. 49:15-16).** Selah! Think about it!



Our Inheritance

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Let us remember that things that are eternal reach back into the past just as far as they reach into the future. God did not wait to see how cute a baby we would be before He decided to give us an inheritance. But in the mind and purpose of God we have had that inheritance from all eternity. And in the mind and purpose, we will have that inheritance throughout the eternity of the future. In I Peter 1:4 we read, **“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.”** This inheritance simply cannot fade away because in Psalms 37:18 we read, **“The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.”** And our inheritance shall be for ever because “He has chosen our inheritance for us” (Psalms 47:4).

Since in the mind and purpose of God this inheritance has always been ours, it became operative in our behalf even before we began to live. You could not have helped it had you been born to a pagan mother in India and had you been thrown to the crocodiles in her

futile effort to appease her pagan god. You could not have helped it had you been born to a savage mother in Africa where you would be wearing such ornaments as a bone in your hair or a ring in your nose. You could not have helped it had you been born to a cannibal mother in the South Sea islands where you would either be eating, or being eaten. No, you could not have helped it, but He who has chosen our inheritance for us could help it, and He did. He who chose His own mother, the time of His birth, and the place of His birth has done the same thing for us. We are who we are, where we are, and when we are because He has chosen our inheritance for us. Not only that, but we are doing what we are doing today, and we have what we have in this world whether it be little or much because He has chosen our inheritance for us. Think back through the years beloved and see if it was your planning and your thinking that has brought you to this hour. O, yes, you have been planning to come to this wonderful Bible Conference for weeks, months, maybe for a year. But what caused you to want to come this way when literally hundreds of people who live in walking distance of this great church do not care whether we have a Bible Conference or not? Yes, beloved, you are here today rather than in a honkeytonk somewhere, or in the penitentiary wishing you were in a honkeytonk, because God has chosen our inheritance for us.

Jeremiah 10:23 says, **“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”** Then again we read, **“A man’s heart deviseth his way (that is, he plans his road), but the LORD directeth his steps”**

(Prov. 16:9). And again we read, **“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD” (Prov. 16:33).** O how I can look back over my path strewn with God dishonoring thoughts and deeds and see that He has led me when I thought I was choosing my own way. I can see now that He has turned me withersoever He would, and I knew it not.

So much for that, our subject is, **“Our inheritance at the end of the apostasy.”** Since our inheritance is eternal, since it can never fade away, but rather it is reserved in Heaven for us, I Peter 1:4, there can never be a time when we do not have an inheritance. So it seems that our problem is a three-fold one. First, what is the apostasy; second, when will it end; and third, what of our inheritance at that time?

I. WHAT IS APOSTASY?

In the first place, apostasy is not a person being saved today and lost tomorrow. The Bible knows nothing of such teachings. A person who is a child of God today can not become the child of the devil tomorrow. The teaching that a person can be a child of God today and a child of the devil tomorrow is the product of an evil imagination, and not a Bible doctrine by any means. The New Century Dictionary says that apostasy is the abandonment of professed religious or other principles. Winston’s Dictionary says it is the giving up of what one has professed. We are prone to think of apostasy as a terrible thing. We think of it in its evil aspect. But it can be a wondrous and a glorious thing.

For example, Billy Graham professes to believe that God can only do that which man is willing for Him to do. Now if it should please God to reveal His Son to

Billy, and if Billy should really come to see who Jesus is, and should it please God to reveal to him the great truths concerning His sovereignty, Billy would depart from that which he now professes to believe and would begin to teach that man can only do what God is willing for him to do. That would be apostasy, and how wonderful that apostasy would be. But, since cases like that are so few and far between, we just think of apostasy as being something evil. And it is in this evil sense that we are to deal with it in our message.

It may be well for us to give an example or two of this kind of apostasy in order that everyone may know just what we have in mind. I believe every one of you will agree with me when I say that as a boy, William Hamilton believed there was a God who was very much alive. He did not believe in this God, but he believed there was one. But after going to the wrong kind of school, and becoming demon possessed, Bill Hamilton now proclaims a dead God. To be sure Eric Rust and Dale Moody once believed that our Lord made all things and without Him was not anything made that was made. But after going to the wrong kind of school, and becoming demon possessed, they now proclaim a Christless creation. This is the kind of apostasy that will come to an end.

II. WHEN WILL APOSTASY END?

This kind of apostasy is increasing by leaps and bounds. And if our Lord does not come for us, or send for us before another year, we will see much more of it in 1968 than we see today. And after our Lord raptures His saints out of this world, and the Holy Spirit no longer hinders, demon

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possessed apostasy will, for a time, be the order of the day. And, when God begins to pour out His awful judgments upon this old wicked world, these awful apostates will cling to their precious religious system for dear life. They will flee to their so-called churches for help in time of trouble. But when they see the stars (their precious religious leaders) begin to fall, and as they see their precious religious system destroyed as the beast and the ten kings make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, they will be left in a desolate condition, no religious leaders to strengthen their faith in the old devil and no church to flee to in time of trouble. I am persuaded that the old whore of Revelation 17:16 will include, not only the Catholic Church, but also her harlot daughters, including her adopted daughter, the apostate Baptists. In Revelation 18:4 we read, **“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”** But instead of coming out of her, all of these apostate groups are flocking to her. So I believe they will all meet their doom together in Revelation 17:16

Now, with all of their false religious leaders and all of their apostate churches gone for ever, they have no place to go except to the dens and the rocks of the mountains (Rev. 6:15). And when they do this, they will have forgotten all about their dead God. They say to the mountains and the rocks **“Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.”** By this time there will be very little of the evil kind of apostasy left.

And when they have seen the armies of the world fall upon the mountains of Israel, their blood run to the horse bridles for 200 miles down the valley as a result of the hundred pound hailstones falling upon them, their bodies being eaten be the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, and it taking the Jews seven months to bury what is left of these bodies, there will not be a case of that kind of apostasy left in all the universe. Bill Hamilton will no longer rejoice over his dead God. And Eric Rust will no longer say the Old Testament begins with two creation myths.

III. WHAT IS OUR INHERITANCE ?

But what of our inheritance when this time comes? In Proverbs 4:18 we read, **“The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”** As the wicked flee to the rocks and the mountains our Lord’s saints shine brighter and brighter as the perfect day dawns. In I Thessalonians 4:16-17 we read, **“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of (or like) the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord: Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”** As this all takes place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (I Cor. 15:52), we are told to be clothed in glorified bodies like unto our Lord’s glorious body. In Philippians 3:20-21 we read, **“For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be**

fashioned like unto His glorious body.” Then when we have been caught up to ever be with our Lord, and while the apostasy is being brought to an end, we shall be rewarded according to our faithfulness to Him and to the His Word. In II Corinthians 5:10 we are told that **“We must all (our Lord’s people) appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”** And those of the saints who have made themselves ready (Rev. 19:7) are to be married to that wonderful Bridegroom, and all other of the saints will be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, Rev. 19:9. After this, and while the apostasy is coming to an end, we will come down with our Lord to the earth (I Thess. 3:13). As a part of our inheritance, we are to reign with our Lord here on earth (Rev. 5:10) for one thousand years (Rev. 20:6). When this wonderful thousand years have come to an end, our eternal inheritance will have just begun. In Revelation 22:5 we learn that we are to reign with our Lord in the new earth for ever and ever.

The Arminian denies that all this is part of the inheritance that God has chosen for us. He says that Psalm 47:4 has to do only with our inheritance here in this life and that it has nothing to do with our eternal destiny. There are many people in the world who will admit that God has chosen our inheritance for us in the material realm. And there are not a few who will admit that He has chosen our inheritance for us in the physical realm. But O how few there are who will admit that He has chosen our inheritance in the Spiritual realm. They are perfectly willing to say that He has chosen our vocation, our parents and even our environment. But when it comes to His choosing our eternal destiny, they kick loose

from the traces. I agree with the Arminian when he says no one would choose hell, but I cannot agree with Spurgeon when he says that people choose the road that leads to the pit. I contend that they do not have any choosing to do, but rather when a person is born into the world, he comes from his mother’s womb onto that broad road that leads to the pit. He lands right in the middle of it, and therefore he has no choosing to do.

That being true, are we not thankful to God that He has chosen our inheritance for us, not only in this life, but in the life to come as well? And the more we come to know about the wonderful inheritance in the next life, the less value we put upon this old sinful world and all it has to offer. That wonderful inheritance that awaits us at the end of the apostasy is glorious indeed. And if our Lord should come to us and say, I will give you the most beautiful clothes this world can produce, a change for every hour of the day so long as you live, in exchange for the glorified body that I have promised you in the next life, we would say, “No thank you Lord; all the most beautiful clothes the old world can produce are but trash ready for the garbage can compared to that wonderful glorified body. So just let your precious promise stand.” If He should come to us and say, “I will make you ruler over all the nations of the earth in exchange for my promise that you are to receive with Me in my kingdom,” we would say, “No thank you Lord; we will just wait for that glorious day.” If He should come to us and say, “I will send you all the world’s finest orchestras, the glee clubs and acappella choirs to singing for you continually so long as you

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Our Inheritance

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live, in exchange for your privilege of hearing the mountains and the hills break forth before me into singing and all the trees clapping their hands," we would say, "No thank you Lord, we will just wait for that glorious time." And if He should come to us and say, "I will give you the earth and the fullness therefore, the world and they that dwell therein, and add a thousand years to your life span in order that you may be able to enjoy all that wealth in exchange for the eternal life I have already given you." We would say, "No thank you Lord, perish the thought. We will just let our inheritance you have chosen for us stand."

Yes, He has chosen our inheritance for us. We are who we are, where we are, and when we are because He has chosen our inheritance for us. We are doing what we are doing today, and we have what we have in this world whether it be little or much because He has chosen our inheritance for us. And we will enjoy our wonderful eternal life along with all the wonderful and glorious things that go with it in the next life because He has chosen our inheritance for us, and O how brightly our inheritance will shine when the apostasy comes to an end.



The Journey Is Too

(Continued from page 1) ◊

him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God" (I Kings 19:4-8).

Elijah was a great man of God,

and one of the most famous of the Old Testament characters. In our text passage, we read about a man who has done great deeds in God's cause, but is now on the run from those who would take his life. Elijah had a "great journey" before him – a journey that he had no hope of finishing without the help and grace of God. He had done much, but he had come to the (apparent) end of what he could do.

