

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

Scriptural Proofs of The Quickenings and A PreTrib Rapture Conversion of A Thief

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

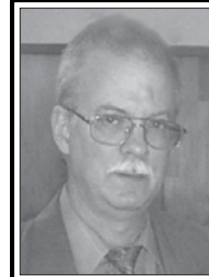


"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

I remember at an ordination some years ago, the question of a PreTrib Rapture came up, as versus a PostTrib Rapture. As at most ordinations, the church convened a peculiar group of dedicated pastors, that have studied and preached the messages God has given them for many decades and we were all unanimously PreTrib. This fact obviously does not make a PreTrib Rapture conclusive, but is certainly is a "weighty" consideration, that I hope young preachers and beloved readers will not cast immediately aside. Every one of us have come to the point when we were ordained, as having grown up with this PreTrib doctrine being taught by our local "... **house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**" (I Tim. 3:15), and have "actually set out to study the subject" with just as much purpose and askance as one would expect young "know-it-all" preachers (such as I was!). I remember very well, my first years at

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By Lucien J. LeSage Jr.
of Pride, Louisiana



Years ago I asked a man how he thought he would make it to Heaven. He replied thus, "I hope my good works will outweigh my bad." So, what if a man had lived a life of thievery? Would he need to pay back all that he had stolen, which would be a just thing to do? Would that get him into Heaven? Or what if he did enough positive works the rest of his days, could that offset the evil that he had committed? What if he found himself in a situation because of circumstances that it was impossible for him to ever do one kind act toward any man? Is he without hope?

The Bible tells us about such a man who was a thief. A "**malefactor**" as he was called in Luke 23:32. When I was very young, the religious leaders who were at that time giving me religious training taught me that there was a "good thief" and a "bad thief" that were crucified along with Jesus. However, Jesus said that "**there is none good but one, that is God**" (Matt. 19:17). Paul says, "**there is none that doeth good, no, not one**" (Rom. 3:12). Even all the righteousness that we can produce in the flesh is called "**filthy rags**" (Isa. 64:6). So how could we call one good and one bad? Was

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How the U.S.A. Got This Way

*A Look at Some Causes
of Our Present Great Wickedness*

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma



INTRODUCTION

All knowledgeable people will agree that these United States as a country was founded upon the moral principles set forth in the Bible. Along with other ancient lawgivers, God's man Moses and God's Ten Commandments are repeatedly found in statue form even on our Supreme Court building. John Adams, second President of this nation said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." The U. S. has failed many times to live up to those standards. She has a history demonstrating that she has not always acted as a moral nation should: that is without question also. But from the earliest days preachers of various groups in this country sounded forth those Biblical standards of conduct and influenced many people. Some of these preachers may have been regenerate and obeyed God from the heart while others may have been legalistic works mongers hoping to please God in their flesh. At any rate, we

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Brick by brick houses are built.

Steady plodding will accomplish anything.

"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10).

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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.

PreTrib Rapture

(Continued from page 1) ♦

Big Creek, when I went to the Bible alone to go through Revelation and the end times. I did not want to be influenced by anyone. And every one of those convened elders without exception found that: 1) Our local pillar and ground of the truth had taught us correctly, and 2) that we certainly found for ourselves that the Bible teaches a PreTrib Rapture of God's precious saints. God certainly did not reveal anything else to me.

WHY I BELIEVE THE LORD'S CHURCHES (AND NEW TESTAMENT SAINTS) ARE NOT APPOINTED TO GOD'S WRATH

Without going through the proof texts that God's people will suffer (even great) tribulation in every age, an honest interpretation of the Bible and particularly the book of Revelation will reveal that the end times contain a specific time of world-wide tribulation, unlike any other. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (specific seven years-tms): and in the midst of the week (3.5yrs-tms) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Dan. 9:27). Daniel prophesies here that for a specific seven-year period, there will be a time of desolation poured out.

Linking Daniel's prophesy concerning Israel's future to Jeremiah 30:3-7, "For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land

that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." With the combination of Israel and Judah being re-consolidated (not just the Jews) this endtime prophecy specifically speaks of "that day" of great tribulation, which Jeremiah claims "so that none is like it." Not your "ordinary" tribulation! NONE is like it! If you are looking for a title, like the Great Tribulation, you certainly cannot deny the title Jeremiah uses, "the time of Jacob's trouble."