I want to use this text passage to cause each of us to consider the "Great Journey" that we are traveling today. This journey that is "too great" for us, is none other than the way which we travel, as we pursue God and Heaven. Quite simply, this journey is "too great" for any man, nor will any man ever successfully travel from earth to Heaven – from wickedness to perfection – without the grace and help of God.

DIFFICULT

Elijah was in a difficult place. He was persecuted by Ahab, threatened by Jezebel, and rejected by most of the people. However, God had provided for him. He protected him from Ahab, shielded him from Jezebel, and supported him despite the wanderings and the idolatries of the People of Israel. In the place of our text, we find that God gave him water to drink and food to eat. Though the way was difficult, and the journey too great, God made a way. Eventually, Elijah would conquer and he would overcome in a fashion that is rarely seen (See II Kings 2:1-11)!

The journey that you and I have embarked upon – the journey that we must take, as we deliver up our service unto God – is not an easy task, nor is it a leisurely journey. Rather, the road that lies before each of the children of God, is a difficult road, and a hard way that is full of many trials. I think

that this is the immediate sense of the scene which is painted for us in our text passage. I think that this is evident in the life, the trials, and the difficulties which we see in the account that we have of the prophet Elijah. This difficult journey is too great for us – except we would have help and succor from God in Heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ once said, **"..The things which are impossible with men are possible with God"** (Luke 18:27). Miracles were evident in Elijah's life; I reckon that miracles are also evident – if we would look closely – in my life and yours.

I want you to know that God is strong and He is on the side of His saints. This is good and comforting to know. In fact, I believe that we can safely say that if we ever encounter something or someone that is too great or too strong for God, then we will fail. But is it possible to encounter a force or power too strong for God? Jeremiah once cried out for God's help this way: **"Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee"** (Jer. 32:17): and then, God answered Jeremiah's plea this way: **"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me"** (Jer. 32:27)?

Though the way and the journey is great and difficult, nothing is too hard for God! **"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of**

God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:31-39).

God's grace is evident in our lives, no matter where the situation or the place that this journey will bring us to. If we ever are caught in a place or a situation that is too difficult for God, then we will fail. And yet, is there any place or situation that is too difficult for our God? **"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work"** (II Cor. 9:8).

Further, though the way is difficult, and there may be distractions which may lead us astray, God is still in control. If we ever get lost and wonder which way to go – without God, we would utterly fail. But, is there any course which the Lord God cannot chart? Is there any road which He has not traveled? Is there any place which is hidden from His sight? **"For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will**

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The Journey Is Too

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I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment” (Ezek. 34:11-16). Though the journey is too great for us – though the difficulties exceed our own abilities – the Lord God will find us, He will set us on the way, and He will guide us, provide for us, and protect us for the duration of the journey.

LENGTHY

The journey which we have endeavored to take upon us is also a very lengthy journey. I believe this is part of what the angel refers to when he speaks to Elijah. Elijah would have to travel from the lands of Israel to the mountain of God – Mt. Horeb – far away in the wilderness. It was a difficult and lengthy journey. This is similar to the “great journey” which we travel as well. We, too, have a lengthy trip ahead of us. Ours is an expedition that will consume the

rest of our days. Ours is a voyage that will last until such time as the Lord will take us to be with Him – either through death, or the Lord will return for us in the skies. This trip will be exactly as long as the number of the days that remain for each of us upon the face of this earth. This journey is too great for us – except God would remain faithful to us, and would stay with us every day and every night. **“And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD”** (I Chron. 28:20).

If our God will ever leave us or forsake us, we will fail. However, our God is not such a God, Who would abandon those who are purchased and redeemed. **“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”** (Heb. 13:5-6). This great and lengthy journey that we are on, requires God’s constant presence and His unfailing support. **“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand”** (Rom. 14:4). The journey is long, we may get tired, but God is willing and able to make us stand.

The journey we are on is a lengthy one, and we must travel very far. If we ever travel beyond the extent of God’s power and presence, we will fail. But, is not God’s power and presence evident

everywhere? Is there any limit to either omnipotence or His omnipresence? **“Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea”** (Job 11:7-9). Is there a realm where God’s power is not known? Is there a place or people that is not subject to God’s authority? No matter where the lengthy journey takes us, God is there.

The days that remain for us, ought to be dedicated to the One Who has saved us, and the One Who has kept us, and the One Who will keep us until the journey is finished. Without Him, the journey would have been too great for us, and we would have fallen. **“O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but**

the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee” (Ps. 139:1-18).

The number of the days of our journey may be few or may be many, but God is with us every day – else the journey would be too great. **“It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD”** (Lam. 3:22-26).

GLORIOUS

Finally, as we can see from the example that is laid before us, the journey that we have been placed upon is both “great” and “glorious.” Consider the example of Elijah again. He began his journey in fear. He began his journey in the home and the place of sinful men.

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He began his journey where only 7,000 men in Israel still retained their integrity, and still sought to worship God. But, he would finish his journey in a place where only God was known, and where only God was glorified – there on the slopes of the mountain of God. What a glorious (great) journey! Surely, such a journey was too great (glorious) for Elijah! And yet, by the grace and help of God, Elijah was brought to such a place, and Elijah met with God.

The same is true for you and me. We, too, have begun in a brutal, depraved, sinful, and wicked world. We, too, have begun upon the path of godliness, in a place where God is not much known, where God is hardly ever feared, and where God is rarely loved and adored as He should be. But, the place that we travel to, is far better, and it is a holy place, where God alone is glorified. What a great and glorious place that will be! Surely, such a place is too great (glorious) for us! And yet, God will make us worthy. God will make us able to travel the difficult and lengthy journey. And, He will give us the righteousness of Jesus Christ, so that we can enter such a glorious land! **“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it”** (Matt. 7:13-14). It is true, that to be even set upon such a way, is a tribute to the Grace and Mercy of God.

Elijah went forty days in the strength of the meat and drink that was given unto him. That meat and drink could symbolize

the Word of God and Eternal life which are granted unto those of us who are saved by the grace of God. **“I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me. I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame. I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart”** (Ps. 119:30-32). The Word of God is essential in our travels. Our continuance on the way is a further tribute to the power of God’s Word and the glories of His grace.

I like the example of Abraham’s servant, and the success of his journey to Mesopotamia as he sought a wife for Isaac. When the man came to the place of his destination, and when he had found Rebekah, who was to be the wife for Isaac, we read the following: **“And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master’s brethren”** (Gen. 24:26-27). This man traveled on the road that led him **“to the house of”** his **“master’s brethren.”** And, the Lord God gave him good success. We, too, are on the road and the way which does lead us **“to the house of”** our Master and our brethren. And, we can expect that the Lord will keep us, and give us good success.

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Phil. 3:20-21). The journey is great – too great for you and me

to travel alone. The journey has many glories of which we are unworthy on our own. But, the end is far more glorious! The end of this great journey, and the glorious home that awaits us is our great hope and our greatest desire. Even now, as we partake of this great journey, we anticipate the end of the journey – Heaven, and Jesus Christ.



A Pastor to His

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Speak His truth, honour His name, extend His cause, and do His will? Is this my grand object? Do I live for the Church? To promote its happiness, add to its efficiency, and increase its members? Is this a part of my object? Do I live for sinners? Realizing the danger of their condition, pitying their circumstances, striving to bring them to Christ and fervently praying that the Holy Spirit would descend and crown every effort put forth for their conversion? Is this my object? Do I live to glorify God? ---endeavouring to make known His true character, to remove the prejudices which sinners have against Him, and to bring back as many of His rebel subjects as I can to their allegiance? Is this my object? Or, does the end for which I am living embrace distinctly these four points? Ought it not to be so? If it does not, “am I guiltless?” “Are you?”

My dear friends, too many of us are living to ourselves. We live to make money, or to spend money for our own gratification? Can we justify this? Sinners perish without out pity. The church calls in vain for extra efforts at our hands. We do not make the honour of Jesus, and the glory

of God, the daily object of our pursuit. Is it then any wonder if our comfort is small, if our evidences are dim, or if our fears prevail? Let us search into this matter thoroughly. Let us seek special grace “from” God, that we may so speak and so act as to bring great glory to God. Let us aim to come up to Paul’s experience, who could say, **“For me to live is Christ.”** “I live for Christ. Christ is honoured in my life. The end of my being is to make known and exalt Christ.” This is the direct road to happiness, honour, and God’s throne. Let us then every morning propose this question, “What shall I live for today?” And let us demand of our consciences an answer to this every evening, “What have I been living for today?” Jesus lived and died for us on earth and He is now living for us in Heaven, let us therefore live for Him. Living for Christ, we shall neglect no relative duty, nor miss the enjoyment of any Christian privilege; but shall at once honour our profession, benefit all about us, please God, be prepared for whatever may happen to us in life, and meet death with confidence and courage. Brethren! Sisters! “What are you living for?” Is your present object that, which you will approve on the bed of death--that which God, conscience, and glorified saints will commend? “Is it?” Are you quite satisfied on the point? Let conscience say. Do not put the subject from you, your happiness, your holiness, your honour is involved in it. Jesus wishes you to be entirely devoted to His cause---to spend all your talents in His service---to seek by all means to promote His causes. He is worthy for whom you should do this. If you neglect, the time will come when you will wish you had done so. Regrets will

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be useless then. Throw, therefore, all your energies at once, and for all your days, into the work. This is what you are required to do; do it then with all your might. **“The night cometh.”**



Calvinism, Arminianism, and the Foolish Foreknowledge Theory

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)



Arminius is the doctrinal godfather of many Baptists, Protestants and others, some of whom have never heard his name. They would be better off had they also never heard his doctrine. He developed a weak and incomplete system of theology. His theological views, while affecting many persons, were not adopted by any of the Protestant groups or their descendants for a long period, with the exception of the English Methodist Church in 1784.

Arminianism holds that Christ died equally for every human being for those who shall spend eternity in hell, as well as for those who shall spend the eternal ages with Christ. Saving grace, according to Arminianism, is offered to every person, and it is up to each to receive or reject, just as they please. It holds that the sinner can reject the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, no matter how much the

Spirit strives, if he chooses to do so. It holds that when the sinner is saved, it is not necessarily a permanent transaction, but that despite the new birth, the love of God, and power of the Holy Spirit, the individual can cast away all this and can perish forever.

As one theologian puts it, “Its leading idea is that divine grace and human will, will jointly accomplish the work of conversion and sanctification, and that man has the sovereign right of accepting or rejecting. It affirms that man is weak as a result of the fall, but denies that all ability has been lost. Man, therefore, merely needs divine grace to ASSIST his personal efforts. Or to put it another way, he is sick, but not dead; he indeed cannot help himself, but he can engage the help of a physician, and can either accept or reject the help when it is offered. He thus has power to cooperate with the grace of God in salvation. This view exalts man’s freedom at the expense of God’s sovereignty. It has some seeming, but no real, Scripture authority, and is plainly contradicted by other parts of Scripture.” (Boettner, Predestination p, 48)

Some perhaps will say, “That is what I believe!” Yes, a lot of people hold such views. They are very popular in this day, for they fit in with the liberalism of the times.

But let us turn from this small summary of Arminianism, to what is commonly designated as CALVINISM. Suppose we let a Calvinistic Presbyterian theologian give us a summary:

“Calvinism holds that as a result of the fall into sin all men in themselves are guilty, corrupted, hopelessly lost; that from this fallen mass God sovereignly elects some to salvation through Christ, while passing by others;

that Christ is sent to redeem His people by a purely substitutionary atonement; that the Holy Spirit efficaciously applies this redemption to the elect; and that all of the elect are infallibly brought to salvation. This view alone is consistent with Scripture and with what we see in the world about us.

Calvinism holds that the fall left man totally unable to do anything meriting salvation, that he is wholly dependent on divine grace for the inception and development of spiritual life. The chief fault of Arminianism is its insufficient recognition of the part that God takes in redemption. It loves to admire the dignity and strength of man; Calvinism loses itself in adoration of the grace and omnipotence of God.” (Boettner, Predestination pages 48-49)

The Foreknowledge Foolishness

In discussing the election question with persons, we have had them say, “I’m not an Arminian---I believe in election, but I believe it is BASED ON THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD.” Then they went ahead to explain that they believed God looks down into the future, and foreseeing that certain persons will receive Christ as Savior, He elects them to salvation. Then they quoted this: **“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God”** (I Pet. 1:2).

If this verse was the only one dealing with the foreknowledge and election question, they might have a strong point, but other passages teach most clearly that election is not determined by foreknowledge. Let’s see if that isn’t true. Ephesians 1:5, **“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL.”**

DO YOU SEE IT? This says that God predestinates us unto the adoption of children according to the good pleasure of His will. It is His WILL and His PLEASURE that is determinative, NOT His foreknowledge! But lest you are not convinced, look down the page of your Bible, and note what it says. It says: **“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the PURPOSE of him who worketh all things after the COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL”** (Eph. 1:11).

Doesn’t this say that we are predestinated according to God’s will and good pleasure? It certainly does. But it has to be a lie, if foreknowledge is the thing that determines God’s predestination. “But,” someone says, “what about the passage that says that predestination is ACCORDING TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD?” The answer is that that verse exactly accords with the Scriptures that tell us that predestination is determined by the will and good pleasure of God. Things decreed and predetermined by the will and good pleasure of God, are indeed in accordance with God’s foreknowledge. In other words, God does not plan and determine to bring a certain person to salvation only to recall, from His foreknowledge, that that person ends in hell. This would cause a clash between God’s predetermined purpose, and His foreknowledge of what will be. Plain common sense tells us that no event can be foreknown, unless it has first of all been predetermined. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God says, **“I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient**

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Calvinism

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times the things that ARE NOT YET DONE, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isa. 46:9, 11).

God's foreknowledge is complete, no question about that, but it is not determinative concerning men's actions. How ridiculous it is to assume that God looks into the future, and seeing that a certain person has been saved, then elects that person to salvation. That raises the question, "Who is boss in this world anyhow---Man or God?" It is the very height of foolishness to assume that God must know what man is going to do, before He acts. There is no way around the fact that this puts man ahead of God, and that is exactly what many want to believe in this day, for this is certainly a day of big man, and little God! Many seem to think that God is as weak willed as the old woman we like to tell about. This old woman had a dog she was very fond of---a dog that pretty well had his way with her, despite her occasional attempts to boss him. On one occasion when she had some company, the dog became very annoying, in everybody's way and under everybody's feet. The old woman with some irritation opened the door and shouted to him, "Rover, get out of here!" The dog instead, ran under the couch. The old lady with the determination to be obeyed, said, "Well, go under the couch then!"

Who really had their will obeyed---the dog or the woman? The dog of course! She saw what he had done, then chose him to go under the couch!

That's exactly the Arminian scheme of election. God sees what man has done through

foreknowledge, then elects him to do that. This makes man the boss! No escape from this conclusion. But this is not the God or the determinism of the Bible. Let's see what God's Word says: Isaiah 46:11: "**Yea, I have spoken it. I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.**"

Look again. "**And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according TO HIS WILL in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?**" (Dan. 4:35)

Take another look. "**But our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.**" (Psa. 115:3)

Note that this does not say that He has done what man has pleased. There is no way of reconciling the foregoing Scriptures with the idea that God has to look in His book of foreknowledge and see what men have chosen to do, before He determines what He will do. If that were true, God would be hopelessly frustrated by his creatures. They would indeed be running things. No, a thousand times, No! God is not governed by foreknowledge! What He decrees to do is not determined by foreknowledge. If it were otherwise election and predestination would be meaningless terms, for there would be no need for either. It seems to us that a preacher, or a student of the Bible, ought to be ashamed to say, "I believe in election, but I believe that God foreknows who will be saved, and that He elects to salvation those whom He foreknows will turn to Christ." Little God has to see what BIG man has decided to do before He acts!

The writer of these lines doesn't

believe any such stuff, and we are glad to say that the great Baptist scholars and leaders of the past didn't believe any such stuff either. Perhaps this would be a good place to stop and examine the beliefs of some of the great Baptists (and others) of the past. To this we will devote the next chapter.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Eternity of Jesus Christ

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

The historical and theological center of Christianity is Jesus Christ. A true and worthy estimation of His Person is the foundation doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. It is impossible for finite minds to fully comprehend the glories of His adorable Person. Human language fails in its most eloquent attempts to describe this unrivaled Person.

The absolute, dogmatic declaration that Jesus Christ is God is the basic premise in all understanding of His Person. Without a complete recognition of His deity, every feature of Christology must be at fault to a baleful degree. Of all the great doctrinal errors, a degrading of the Person of Christ is the worst. This heresy has eternal consequence.

Being God, Christ existed from all eternity. He was pre-existent with the Father and Spirit in eternity past. The Arians denied this truth centuries ago. They said the Son was not of the same substance of the Father but was



created as an agent for creating the world. The Socinians likewise denied the divinity of Christ in more modern times. The old Arian heresy and the Socinian error are being revived in our time by false cults.

It is fitting that true believers take a firm stand upon the Person of Christ, since His enemies are attempting to convince the world that He was nothing more than a mere man. Let us not have the truth on ice, while they have heresy on fire.

THE BEFORE-TIME COVENANT

In Isaiah 58:15 the prophet takes us back to when the high and lofty One inhabited eternity. This was before any creature had been formed. God existed alone in eternity past. There is no being like Him. He has neither beginning of days nor end of life. There is no change of time with Him. He is immortal and immutable.

From eternity there existed only the three divine Persons

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in the Godhead. Before the Covenant Redemption, there was no relationship existing as that of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These things came about with the conception of the Everlasting Covenant. The titles, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are eternal only in the sense that the three divine Persons agreed to perform certain things and to bear certain titles concerning man's redemption.

The Second in the Godhead became the Son in covenant relations. In this sense Christ was begotten before all creation and is the firstborn of every creature. Christ was begotten in covenant relation before the time of the ages.

The eternity of the Son can be seen from the Covenant of Redemption. We learn from Ephesians 1:4 that the elect were chosen in Christ **"before the foundation of the world."** The elect were given grace in Christ **"before the world began"** (II Tim. 1:9). The elect did not exist at that time, but the Second Person of the Godhead did exist. He was in the form of God and equal with God.

IN THE BEGINNING

When the universe was created, the three divine Persons existed: **"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"** (Gen. 1:1). The word "God" is a translation of the Hebrew word "Elohim" which means "the Infinite Ones." This word is in the plural number. Here is seen the doctrine of the blessed Trinity for the first time. They were all co-existent and co-eternal as associates in the Godhead before the first creative act.

According to Philippians 2:6 the Second Person was **"in the form of God,"** partaking of the divine nature and essence. He possessed the **"image of the invisible God"** (Col. 1:15). The Word was **"the brightness of his glory, and the expressed image of his person"** (Heb. 1:3). As the living image of God, He was equal to God Himself.

The Second Person was in the bosom of the Father before the time of the ages. It is written in John 1:18: **"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."**

This expression is taken from the custom among Orientals of reclining at their meals. It denotes intimacy, friendship, and affection. This remarkable expression reveals the Son's conscious existence distinct from the Father and His eternal acquaintance. Christ had lain in the Father's bosom from eternity.

Christ was loved by the Father from all eternity. While on earth our Savior said to the Father: **"Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world"** (John 17:24).

This is another of the numerous passages which prove the Son existed before time and creation. The language cannot mean anything else. If the Son did not exist from eternity past, then there was no object of the Father's love.

HIS PRIMEVAL GLORY

The Son must have existed before the creation of the world, since He had a glory with the Father in eternity past. Jesus prayed: **"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was"**

(John 17:5). Back there He was **"the brightness of his (Father's) glory"** (Heb. 1:3) (emph. MRC). The making of the world enhanced His glory, but it added nothing to His divine Person.

Christ divested Himself of this glory and drew a veil over it in His humiliation. He was God manifest in the flesh, not God in His glory. In His final exaltation, He will resume this glory when He abdicates the kingdoms of this world to the Father.

PROVERBS 8:22-31

It is to be doubted if a more marvelous unfolding of the Person of Christ can be found in all the Holy Writ than is seen in Proverbs 8. There is a more detailed description of Christ here than in John 1. Solomon is not just elating wisdom as a desired attribute in man and God. Nor is he merely telling us that wisdom is an essential property of the divine nature. Instead, he is exalting a divine Person, for wisdom in Proverbs 8 has personal properties and actions.