This is further validated by our Lord (both the linking with Daniel's prophecy and an extraordinary tribulation of specific length) in Matthew 24:15-21, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was

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PreTrib Rapture

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not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

We could quote much of the book of Revelation to (not assume, but) prove that there are seven years of great tribulation coming, which will be broken down into two 3.5 year segments (42 months or 1,260 days). It will be on God's timetable of His holy wrath (not Satan's or even the Anti-Christ!) being poured out upon the entire earth. **"One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter"** (Rev. 9:12). **"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly"** (Rev. 11:14). **"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth"** (Rev. 1:2-3).

That there is a specific time (3.5 or 7 yrs) of God's righteous and judgmental wrath being poured upon the earth is just simply too obvious in Scripture to pass off as an "assumption." Two explicit passages from our Lord that proclaim a PreTribulational Rapture OUT OF that time of wrath are the following passages, **"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things**

that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:34-36). This is the Lord, Himself proclaiming that those worthy saints in His churches will find an **"escape"** from this surely prophesied **"snare...on all... the whole earth."** Christ further amplifies this "rescue" to the Philadelphia church in Revelation 3:10, **"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."** God's churches WILL NOT go through the great tribulation of Jacob's trouble. Israel is condemned to that fate, as we have already noted, but never does the Lord tell His churches to be ready to suffer His holy wrath, but ONLY the tribulations of the flesh and Satan's minions.

The Apostle Paul also verifies that we are not appointed to wrath (what else can he mean?) in I Thessaloians 5:1-9, **"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 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, putting on the breastplate of faith and love;**

Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



The New Birth #8

Evidences of Having Been Born Again—Part 1

When a person is born of God they become a new creation. **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"** (II Cor. 5:17). They are now alive spiritually—**"And you hath he quickened (made alive), who were dead in trespasses and in sins"** (Eph. 2:1). Just as there is evidence of physical life, there is evidence of spiritual life, or this new creation. One evidence of our new birth is that we are "laying aside" sin, **"Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings"**

(I Peter 2:1).

The new birth must be evidenced. We do so by **"laying aside"** these sins. NOTE: it is in the present tense—**"laying aside,"** not past tense—laid aside. It is an ever battle of the child of God to **"lay aside"** or "cast off" sin. Those who are saved will be constantly laying aside these sins and other sins. You will not find a sinless child of God this side of Heaven, yet the saved will be **"laying aside"** sins. The absence of **"laying aside"** sin tells us that one is not born again, but still dead in trespasses and in sins (Eph. 2:1). Are you **"laying aside"** sin? If not, the Scriptures indicate it is because you are still dead in your sins. You must be born-again.

and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." When the day of the Lord cometh, **"sudden destruction cometh upon them"** not the Thessalonian church. **"For God hath not appointed us to wrath."** To make the Apostle Paul to be speaking of Hell, is to wrench this verse and DOCTRINE out of the context of this particular book detailing the end times, the Rapture and the coming of Christ!

1. GOD'S BAPTIST CHURCHES WILL NOT BE FOUND IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

The next argument for the Lord's New Testament churches being raptured BEFORE Daniel's 70th week, is often referred to as the

"silence argument." Considering that the New Testament is particularly written by Baptists, for Baptists, to Baptists and to make Baptists, it is surely a weighty argument that for 15 chapters detailing the heart of the endtimes prophecy, no mention is made of surely the most important entity upon the face of the entire earth, the Body of Christ, the Lord's New Testament Baptist churches.

Actually, it is not essentially a silence argument. It is an absent argument. The book of Revelation pulls no punches as John writes about the particular characters and precise events they are associated with. He gives lots of information about Israel, Jerusalem and the sealed 144,000. He writes prolifically

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about the Beast/AntiChrist, Satan and the False Prophet. He mentions heathens, Catholics, kings, kingdoms, reprobates, angels and two witnesses. He even tabulates tribulation martyrs and gives instructions to those godly folk that must suffer for His Name sake. But where is the church? The churches that were given such detailed instructions in the first three chapters? Why would God suddenly (yes, after we receive a picture of the Rapture in Revelation 4:1) not care to have John the revelator involve them in His prophetic accounting of this period of time? Are we really desiring to consider this honestly? Or just trying to prove a point, preconceived or otherwise? Honestly, if the PostTrib view were true, then the Lord's churches should be mentioned. But, if the PreTrib view is true, then the Lord's churches should not be mentioned, and they are not. They are absent, because the Lord has already raptured them, pretribulationally!

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace...I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches” (Rev. 1:4, 22:16). It is not because Jesus and His revelator John are not aware of the churches. The apocalyptic nook opens and closes with specific words to **“my church”** which the gates of Hell shall not prevail against! But the seven year gap, where the Lord is going to deal with Daniel's Israel, has no revelation involving Baptists, except as spectators from the present and then from Heaven's glory!

2. THE SILENT, THIEF-LIKE PRETRIBULATIONAL

RAPTURE.

The ones that are caught unaware at the PreTrib Rapture will be the lost reprobates. An “exhorted” faithful and wise servant will not be surprised that the Rapture occurs! Excited and joyous at the unknown timing, but the PreTrib Rapture is indeed the blessed hope of God's people.

The context of the Scriptures predicting that the return of the King will be “thief-like” are more speaking of the “unexpected excursion into our realm,” than to do with the “thieving activities” of stealing and covetousness. Certainly, Christ Jesus will not steal nor covet another person's belongings! But the “breaking and entering” aspect is what is primarily being alluded to. **“But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house”** (Matt. 12:28-29). Not even Satan will be able to hinder the Lord's return for His people at the Rapture!

Several verses bring out this point very clearly, of Christ coming for His own, and catching the world unawares. **“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall**

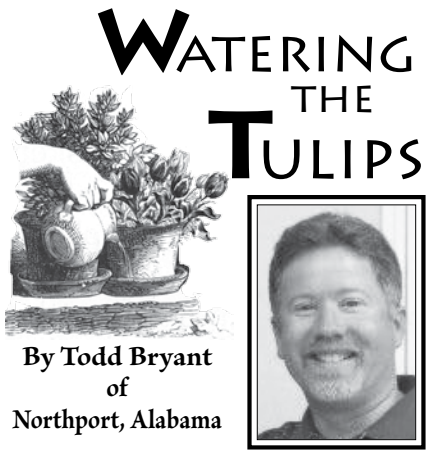
be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:36-44). As the world continues their merry parties (as in Noah's day), the Lord will come “suddenly and silently” and snatch away His elect from their everyday activities in the fields, at the mills, or in their beds. Certainly, the Rapture is not silent for His people, for they shall hear the promised shout, **“Come up hither!”** but the world will know nothing of what has occurred, until they feel the first scattered raindrops upon their heads of the imminent coming judgment. Selah! Think about it!

One of the errors of a PostTrib view, is that folks are not exhorted to watch for the imminent return of our Lord, but will still be watching for signs, when the Lord comes. Our Master and Saviour has more to speak of His imminent, thief-like coming than any other writer in the New Testament. More on the imminent nature of His return in a bit, but it is inextricably tied to His silent, thief-like aspect of the PreTrib Rapture and His return.

The context of both Matthew 24:32-51 and all of I Thessalonians 4-5 is perfectly in tune with a PreTrib Rapture. Exhortations to the saints to “watch and be ready,” to find “comfort and joy” in the expectations, while the lost and undone can expect only Judgment and the wrath of God. **“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man**

taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:33-37). **“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven...”** (II Thess. 1:6-7). Salvation, deliverance, rescue, rest and redemption are the key words describing the saints future at the Rapture. **“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not”** (Luke 12:35-40). That last phrase could very well be a condemnation of PostTribbers, but cannot be of imminent PreTribbers!

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By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama

Paul

Thirteen books in the New Testament begin this way. His description of himself may vary. He may be writing along with other men in some letters. But, Paul is credited with being the primary author, or sole author, of thirteen of the books in the Bible. This is all many people know about this man.

Paul (or Saul, in Hebrew) was born around the same time Jesus was born, though there is no indication they ever met prior to his conversion. He was a Roman citizen by birth (Acts 22:25-28). His early years were spent in Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 22:3). Undoubtedly, Paul was raised as a rich kid. One of his predecessors had clearly purchased his citizenship. This was costly. Not only so, but the annual tax in the city of Tarsus was 18 months wages for the average working class person at this time. The inhabitants of this city were wealthy and refined.