There should be little doubt in the honest interpreter's mind that Solomon speaks of the Second Person in the Trinity. In Colossians 2:3 the Apostle Paul, speaking of Christ, says, **"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."**

Observe the profound description of the Son in Proverbs: **"The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not**

made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. 8:22-31).

Here the Son is seen as co-existent and co-eternal with the Father in that unbeginning beginning. There was a Second Adam long before the first Adam. The Second had a being before the earth, and He is "not of the earth" (John 3:31).

ISAIAH 9:6

The revelation of the Scriptures proves Jesus Christ was not only the pre-existent One before His incarnation, but also He was the One co-existent with the Father and Spirit. In a prophetic utterance about the Messiah, Isaiah called Him **"the Father of eternity"** (Isa. 9:6 margin reading). This can mean but one thing. Isaiah believed Christ inhabited eternity. He was the One with the Father from everlasting to everlasting. Christ cannot be the Father of eternity, unless He existed from eternity past.

Some Hebrew scholars tell us that the rendering should be "the Father of the ages." This may well be. Jesus Christ is not just the One in Whom all the

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Why is Arminianism so popular? Don't people even read their Bible to see that most of these things are not scriptural?



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Arminianism is a system of belief that exalts the supposed "free will of man." Full blown Arminians are in opposition to all five points of the doctrines of grace, denying the truths of total depravity, unconditional election, particular redemption, effectual calling, and the preservation and perseverance of the saints. Roman Catholics, Campbellites, Methodists, the cults, Free Will Baptists, and the grab bag of Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations would all qualify as full blown Arminians. In my estimation Arminians really believe in a works salvation that starts with man making a decision to be saved and then keeping himself saved by observing certain standards and religious ceremonies. Full blown Arminians believe that a person can lose their salvation which is an abominable heresy that denies the efficacy of Christ's finished work. There are some reformed Presbyterians that believe in the doctrines of grace, but a majority of modern day Presbyterians and Lutherans have embraced the heresies of Arminianism. There are a lot of BINO's (Baptist in name only), who are "Whiskey Calvinists" because they really only believe one-fifth of the doctrines of grace (preservation of the

saints). True New Testament Baptists have believed the truths of sovereign grace ever since Jesus Christ organized the first church during His earthly ministry, long before John Calvin ever came along.

Arminianism is popular because it appeals to the depraved, fleshly, and religious nature of man. It is the religion of Cain who hoped to gain God's favor by the works of his own hands. The natural man feels good thinking that he is contributing something to his salvation. Satan has ministers who have convinced their hearers that salvation, in whole or in part, is really up to them. They have to work to get it and keep it. This system of belief is in direct contradiction of Ephesians 2:8-10 which forcefully declares: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"** (cf. Rom. 3:24-28; 4:1-8; 8:29-39; 11:5-6; Eph. 1:3-11; Titus 3:5-8; I Pet. 1:1-8; II Thess. 2:13-15; II Tim. 1:9, etc.).

Lest we get too exalted on our high horse of theological superiority and our declarations of affinity and loyalty to the truth of sovereign grace, we ought to remember that the only reason we believe anything at all is because the Holy Spirit has been pleased to show us, enlighten us, instruct us in the way of truth. I am sure there are plenty of Arminians who read

their Bibles. Ultimately God has to open their eyes and hearts to the truth. Matthew 11:25-27 states: **"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him"** (Read also I Corinthians 2:10-12). If you believe in the doctrines of grace it is not because you have a superior intellect over Arminians! It is simply because God was pleased to reveal spiritual truth to your mind and heart. A realization of this ought to humble you before God.

I have no doubt that there are many Arminians who are saved by grace in spite of their adherence to certain doctrinal heresies. However, there will be no Arminians in Heaven. By the time they reach the shores of glory the Lord will show them the blessed truths of sovereign grace so they will be able to praise and worship Him aright! Isaiah 29:24 proves this point: **"They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine."**

TOM ROSS



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Arminianism has been on earth ever since Adam and Eve. Satan's doctrine is Arminianism. **"Woe**

unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core" (Jude 1:11).

Why can they not see the error? Isaiah said it best, **"And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed"** (Isa. 6:9-10). These verses were quoted in the New Testament for a reason.

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Arminianism is popular, because at its heart it is a mixture of two very fashionable modern "ism's" –humanism and liberalism. Selah! Think about it!

Religious humanism only differs slightly from secular humanism, which is the current religion of most modern Americans. It is salvation by human works, where one is able to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps! Jacob Arminius followed in Pelagian's footsteps to put in order this religious system of anti-salvation by grace. As we examine his constructed theology, it is easy to see why it is popular with "shallow Christians" and Christians that rarely study their Bibles.

1) Arminian Humanism declares that men are merely "sick" with sin, not "dead" in trespasses.

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Who are the “children of light” mentioned in Luke 16:8?

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concerning the things of God, the things yet to happen, and wise to the things of Heaven and Hell. God Bless!

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“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober” (I Thess. 5:4-8).

The Lord is contrasting saved folk with lost folk in this passage, as in many texts. Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, and we are to reflect that light in our lives. **“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”** (John 8:12; 9:5). **“Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him”** (John 11:9-10).

There are a couple of things to note in the passage of Luke 16:8-10, **“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”**

First of all, please note that the Lord is not deceived. The steward is entitled “unjust” in the parable, and that does not change in the epitaph verses here noted. It might seem confusing to “commend” him and mark his actions as “wise,” since this steward is indeed a child of “this world” of darkness, as compared to the “children of light.” But this is not a commendation of praise, but rather an acknowledgment of a lost person making a creative choice that would seem on the outside to be a wise, or prudent act. In fact, the word translated as “wise,” when used in the Greek in a “bad” sense, means conceited, or selfish. That is how it is translated in Romans 12:16, **“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits”** (also in Romans 11:25).

What the “unjust steward” has done, is made a bed of further deceit and betrayal to lie in. The Lord warns of the coming “payday,” to dangerously put himself into the hands of those who KNOW that he cheated his former master. **“If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will**

commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own” (Luke 16:11-12)? Selah! Think about it! These new masters are NEVER going to trust him with anything that they value.

One other phrase in this passage that has been misused is verse 9, **“And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”** Note again, that the Lord is not sugar-coating the plight of the “unjust steward” at all. **“When ye fail”** is a SURE thing. But some folk take the next line and say that “at least he will have his buddies in Hell to comfort him” Is not likely, beloved reader. Hell’s “welcoming committee” is seen in a couple of passages. **“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! ... Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee”** (Isa. 14:12, 9-11). Nothing more than disdain, if there be any acknowledgment at all, of the addition to Hell’s eternal torment of one more soul. Even in this same chapter of Luke 16, the unheralded arrival of the rich man, evoked no party, only a desperate desire that his five brothers NEVER end up, down here. Selah! Think about it!

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“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matt. 5:14).

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:4).

Those that are spoken of as being “the children of light” are the saved of this dispensation. They are those that are the elect of God, who have been “born again.”

Those that are said to be wiser than “the children of light” are not wise in the sense of being smarter but rely on their own wisdom and understanding, not God’s. They have no understanding of the Bible (they think they are wise in their own conceit) but have not a clue. **“Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him”** (Pro. 26:12). **“The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason”** (Prov. 26:16).

“The children of light” are wise

Forum #1

(Continued from page 12) ◊

Prevenient grace (although not found in Scripture) is trumped up to enable each person to exercise their free will to choose either Christ as Saviour or reject Him. 2) Arminian Humanism declares that God looked down through the “eternal halls of time” and saw which souls would “choose” Him and turns right around and “elects” them unto salvation. This will allow the Biblical words election, foreknowledge and predestination to be merely a puppet response of God, not a (God forbid!) sovereign decree of divine immutability. 3) Arminian Humanism declares that God loves everyone and therefore Christ died for everyone. Never mind that many that God “loves” then end up in Hell, despite the “best efforts” of God. God’s done His part- now it is up to you. 4) True Arminian Humanism follows through with their theology and declares that if one does not continue to stay true to God, their salvation can be lost. Ultimately, it depends on whether you are good or bad at the time of death. It really is up to us. Many Arminians are not able to stomach this logical conclusion of their man-made doctrine, so they “steal” eternal security from God’s grace and take it as their God-given “right,” once they have “prayed through.” These folk would fall in the category of “semi-Pelagians.”

As can be seen from these tenets of arminianism, humanists fall in love with the thoughts of being in control of their own spiritual salvation. They will only read and preach the verses that support their humanistic doctrine, soon becoming what we termed earlier as “shallow

Christians” that have abandoned much of the Bible as “inscrutable” or “theological conundrums.” The very nature and attributes of God are denied and/or ignored, as they insist on studying salvation (Soteriology) ONLY from the human perspective. Although the Bible clearly teaches a God of absolute predestination and prophecy, alongside the truth of human responsibility, they ignore the first and loudly proclaim the latter! Although the Bible clearly proclaims salvation by grace, they trumpet a salvation by faith, excluding again any sovereignty of God. Although the Bible clearly teaches that souls are saved as a fruit of gospel preaching, made effectual by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, these humanists pluck out the phrase “soul-winning” from Proverbs 11:30 and run out the door claiming that church members can wring professions out of any emotionally-charged sinner by badgering them into “making a decision for Christ.”

America is a prime example of how arminianism has led to the second “ism.” “Liberalism” is built upon the foundation of humanism and denies any ties to conservative truths and authority, but affirms that every man should do what is “right” in his own eyes, **“In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes”** (Jud. 17:6). When this liberal arminianism is in full bloom, as it has been for the past century in our beloved country, it will fill so-called churches with lost people, deceived into thinking they are saved and these arminians will lead families, churches and eventually country into liberal theologies and social practices. American Christianity has become so corrupted, that it has no spiritual power (with God)

and no physical respect (from men). **“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 roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us. ...In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey”** (Isa. 59:10-15). Beloved reader, please do not take the first step into arminianism! Destruction awaits down that broad road. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



I believe the reason Arminianism is so popular is the Arminian wants to put themselves in the driver’s seat. They want the credit for their salvation. They believe God has gotten old and is no longer capable of doing the things He once did. In other words God needs our help. This of course is a falsity.