But Paul's family was not influenced by Greco-Roman culture. They were devout Jews. He was "an Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee" (Phil. 3:5). In fact, Paul states that he was "the son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23:6). Paul was simply the latest devout Jew in a long line of devout Jews. Like

his family before him, he was a zealous advocate of all things Jewish.

Being from a seemingly wealthy family, Paul was able (and no doubt encouraged) to study at the feet of one of the most respected rabbis of the first century, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). When the Mishnah was written, referring back to Gamaliel they wrote, "When Rabbi Gamaliel the elder died, the glory of the Law ceased, and purity and abstinence died." He was a brilliant, committed Pharisee – the greatest teacher of the first century, and Paul was his student.

Paul advanced in Judaism beyond those around his age (Gal. 1:14). He was a leader of men. This led him to ravage the church as he saw "The Way" to be in complete opposition to all that he knew Judaism to be (Acts 8:3). In recalling his early life to King Agrippa, Paul said, "**Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them**" (Acts 26:10).

One day, as he was on his way to persecute more believers, he was stopped in his tracks by the risen Christ (Acts 9:1-9). From this moment forward, Paul became the greatest missionary this world has ever known (save Jesus, of course). All of his family history...all of his learning...his entire career, he left behind. He later wrote, "**But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ**" (Phil. 3:7-

8).

Paul's conversion proves that God is the Author of salvation. Paul certainly was not seeking Jesus. On the contrary, Jesus sought him. Secondly, God can save anybody. Thirdly, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a reality. The man who fought so staunchly against the resurrection could only be changed having seen the risen Christ. Lastly, the Gospel has transforming power.

Have you seen today that religion is not the way? Are you willing to forsake all for Christ? Like Paul, you must see that Jesus is your only Hope into Heaven.



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The remainder of the references concerning the thief-like return of the Lord do indeed have many connotations concerning Armageddon and other events located at the end of the Great Tribulation's seven years, but they also have many allusions to events during and after the Millennial Reign. But that does not mean the Rapture will be PostMillennial, either. These passages are speaking of the "day of the Lord" or the "day of Christ" as the culmination of ALL prophecies concerning the end times, and the context bears that out in each portion of Scripture.

3. THE IMMINENT RETURN OF OUR LORD IS THE THEME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The coming Rapture is nigh/imminent, even at the doors. Christ Jesus our Lord gives us a promise that His return is so imminent, that He could walk through the doors and be here. "**Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves,**

ye know that summer is near: So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:28-32). Many of the verses that speak of the imminent return have already been quoted in the section on the thief-like coming, as they are inextricably related to each other. Luke 12 & 21, Matthew 24-25, numerous passages in the epistles of Paul and others. The New Testament is full of constant exhortations to be looking for our Blessed Hope that could come at any moment. I do not deny the fact that there are signs to be aware of, but these merely amplify the expectation of the opening Heavens to reveal our Saviour. "**And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ"** (Rom. 13:11-14). Certainly, this passage of the apostle is not referring to a PostTrib Rapture out of great tribulation, but instead is referring to the very real possibility, that apostasy is making some of the saints, "sleepy" and "unaware" that the "day of Jesus Christ is at hand."

Actually, I will not argue that

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the Lord could not have come back in the Apostle Peter or Paul's lifetime. But that is only because He did not. We have a luxury of hindsight, that can now see the fulfillment of many prophecies and signs concerning: 1) the spread of the world-wide Gospel, 2) Peter's prophesied end as a martyr, 3) Paul's trip to Rome and beyond, 4) Pentecost empowering, 5) the sack and destruction of Jerusalem, etc, etc, etc. But even with the fact of knowing that the Lord had all things planned to fulfill His Holy Word, denies not that the Lord could have come, had He so desired. Time can hold no restraints upon our Lord and we cannot presume upon His longsuffering and grace. Our only responsibility is to be watching and waiting in the labors that He has prescribed for us until His glorious return. Our responsibilities are never negated by the expectation of prophecy. Peter had no right to ignore the commandment of the Lord to watch for His return, by telling others, "Well, I know he will not come until after I die, because He prophesied. So do not start watching until after I die." Baloney! A more proper lifestyle for Peter was portrayed constantly, that "if the Lord tarry, I expect to die a martyr's death, but I am looking for His return every day."

Let me illustrate that thought of the sovereignty of God over temporal matters. **"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes"** (Matt. 11:21). The proclamation here from Christ concerns matters "that never happened."

"If the mighty works...had been done in Tyre...they would have repented." Now, if this was John or James speaking, we might have cause to say that they were "speculating" what "might have happened." but it is Christ speaking. Matter-of-factly, He supremely states that Tyre would have repented. No doubt about it at all. The city would have decked themselves out in sackcloth and ashes. But, they never had the blessing of Bethsaida's mighty works exhibited. We might term this an "alternate reality" of science fiction or fantasy, but for the fact of the Lord's being the Author and Speaker of these words. He knew what would have happened in Tyre and Sidon without a doubt. And our Lord knew what would happen to the Apostle Peter, if the Second Coming was delayed, and it was.

So for us to say that Christ could not have come before Peter's death, etc, is to deny the open commandments of Christ Jesus Himself to **"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch"** (Mark 13:35-37). We do not have the liberty of Scripture to take a prophecy of God and claim that it absolves us from obeying open commandments. Christ, Himself claims that His return/rapture is imminent, and so the apostles wrote their epistles in expectation of that coming gathering.

The Apostle Paul was expecting to be raptured in his lifetime. **"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which**

are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:15-18). Four times in this passage he refers to the **"we which are alive and remain"** shall be witnesses to Christ's coming rapture and the resurrection of the saints. These verses alone are Scriptural proof of the imminent return of Christ. But the whole tenor of the New Testament is an exciting expectation of our Saviour's promise to return. **"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive YOU unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"** (John 14:3) (emph. TMS). Much as we must reconcile human responsibility in salvation with the total inability of the truth of total depravity, as something that we must carefully leave in the hands of the omnipotent One, so we cannot restrict God to human time and measurements in any matter, including His coming. If the Lord says that it is imminent in His own words, then it most surely is.

Let us look at this matter Scripturally. First, as the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthian Baptist Church: **"So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Cor. 1:7-8). Paul told them to wait for the coming of our Lord. Yet, if you go to Corinth today, you will not find this church

waiting patiently. It has since gone out of existence, except as through mission works it perpetuated the Lord's churches elsewhere. But, if there is no imminent hope, why would Paul tell them to wait for the Rapture? It was not coming during their lifetimes.

God's purpose for the doctrine of the imminent return, is simply so that we might labor with hope. Christ said **"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only"** (Matt. 24:36). Was that to cause them to despair? ("No one knows when. You will never know." hahahaha!!) Of course not! It was stated/revealed that way, so that every generation would have hope. **"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh"** (Matt. 24:44). Paul did not lie to the Baptists in Corinth. He was right to tell them to hope for an imminent coming. He was following the pattern of Christ. **"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come"** (I Thess. 1:9-10). Always a "personal" waiting, expectation and deliverance from the wrath to come. Not looking for an anti-christ/man of sin, but deliverance in the person of Christ.

Check out I Corinthians 11:26, **"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."** Vibrant hope of being here when the Lord comes back. Are the actual recipients of the letter still there? No? Does that negate Scripture? Absolutely not! **"For our conversation is in heaven;**

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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). "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15:51-54). Only a belief in the imminent return of Christ could cause an author to write in such a manner. The Apostle Paul expected, that not only himself, but the members of the churches would share in the wonder of a PreTrib Rapture and that instantaneous transformation of death into life everlasting.

For lack of space, I will but list a few of the multiplied references that mandate an imminent hope of seeing Christ return at any moment. I Thessaloiains 2:19, 3:13, Colossians 3:4, like Corinth, the other churches are right to expect to see Christ. I Thessaloiains 5:1-11, not looking for wrath, but Christ's imminent coming. I Timothy 6:14-15, a personal charge to a man, Timothy, to be ready for Christ's visible return. Did Timothy die too soon? Was he deceived by the apostle by

departing this world through death, not rapture? No! The charge is to live in expectation of God's glory. II Timothy 4:1, speaks of two phases of Jesus' coming: 1) for the quick and 2) for the dead. 1) Appearing at the Rapture and 2) Setting up His Kingdom at the advent. Titus 2:13, this now dead man, also was told to be watching/waiting for a blessed hope. Hebrews 9:28, promise exclusively to them that look for Him, is the 2nd coming. I John 2:28, "we" at His appearance. Revelation 3:11, promised the Philadelphia church that I come quickly/suddenly.