If you ask the Arminian these three questions, you will soon learn they do not believe in true sovereign grace! 1) “Do you believe in the grace of God?” they will answer, “yes!” 2) “Do you believe that all men (mankind)

have a chance to be saved?” they again will answer, “yes!” 3) “When the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in man, does he have the power to receive or reject the Holy Spirit?” and once again they will say, “yes!”

At that point I ask them to explain the first three chapters of Ephesians. I believe in the grace of God also. But all men will not be saved, but only the elect of God which He had chosen, elected, and ordained to be saved in Christ before the foundation of the world and they will be saved at that appointed time that God ordained them to be. There is no chance involved, the elect will be saved. **“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace”** (Gal. 1:15). If we say we have the power to receive or reject the Holy Spirit at the time of regeneration, than we are saying we have more power than God!

NO! People do not read their Bible; they now rely on the false preacher and what they believe to be their spiritual leader. Look at how the people fell all over the pope when he was here in America...they believe he is the holy father (which just sickens me to death) and will believe whatever he tells them. They are being deceived and are too blind to see it and too lazy to find out for themselves the truth. **“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that**

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Forum #1

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they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (II Thess. 2:8-12).

I worked with a man who went to an Arminian church (rank Arminian), and he told me he was so fed up with the Sovereign Grace doctrine he kept hearing about (which he hated) that he prayed to God that He would show him the truth, and he said God lead him to the Book of Ephesians and walked away believing the doctrine of Sovereign Grace.

Oh, if God's people would prayerfully read God's Book, what joy they would have. **“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”** (II Chron. 7:14). God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ◊

It should be our desire to be a child of God's light, not someone that is “wise” in the conceits of this selfish world. **“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”** (Matt. 5:14-

16). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph 5:8). **“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness”** (I Thess. 5:5). God's holy and elect people, those saved by grace thru faith of Jesus the Christ.

MIKE DEWITT



Luke 16:8: **“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”** The parable of the unjust steward is an illustration of personal accountability we have to serve God to the best of our ability. We ought to be faithful in small things as well as big things. If we are not faithful in the small things God will not entrust us with greater things. It is a simple principle teaching that we are to be faithful in all that we do from the least to the greatest. From the smallest things like being on time to work, as well as doing something as important as teaching a Sunday School class or homeschooling

our children.

The children of light are God's elect who have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light (cf. John 12:36; Eph. 5:8; I Thess. 5:5). The rich man (lord, lower case) commended the unjust steward for using worldly wisdom in getting at least something from the debtors, as opposed to nothing at all. The unjust steward felt a sense of accountability to at least get something done so he would have something to show his boss. The men of this world are often wiser than the children of light when it comes to worldly and secular affairs of this life. Steve Jobs was a reprobate when it came to spiritual things, but he was wise in business acumen and innovation. Worldly men sometimes know how to use their resources, wealth, and leverage better than God's children. May God give the children of light the ability to use all of their resources and wealth, both spiritually and materially for the glory of God.

TOM ROSS



The Eternity of

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ages meet, but He is also the One Whom from eternity past framed the ages or dispensations of human history. The eons of time were fitted together by the eternal Word.

In Hebrews 11:3 this truth is seen: **“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”** J. B. Rotherham translates a portion of this verse: “. . .the ages have been fitted together. . .” The grand truth seen in this verse is that the dispensations, extending

successively from creation to the new heavens and the new earth, have been planned and executed by Christ. This clearly declares the eternity of our Lord.

MICAH 5:7

The Son as the eternal God was active before all worlds. Micah 5:2 tells us: “As for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, little as you are among the thousands of Judah, from you shall He come forth to Me, who is to be ruler over Israel, His goings forth are from of old, from days of eternity” (Berkeley Version). The One born in Bethlehem went forth as the son of man to do the Father's will, but as the eternal One His goings forth were from everlasting. “From the days of eternity” is the strongest expression of infinite duration of which the Hebrew is capable.

JOHN 1:1-3

It is obvious from the New Testament writers that Jesus Christ is the uncaused Cause, the self-existent One. The Apostle John wrote: **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”** (John 1:1). The Word was with God before the creation. This takes us back to Genesis 1:1 and before time and created existence. The Word was God from the beginning, and He who was in the beginning never began. The world was from the beginning, but the Word already existed in the beginning.

John continues: **“The same was in the beginning with God”** (John 1:2). From all eternity the Word had a personal existence from God and was associated with Him. The Word (Greek Logos) is no inferior being. He was a partaker of the Divine

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The Eternity of

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glory; He was blessed and happy with the Father. There was an intimacy between the eternal Word and the Father. In his first epistle John said of Christ **"which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us"** (I John 1:2).

The eternal Word must have existed before creation, for He is the origin of it: **"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made"** (John 1:3).

JOHN 8:58

In John 8:58 Jesus Christ said: **"Before Abraham was, I am."** Christ in these words asserts not only His pre-existence, but also His eternity. He declares Himself to be the self-existing and immutable Jehovah of the Old Testament.

These words look back to Exodus 3:14. Jesus claimed for Himself the same eternal, unsuccessive, absolute unbeginning as Jehovah claimed when He said to Moses: **"I AM that I AM."** Christ makes Abraham a creature and Himself the eternal Creator.

COLOSSIANS 1:16-17

He who created all things must have existed before all things. Of God's dear Son it is written: **"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist"** (Col. 1:16-17). If Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, then He existed from eternity.

REVELATION 1:8, 11

In Revelation 1:8, 11 Christ

said: **"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending."** Christ had no beginning, for He existed from the beginning. He is the Beginner of time and the universe.

ETERNAL SONSHIP

The sonship of the Second Person in the Trinity is unique. It is not shared with any creature. His incarnation (Luke 1:35), His baptism (Matt. 3:17), His transfiguration (Matt. 17:5), and His resurrection (Acts 13:34-35; Rom. 1:4-5) did not make Him the Son of God. These things merely declared He was already the Son of God.

The Scriptures teach the eternal generation of the Son. It is written: **"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee"** (Ps. 2:7). **"This day"** refers to the date of the decree in the Covenant of Redemption, to the divine act which was eternal. **"This day"** with God means **"from everlasting to everlasting."** The Prophet Isaiah well asked: **"Who shall declare his generation?"** (Isa. 53:8).

In the sense that Jesus Christ is God's Son He is the only begotten Son (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; I John 4:9). There was an eternal relationship existing between the Father and the Son since the time of the Covenant of Redemption. Jesus Christ is the only begotten in relation to the angels who are sons of God by creation and believers who are sons of God by adoption. These all begin to be sons at their creation; Christ was the only begotten from the Covenant of Redemption.

Christ is called the **"first begotten"** in Hebrews 1:6 because He was begotten before the world was in the eternal

purpose of God. By eternal generation Jesus Christ is His **"only begotten Son."** He was already the Son when the Father sent Him into the world: **"God sent his only begotten Son into the world"** (I John 4:9). **"But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman. . ."** (Gal. 4:4).

Proverbs 30:4 suggests the eternity of Christ's sonship: **"Who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"**

THE FIRSTBORN

In Romans 8:29 the Apostle Paul speaks of Christ as **"the firstborn among many brethren."** He is also called **"firstborn"** in Hebrews 12:23. The Lord Jesus is firstborn in order, priority, and pre-eminence. As to His divine nature He was truly the firstborn since He is the eternal Son of the Father. He is the Son of God by nature, while His brethren are sons of God by grace.

FIRST BEGOTTEN FROM THE DEAD

It is written in the Bible that Christ is **"the first begotten of the dead"** (Rev. 1:5). Jesus Christ as the eternal Son raised Himself by His own power: **"I lay down my life, that I might take it again"** (John 10:17). He is the Head of the resurrection and will raise all His people when the dead saints hear His voice (John 5:25). We are begotten to a lively hope by His resurrection (I Peter 1:3).

Jesus Christ was the first to receive a glorified body. He was **"the firstfruits of them that slept"** (I Cor. 15:20, 23) and the **"firstborn from the dead"** (Col. 1:18). All those raised from the dead, except Christ, died a

second time. Christ rose to die no more. As His resurrection declared His eternal sonship, even so our resurrection will attest our sonship (I John 3:12), and declare that the Father **"predestinated us unto the adoption of children"** (Eph. 1:5).

THE FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE

The Son is said to be **"the firstborn of every creature"** in Colossians 1:15. This means He was begotten antecedently to everything that was created. This does not mean, as some say, that Christ was the first of all created beings. Christ was born, the universe was created, Christ is Maker and Head of all created things. His position in respect to creation is like that of a firstborn son.

CONCLUSION

What does Jesus Christ mean to you, dead reader? I cannot answer for you, but I can quickly answer for myself in the words of the Baptist preacher, Samuel Stennett, who lived from 1727 - 1795. He wrote in his great hymn:

*Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow;
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o'erflow.*

*No mortal can with Him compare,
Among the sons of men;
Fairer is He than all the fair
Who fill the heavenly train.*

*He saw me plunged in deep distress,
And flew to my relief;
For me He bore the shameful cross,
And carried all my grief.*

*To Him I owe my life and breath,
And all the joys I have;
He makes me triumph over death,
And saves me from the grave.*



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.

DEMOCRATS BLOCK 20-WEEK ABORTION BAN

(WNS)--On Tuesday, Sept. 22, U.S. senators voted on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. The bill would make abortions illegal once a baby reaches 20 weeks of fetal age. Senate Democrats blocked the measure, but pro-life lawmakers vowed to keep fighting for it. A record 54 senators—including three Democrats—voted to move forward with HR 36, a late-term abortion ban that passed the House in May. Collins and Sen. Mark Kirk, R-Ill., joined 40 Democrats to kill the bill. “Even if we differ on the larger abortion issue, can not we at least agree that children at this late stage of development deserve our protection?” asked Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who noted the United States is only one of seven countries to allow abortion on demand after 20 weeks. For now the answer is no.

SENATE APPROVES USCIRF REAUTHORIZATION

(WNS)--The long battle to reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) appears to be nearing an end. On Sept. 30 the U.S. Senate passed a four-year reauthorization that largely maintains USCIRF's current structure and direction. USCIRF authorization was set to expire Sept. 30, but Congress included an extension in the stop-gap funding bill, keeping USCIRF's doors open until the House can debate the Senate measure.

HIGH SCHOOL REJECTS ACLU BID TO BLOCK PRAYER BOXES

(WNS)--A Louisiana school board rebuffed the ACLU at a meeting Oct. 1 when it passed a resolution calling the organization's recent threats unwarranted. On Sept. 24, the ACLU issued a demand letter to the Bossier Parish School Board in Bossier City, La., part of Shreveport's greater metro area. The letter claimed Airline High School had engaged “in a pattern of religious proselytization” by allowing Fellowship of Christian Athletes, a student-led club, to post “prayer boxes” throughout the school. In addition, the letter targeted the school's principal, Jason Rowland, for using the phrase “God bless you all” in a school newsletter. The school board issued a statement saying it would investigate the claims and respond to the ACLU after the Oct. 1 board meeting, the *Shreveport Times* reported.

SCIENTISTS URGE JAIL TIME FOR THOSE WHO QUESTION CLIMATE CHANGE

(WNS)--The government should march off to jail scientists and others who do not support man-made global warming theories, according to 20 climate scientists from several universities and research centers. The group recently sent a letter to the White House, urging President Barack Obama to use the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) to investigate, “corporations and other

organizations that have knowingly deceived the American people about the risks of climate change.” Congress enacted the RICO Act in 1970 to fight organized crime syndicates. Those found guilty of racketeering—criminal activity designed to benefit an organization—may face prison sentences of up to 20 years and seizure of financial assets. The Justice Department used the RICO Act in 1999 to successfully prosecute major tobacco companies.

DEBUNKING THE PLANNED PARENTHOOD MAMMOGRAM MYTH

(WNS)--Planned Parenthood does not provide mammograms despite continued claims from high-profile supporters that it does, according to a Fact Checker report released by *The Washington Post* in late September. In a Sept. 29 House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform hearing, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., claimed that Planned Parenthood provided mammograms. “All the signatories [of a letter supporting defunding Planned Parenthood] are men, none of whom will get pregnant, or need a cervical screening for cancer, or a mammogram, or a pap smear, or other life-saving services that are provided by Planned Parenthood,” Maloney said. But the claim that Planned Parenthood “provides” mammograms is false, according to report author Michelle Ye Hee Lee. And the claim earned three-out-of-four Pinocchios from Fact Checker, meaning it contained “significant factual error and/or obvious contradictions.”

KERRY QUESTIONED ABOUT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM POST

(WNS)--The U.S. State Department ignored last year's congressional request to appoint a special envoy for religious liberty in the Middle East and Asia, creating a lower-ranking advisory position instead.

In a letter sent to the department Oct. 8, Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., called on Secretary of State John Kerry to explain the discrepancy. In the letter, Lankford questioned the administration's commitment to international religious freedom and why it did not follow the Near East and South Central Asia Religious Freedom Act. The bill created a special envoy for persecuted minorities, and Congress passed it without objection from either party.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS IRISH PRO-ABORTION MOVEMENT LOSES MOMENTUM AFTER CITY VOTE

(WNS)--The City and County Council of Limerick, Ireland, on Sept. 28 rejected a proposal calling for a referendum to repeal the country's constitutional right-to-life provision. The 23-12 vote slows an effort led by the Anti-Austerity Alliance and other pro-abortion groups to gather support for a referendum on Ireland's Eighth Amendment. Limerick County is the eighth most populous county in the Republic of Ireland.

NEW HOME MISSIONS

(WNS)--Secular media are filled with stories about refugees coming to Germany, but they often skip one crucial angle: Because many asylum seekers come from nations with little or no religious toleration, Germany offers a new opportunity to investigate a Christianity they had only heard about. Dennis Blea, who works with the Navigators in Germany, told me about two Iranian visitors to his church who “had always wondered what a Christian church looked like.” He called the refugee crisis a great open door for conversion: “I think we need to go to them and bring the gospel to them while they are ‘trapped’ in Germany.”



Christian! Do Not Bow Down!

By Roger Reed
of Mansfield, Ohio

“And all the king’s servants, that were in the king’s gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence” (Esth. 3:2).

Christian reader, we are coming to the end of life here on earth and the “Last Days of the Last Days” are upon us. We are being taken over by the Haman’s at this present time, and the days that I once knew growing up as a child and young adult are far behind us.

July 23, 2015, I will be 64 years old, and I have asked everyone I meet that is my age or older, did they ever think they would live to see this day, and they all answer...No!

In Mordecai’s day he and his people had to deal with **“Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite”** (v. 1). We see from the Scripture above in verse two that Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, because he knew of his wicked and evil ways. And oh, how Haman hated not only Mordecai, but all of Israel to the point that Haman tricked the king to put it in writing that all the Jews be destroyed at a certain day of the year. Praise the Lord for Esther! I would encourage you, dear reader, to take time and read the book of Esther and you, too, will see that America is in the same peril as was Mordecai and his people the Jews.

That is what I want to focus on here, how America is being controlled by those in power, and that she is letting those in power dictate rules and laws



that are illegal for them to do.

Our current president, I am convinced, hates America. He makes executive orders that are not lawful for him to do, and the people praise him for it. He has the lawmakers, and now the Supreme Court, in his back pocket. Also there is no doubt in my mind that he hates Christians and is no Christian himself. **“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them”** (Matt. 7:20).

In our day we have the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; it is not Superman, Spiderman, or Batman, which I am so thankful for. God arranged that Esther would be the spokesperson for her people, encouraged and mentored by Mordecai. Today, God has set the church and the preacher led by the Holy Spirit to stand up for what is right and what is the truth. It will not be long and Jesus will be coming back to take the elect of God home...what a glorious day that will be. But until that day the gospel must continue to be preached to the unrighteous. Are you praying that the elect of God will be saved?

I am sure that many (not all) Christians are appalled by the Supreme Court’s decision concerning same sex marriage. If you are not, then you need to repent and/or examine your salvation, because there is something definitely wrong with you. Awhile back I wrote about Christians (especially true Baptists) that voted for the current president, knowing he believed in abortion, and I made the comment that those that did

so are baby killers, that they are just as guilty, knowing what he believed. Well, as many things do, it got back to me that some were all fired up and mad at me because I called them baby killers. Well the fact of the matter is- that that is a fact and you are. You can jump up and down and pitch a fit but the truth is the truth and God will not count you guiltless for things that are against Him. **“Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him”** (Deut. 13:4). **“But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you”** (Jer. 7:23). Christians have become followers of the world rather than obeying the voice of our God.

I try not to think about it, but how many of God’s people are putting blinders on and are bowing down to this president and his administration? I am ashamed of you, I am afraid of you, who hath bewitched you? **“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you”** (Gal. 3:1)? **“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain”** (Gal. 4:11).

I believe that if I end up in jail for preaching the truth, it will be some Christian that will turn me in to the authorities, not a lost person. That is sad to say, but remember it was God’s own people who killed His only Son.

The statistics tell us that 70.6% of Americans are Christians. In fact, this is what Wikipedia had to say: “Religion in the

United States is characterized by a diversity of religious beliefs and practices. Various religious faiths have flourished, as well as perished, [citation needed] in the United States. A majority of Americans report that religion plays a very important role in their lives, a proportion unique among developed countries. The majority of Americans identify themselves as Christians, while close to a quarter claim no religious affiliation. According to a 2014 study by the Pew Research Center, 70.6% of the American population identified themselves as Christians, with 46.5% professing attendance at a variety of churches that could be considered Protestant, and 20.8% professing Roman Catholic beliefs. The same study says that other religions (including Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism) collectively make up about 6% of the population. According to a 2012 survey by the Pew forum, 36 percent of Americans state that they attend services nearly every week or more. According to the 2013 Gallup poll, Mississippi with 61% of its population described as very religious (say that religion is important to them and attend religious services almost every week) is the most religious state in the country, while Vermont with only 22% as very religious is the least religious state.” Hurray for Mississippi! I had to laugh when I read, “A majority of Americans report that religion plays a very important role in their lives, a proportion unique among developed countries.” Wow, I wonder what that majority is being taught? If that be the case, then how in the world did “Slick Willy” and the current president get elected not once, but twice? Let me remind you, dear reader,

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that 70.6% of Americans identified themselves as Christians. But wait; do many Sodomites not identify themselves as Christians? There you have it!

There is a huge difference to identify oneself as a Christian and actually be a Christian. You also can be religious, even be very religious, and not be a Christian! Paul is a very good example of this and from his own words he says, **“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers”** (Gal. 1:13-14). Then something wonderful happened to Paul, and from him once again we read in Galatians 1:15-16, **“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood...”** So, making a profession that one is a Christian is quite different than possessing Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Dear reader, are you a possessing Christian? Or are you just a so-called religious person? If you do not possess Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and have never confessed Him with your mouth as the Son of God, **“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God”** (I John 4:15), you will spend eternity in the **“lake of fire”** (Rev. 19:20) and you have no hope but total destruction will

come to you. Only in Jesus can one obtain true Christianity.

If we are true born again believers then we need to be followers of God, not man, or man-made laws that are contrary to the law of God. I admonish all of God’s true elect people: do not bow down to these tyrants that are traitors, not only to God, but also to America.

The current president, the Clintons, most liberals (if not all), and the five of the nine Supreme Court Justices should be run out of our country or hanged for treason. And this form of government that we have now should be abolished and a new form of government should be put in place by the people and for the people as stated in The Declaration of Independence. Here is how part of the second paragraph of our Declaration reads; “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while

evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.”

This is what we as Christian Americans should be doing. When was the last time you read The Declaration of Independence? When was the last time you read the Constitution of the United States? These are the laws of the land, and the president and the Supreme Court just spit on them. These are our laws, people! God gave them to our Forefathers so that the people of this great nation could live by them and protect us from tyranny, and they have just been thrown in the trash. Does anyone not care anymore? If we do, we sure have not done anything to change it. A lot of talk, but no action! When was the last time you wrote a letter, or sent an email to a Senator, Congressman, or the Governor of your state?

We need to stand up, people, not bow down, even if it means our death...and what Christian is afraid to die? I am not; I will gladly die for my God and country. Do we remember the three Hebrew children in the book of Daniel that refused to bow down to the law of the king, or Daniel who refused to stop praying because a law was made forbidding it (Daniel 3; Daniel 6)? The apostles continued to preach Jesus even after they were told not to in Acts chapter 5. Paul, while in prison, preached and sang songs and ceased not to preach Jesus, (Acts 16 and Colossians 1:28).

In Esther 3:13 a letter was posted and the date had been set for the total destruction of the Jews because of Haman’s wrath against Mordecai. How do you think the wrath of this president compares to Haman’s? I am coming to believe that this president thinks he is the only one that matters on the face of the earth. I drive down the road sometimes and think other drivers think that they are the only ones on the road because of their actions. It seems the president has the same mind set.

I can almost see everyone around Mordecai, saying, “Man, what are you doing? Do you want to lose your head?” But Mordecai believed in the deliverance of God, as did Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They believed that in the fire or out of the fire, in the lion’s den or out of the lion’s den- their God would deliver them. And guess what... He did!

When you read Esther, and I hope you do, the news of the impending annihilation of Mordecai’s people broke his heart and he cried in the streets, he rent his clothes and put on sackcloth with ashes. But as you read on, he did not give up. Have you, dear Christian? Have you bent a knee, laid prostate before the throne of Almighty God?

There are Christians that are opposed to violence and think that Christians should not carry a gun, but say nothing about the thugs that kill innocent people every day (other than how awful it is). Do you know if one person would have had a gun in that church in South Carolina, the shooter may have killed one or two at best? Do you know what the resolve was for Mordecai and the Jewish people? In those days the king could not take back a decree

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(law) that he had made so what he did was this, **“Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey, Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies”** (Esth. 8:11-13).

Some will cry out and say, “That is not the answer!” Well the way I see it; no one has come up with a better answer. Explain to me what this means, Amendment II. — Ratified December 15, 1791; A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

For the security of a free state! The Supreme Court just took that away, how can a state be free when the Court system of our land makes illegal laws as they just did? It is our duty to take back our country and restore it once again. And whatever happened to “of the people, by the people and for the people?” But it will not happen because unlike our forefathers, Christians have become too passive and our government has become too powerful. But there is something more powerful, and that is prayer. God will hear His people if they are obeying Him.

The other thing that is powerful is our right to vote, if you do not vote, you just voted for the person that we do not want in there. If you did not vote in the last two presidential elections, then you helped the current president to get elected.

Whether people want to believe this or not, there is persecution coming to the Christians in America that has not been seen in a long time. We will be hated beyond belief. How soon is hard to tell. But if there is not a godly man elected in 2016, life as we knew it will no longer exist. Our freedoms will be gone forever, that is, of course, until the Lord’s Millennial Reign.

This article is being written 3 days before Independence Day 2015. Do we even know anymore what that means, or is it just all about picnics and fireworks? Men fought for our independence from a terrible dictator and we finally got our freedom from tyranny, free from taxation without representation, and it cost thousands of lives to get. We have now come full circle. We once again have a dictator, we are losing our freedoms, and we have taxation without representation.

Oh Christian! Will you stand and let your voice be heard, or will you hide under a rock until there is not a rock to hide under? Will you stand and not bow like the patriarchs of old? Will you stand as our Forefathers did? I hope so, because it is your duty and privilege as an American citizen and a child of God to do so. Will you stand against the sin and wickedness of this administration, or will you falter and bow under the pressure of lawlessness?

May God help us **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come”** (II Tim. 3:1). It would behoove us to read over

and over again II Timothy 3:1-17. Let us heed the words of Joshua, **“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”** (Josh. 24:15). God Bless!



The Short Pews



Brief
Articles
by Curtis
Pugh

NO MORE CHRISTMAS

The Mother of Harlots, along with her daughters are the greatest promoters of Christmas. She is, you know, the **“MOTHER OF HARLOTS”** and also the Mother of the **“ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH”** (Rev. 17:5). The old word abomination, seldom now used, means something hated or rejected with extreme disgust. The Mother of Harlots is very similar to Christmas itself: the big day she promotes. Both are filled with lies, paganism and false worship. But that is not the point of this little article. If you are unsure who this wealthy Harlot is, read Revelation chapters 17 and 18 and do a bit of research about a city that sits on seven hills or seven mountains, that is associated with the colors and riches described, and who has worldwide influence.

There is coming a time when the Harlot and those who have not come out from her are going to be judged. She, because of her sins and those in her because

they have participated in her sins. Revelation 18:4 is clear on that point. It says, **“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”** Somebody named that verse a call to come out of her. We think it is not so much a call as it is a command! It is a command issued just prior to the judgment of God upon this false-Christian political machine – this city that is **“drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus”** (Rev. 17:6) This politico religious machine rules over nations, for Revelation 17:18 says: **“And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”**

As you probably know, the time of biggest profits for wholesalers, retailers, shipping companies and manufacturers is the “Christmas rush” which begins in October and runs through the holidays. Retailers and online sellers report their Christmas sales into the billions of dollars. Of course everyone in the supply chain profits from this season’s sales. But there is coming a time when God judges the Mother of Harlots, and Christmas and Christmas profits will be no more. Hear what the Bible says will happen when the Harlot is judged: **“And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her [the Harlot], shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon [religious Babylon, another name for the Harlot], that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment**

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come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more" (Rev. 18:9-11). Not only does the Harlot not buy their dainty and expensive merchandise, but **"no man"** buys it either.

Did you notice that phrase, **"And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more"**? There will be no celebration of Christmas that year! CEOs will not be counting up their expected bonuses. They will be wailing and lamenting the sudden loss of profits. Christmas will be finished. That supposed celebration of the birth of Christ which God did not anywhere instruct His people to celebrate will be no more. Since God did not command Christmas celebrations, just who did? It was the head of that religious organization that headquarters in a city known for her seven hills – it was he that set the date and it is his Harlot-system that promotes and benefits from its observance.

If God hates the Mother of Harlots – if she is also the mother of "the abominations of the earth" – and this crowd is all in favor of celebrating Christmas, does that not speak volumes to the issue as to whether or not God's children ought to be involved in that mess? 1 John 2:15 is clear: **"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."** Every informed thinking person admits that Christmas is not of God, but rather that it is of the world. Does not this last quoted verse speak to the issue at hand? The world loves the Harlot and her Christmas.

We live in a time when the one who heads up the Harlot-system – papa - comes to town and everyone rushes to be identified with him. Is this not compromise also? Is not Christmas observance partaking of the sins of the Harlot? Is the observance of Christmas not compromise? Did not our Lord Jesus condemn compromise in the church of the Laodiceans saying, **"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth"** (Rev. 3:16)?

The results of compromise are enduring and are evil. The world, your family, and above all, God sees compromise. We cannot help but believe that the observance of pagan Christmas right alongside the Harlot and her daughters identifies all participants together. It is joining with false religion in observance of a false celebration of lies and paganism that brings no glory to God. It only tickles the flesh for a brief time and does no lasting good for anyone involved. It certainly does not glorify Christ, for acceptable worship must be a spiritual (not fleshly as is Christmas) and according to truth (which Christmas is not). Remember the Lord Jesus said, **"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him,"** (John 4:23).

Let us live so that we are separate from the Harlot and her daughters lest we be **"partakers of her sins."**

CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

The Bible says, **"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"** (Rom. 10:13). We believe that. But in a mistaken zeal to get sinners to

bring about their own new birth, people have been told that all they need do is pray a one-time prayer. Supposedly this will result in their new birth. We reject the idea that there is something that a lost sinner can do to bring about his own spiritual birth. Why? Because the Bible nowhere tells us what a sinner can do to cause God to birth him into His family. Search God's Book! You will not find instructions anywhere in the Bible telling you what to do in order to be born again! Why? Because the new birth is not brought to pass by human action.

If going forward in a religious service and praying a one-time prayer asking for salvation constitutes calling on the name of the Lord, everyone who ever prayed such a prayer is saved. It must be so. God said those who call upon Him will be saved. If praying "the sinner's prayer" is what He meant in Romans 10:13, everyone who ever prayed such a prayer is saved. Are you ready to say that? Are you really ready to claim that everybody who ever went forward in a church service and repeated a prayer for salvation is truly saved? Where are they all? Some who prayed such prayers can be found in bars, drug dens, houses of prostitution, etc. Others are corrupt business men, politicians, murderers and thieves of various sorts. Some are apostates and heretics of the worst sort: themselves deceived and deceiving others. Honesty demands that everyone admit this: not everyone who ever went forward and prayed in a church house is saved. So is God a liar? Or have religious people equated praying a one-time "sinner's prayer" with calling on the name of the Lord when they are not the same thing?

Paul wrote: **"Flee also youthful**

lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Tim. 2:22). Ah! Here is the answer! There is always a first time when born again sinners call upon the Lord, but such as are saved continue to call upon Him. It is not a one-time thing! Notice in this last verse it says **"with them that call"** - they continue to call! It does not say they called one time – once upon a time. There is the first time a sinner repents, but it is only the beginning of a lifetime of repenting – of calling on the Lord. When the Spirit of God births a sinner into God's family thus giving them **"a pure heart"** they begin a life-time of calling upon the Lord! That is the truth of the matter. **"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"** (Phil. 1:6).

I AM AFRAID OF YOU

Paul wrote these words to the members of the churches in the region of Galatia: **"I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain"** (Gal. 4:11). Why did he write such a thing? The verses before this one tell us why Paul wrote as he did. Those verses say: **"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years"** (Gal. 4:9-10).

What was Paul writing about? Many of the church members in Galatia had formerly been of the Jewish faith. This involved the observance of all kinds of laws regarding their diet, temple rituals, priests, sacrifices and the observances of Holy Days. Paul

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had come to them and preached salvation by grace in their region. Many had believed and been converted. After Paul left there, certain men came from Jerusalem and taught them that in order to stay saved they had to keep the Old Testament Jewish law. Paul opposed this as being contrary to the new covenant – contrary to salvation by grace. He called going back under the law “bondage.” So he wrote to them a letter, being unable to visit them. Further along he wrote: **“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law”** (Gal. 4:19-21)? Next he goes on to explain an allegory which pictures the law being cast out. Then in 5:1 he wrote: **“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”**

This last verse means that those who have been born from above – by the Holy Spirit – are free from the **“yoke of bondage:”** free from the Old Testament law. Law-keeping has no part in the Biblical Christian life! Desiring to go back under the law was what caused Paul to write, **“I am afraid of you...”** The root of law-keeping is works for salvation. Most people hope either to be saved by something they do or to be kept saved by what they do. Paul said that is not the case at all. He wrote: **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his**

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10). Good works are to follow the new birth, but works are not the cause of any part of salvation. Salvation is by grace: by the undeserved favor of God toward sinners.

SOURD MILK AND TAINTED MEAT

The Bible speaks of preaching the Bible as being “milk” and “meat.” Peter told believers: **“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”** (I Peter 2:2). Paul wrote to the carnal baby Christians in Corinth saying: **“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able”** (I Cor. 3:2).

But what if spiritual babes are fed spoiled milk? And what if more mature believers are fed tainted meat? Just as spoiled milk and tainted meat bring sickness in the natural realm, so it is in the spiritual realm. Those who teach, preach, write, etc. must be careful to teach what the Bible teaches – no more and no less. They must not just select proof texts – distorted verses – to try and prove their preconceived ideas. In fact, those who are “masters” or teachers of the Bible will be judged more severely than their hearers. We know this because James wrote: **“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation”** (James 3:1).

About other teachers and what they were doing to Paul’s writings, Peter wrote: **“As also in all his [Paul’s] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are**

unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (II Peter 3:16). Wresting or twisting out of shape the Scriptures not only harms the hearers, but also those who torture the Word of God. Consider these two things – (1) the more severe judgment of those who teach and (2) the ruin brought by twisting the Scriptures that comes upon the teachers themselves as well as their hearers. Some teachers are **“...deceiving, and being deceived”** (II Tim. 3:13).

Only those regenerated by the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit are able to understand the Scriptures rightly – i.e., in a spiritually profitable way. We know this because Paul wrote: **“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”** (I Cor. 2:12-14). Just being baptized, praying a one-time prayer for salvation, making a decision for Christ, going to seminary, etc., will not do. To understand the Bible, the teacher and the hearer must have been regenerated. The Holy Spirit must have birthed the spiritually dead sinner into God’s family by His presence. Apart from that the Word of God is foolishness and non-understandable to the natural or unregenerate man. **“...Ye must be born again”** (John 3:7).

LOOKING AT PEOPLE AS JESUS DID

The Bible teaches us that we should follow the examples set before us by the Lord Jesus Christ. Following His example will not save us, but it will produce good works in us. Speaking of those who profess salvation, John wrote, **“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked”** (I John 2:6). So how did Jesus “walk” – how did He look upon the people ‘round about Him? We are told this: **“And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things”** (Mark 6:34).

People who have been regenerated and who understand the Bible’s teachings ought to look with compassion upon those folk around us who as yet are unregenerate. While the Lord Jesus openly rebuked the religious false teachers – the Pharisees and Sadducees of His day – He always exhibited tender mercy and compassion upon ordinary folk. The Pharisees and Sadducees were religious crooks and “hypocrites.” John the Baptist openly called them a **“generation of vipers”** and Jesus called them **“hypocrites”** to their faces, (see Luke 3:7; Matthew 15:7; 22:18, etc.). But the Lord Jesus set the example for us: we ought to look upon ordinary folk with compassion and understanding.

If we know Bible truth which others do not know we are debtors to them. We have a responsibility to tell them what the Bible says. Paul was such a debtor and wrote about his debt in Romans 1:14-15 where he said: **“I am debtor both to the Greeks,**

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and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." It matters not the ethnicity, educational level, religious background or whatever. If you and I understand how God saves sinners, we have a debt to share the Gospel with all those around us.

It was patient teaching that the people needed in Jesus' day. And so He began to meet that need: **"he began to teach them many things."** Teachers whose confidence is in supposed human ability – teachers who deny total depravity and total human ability have filled the land with teachings that bolster sinner's confidence in themselves. So much so that most people think that they can be saved anytime they want to by simply praying a little prayer. Or they think by their "baptism" and other ritualistic observances they can earn favor with God and be saved because of their works. But those who understand the Bible know that salvation comes to Christ's lost sheep by grace alone. It comes apart from anything done or attempted by the lost person. Will you look at people as Jesus did and do for them what He did? Will you share your knowledge of the Gospel with them?

CRAZY TALK

"Lord I love you. If you send me to hell, I'll tell everybody there that you are just and fair and I'll still love you." These are the words of a young man brought to see his utter helplessness. He had come to see that if God did not look upon him with undeserved favor he would receive the just reward for his deeds. He deeply

felt himself to be a sinner. God had regenerated him and enabled him to profitably understand the Word of God. He knew that God had purposed the salvation of His chosen people from before the foundation of the world. And, not knowing his election, all he could do is cast himself humbly upon the Lord. He knew that he deserved the lake of fire.

Only later did this young man realize that unregenerate people – lost people – do not willingly take their place as a sinner before God. And so he later looked back upon his words as being "crazy" for all the while he was saying them, he was speaking as one who had been shown his sins and was trusting Christ as his only hope. Do lost sinners see themselves as sinners? Oh, they will generally admit to being sinners, but they do not feel their sin. Their admission is mental only. God does not operate only upon men's minds, but deeper – upon their hearts. Whenever God calls a sinner to Himself it is like this: **"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"** (Ezek. 36:26).

And that **"new heart"** and **"new spirit"** which God puts within the sinner is a heart that is after God. Whereas of lost sinners the Bible says, **"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God"** (Rom. 3:11), of those born of the Spirit, the Bible says, **"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened..."** (Eph. 1:18). After God regenerates the spiritually dead sinner he begins to seek God because God has enlightened his understanding and is drawing him. On the other hand, lost people are described as **"Having**

the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:18). So it is that the natural man – the person who only has what they were born with naturally – an old **"stony heart"** – continue unconcernedly in pursuit of natural pleasures – whatever tickles their fancy.

The Psalm writer said, **"...I am shut up, and I cannot come forth"** (Ps. 88:8). Every sinner whom the Lord saves is **"shut up"** as calves are kept up in a stall. God works in their minds and hearts. They are confronted with their sins. Again the Psalmist wrote, **"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned..."** (Ps. 51:4). Has God shown you that your sin was primarily against Him? Are you **"shut up"**?

HUMAN GOODNESS

While there is human goodness in people, the Bible and our own experience tell us that there is also much evil. So the question is this: just how bad off are we humans? From God's Word we learn that **"all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23). We are also assured that **"There is none righteous, no, not one"** (Rom. 3:10). The prophet wrote: **"...we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..."** (Isa. 64:6). Even the good that we humans sometimes do is often tinged with wrong motives: motives of selfishness, desire for recognition, etc.

This world would be an intolerable place if everyone was as bad as they could be. That is not the problem. The problem is this: each one of us – apart from the new birth – is as bad off as

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BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

9-1-2015 to 9-30-2015

Beginning Balance	\$7,633.64
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary B. C., Everson, WA	200.00
.....	525.00
TOTAL	8,158.64
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	454.98
Program Production	195.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	649.98
.....	7,508.66
Interest	+0.06
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,508.72



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

9-1-2015 to 9-30-2015

Beginning Balance	\$707.05
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	200.00
Faith B. C. Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	30.00
Michael Wilson, Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumersville, AR	50.00
Providence S. G. B. C., Tupelo, MS	200.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	60.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	70.00
Anonymous	1,210.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,685.95
TOTAL	\$4,393.00
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	737.47
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.90
Dividing checks	150.00
Bank Charge	13.00
Mistake on August FICA06
Total Expenditures	\$3,866.43
ENDING BALANCE	\$526.57

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Baptist Church and Pastor Andy Proctor of Rural Hall, NC is offering Bible Studies, weekday services or Sunday Late Afternoon or Evening Services, or open air services to any who receive this paper that are within an approximate 100 mile radius of the Winston-Salem, NC area.

This is an outreach effort to help churches, missions, families without pastors, or without a sound church nearby, or other outreach / evangelistic needs. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Pastor Proctor on his cell phone at (352) 895-1437.

A new mission work has begun. The Providence Baptist Church located at 1115 Jones Mill Road, Cartersville, GA 30120, is an outreach of the Tibet Baptist Church of Ludowici, GA. Service times are Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., Morning Worship at 10:45 a.m., and Evening Worship at 5:00 p.m.

For more information please contact Bro. Bruce Allen (502) 468-6563, Email: providencebc30120@gmail.com or on Facebook under Providence Baptist.

The Windsor Baptist Church of Windsor, IL is seeking a qualified candidate for pastor. They are small in number but rich in truth. Candidate should meet the qualification in I Timothy 3. For more information please contact Brother John Gregory at (217) 728-9966 or Email windsorbaptist.grace@gmail.com.

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a

pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street, Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.

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

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

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

today. Please contact Bro. Chris Willis at Elohimfirst@gmail.com for more information.

Any church that is without a pastor, please feel free to send your information in regards to the pastoral position for publication in these announcements. We also welcome any upcoming meeting or conference announcements.

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we could be. Why? Because each child of Adam was born spiritually dead. When God tested Adam with the forbidden fruit He told him, “**..in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die**” (Gen. 2:17). Adam did not die physically that day, but he did die spiritually that day. Because of this all his offspring were born alive physically, but dead spiritually. Paul verified this to be true when he wrote to Christians telling them what God had done for them. He wrote: “**Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)**” (Eph. 2:5). Being born dead in sins means each individual is born as bad off as they could be. Physically dead persons can do

nothing physically. Spiritually dead persons can do nothing spiritually. That is the meaning of being dead: the absence of life and all it entails.

The Lord Jesus Christ said, “**..I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly**” (John 10:10). The idea behind life more abundantly is not related to health and wealth, but to spiritual life rather than spiritual death. Of course spiritually dead people do not know they are spiritually dead. They have no basis of comparison having never experienced spiritual life. So it may be that some who see this article will say that they are not dead. How can they know, having never experienced life? And so it is that the Bible means nothing to many. They will not believe it because it is foolishness to them and because they cannot – they absolutely cannot understand it with profitability. The Bible specifically states these two reasons in I Corinthians 2:14: “**But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**” The greatest religious teacher in Israel, Nicodemus, did not understand about spiritual life. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus said to him, “**Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again**” (John 3:7). Selah – think about it!



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