However, having said all that, because I see it as a scriptural truth, I do believe that the Lord would not have come during that first century, even though all of the saints, even John the beloved apostle expected it. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). The reason being is that Jesus Christ, Himself laid out the outline of occurrences that would happen over the next few centuries (two millennia?) before His return in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. As we read through these wonderful passages, we can check off these signs of the times and live our lives in expectation of His imminent return, for which we can for sure say in our day and age that there are no prophesies that would hinder His coming today in 2016. For how long that has been able to have been assuredly said, only God truly knows, because only God knows the extent to which the signs must be fulfilled, including the Gospel going to all the world, and us being a witness to all nations.

THE CLEAREST PRETRIB OUTLINE IN THE BIBLE IS MATTHEW 24

The "Grand End Times Outline"

of Matthew 24 and the other synoptic Gospels, starts with the apostles' question in Matthew 24:3, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The Lord proceeds to answer these two questions as clearly as can be. No better outline of the end times is found in Scripture.

Verses 4-14 provide a detailed analysis of current events in our time of "the end is not yet" (vs. 6). The time of apostasy predicted by the Apostle Paul in II Thessaloiains 2:3, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first..." Christ says there will be false churches (vs. 5), wars and rumors of wars (vs. 6), famines, pestilences, earthquakes (vs. 7), persecutions from without (vs. 9) and from within (vs. 10), false prophets and televangelists (vs. 11) and cold-hearts amid apostasy (vs. 12). The 10th and final sign given by Christ before the Rapture will occur is vs. 14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." This is what I made mention of earlier, in that the extent of the witness is God's prerogative, and is pertinent for every generation because "all nations" could be "all known nations" at the time of the First or Second Century (Surely you can see the Apostle Paul's urgency in traveling to far off Spain and Wales. After those trips, he might well be thinking, now, the Lord can come.), it could be "all nations decreed and elected," or it could be "all nations without exception," all of which certainly is fulfilled in our time in the 21st Century.

The most important part of this grand outline for the current topic is verses 13-14. The disciples' question was "and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The Lord tells them in verse 6, "...see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Wars are insufficient of a sign for the end. The end comes precisely when the Lord comes. The end equals His coming in these two precious verses. "But he that shall endure unto the end (His coming), the same shall be saved (delivered/snatched away). And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end (His coming) come" (Matt. 24:13-14). The Lord here promises that "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be... saved"/rescued/delivered/raptured. Obviously, the Lord is not talking about salvation by works, in this verse, but just like Matthew 10:22, He is speaking about a deliverance: from the power, penalty and now the presence of sin.

The rest of the grand end times outline continues with Daniel's 70th week and the time of Jacob's trouble in verses 15-28. Exactly chronologically in order, but long before the abomination of desolation (at the 3.5 year midpoint), long before "then shall be great tribulation" (vs. 21), the Lord, Himself has already shown the end of the age for the disciples and us. Our end is the Rapture.

After the Great Tribulation's seven years run their course, the 2nd advent will occur (vs. 29-30) and the Battle of Armageddon and the Judgment of the Nations (vs. 31) will usher in the Millennial Reign. All perfectly predicted by the Son of God. And perfectly in

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harmony with all of Scripture.

That verses 13-14 can only be speaking about the PreTrib Rapture is also validated in the parallel passage in Luke 21:16-19, **“And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls.”** This last verse is the counterpart to our Rapture text in both Matthew and Mark. In your “patience/endurance” (he that endures to the end) possess ye your souls/ lies your salvation. But more than that, it is a phrase that is used in Revelation 13:10 and 14:12 to point out the end for those saints’ life’s journey as well. In Revelation 13:10 it refers to martyrdom, but in Revelation 14, we have THE clearest picture in the Bible of TWO PHASES of the Lord’s 2nd Coming. Revelation 14:12-16 refers to the Rapture, **“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for**

thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.” The first phase of the Lord’s coming is prophesied here, with the **“patience of the saints”** interposed. Christ, the Son of Man is on a cloud (coming in the clouds, cf. Acts 1:9) and the Lord Himself (not the angels) reaps the elect from the earth with His sharp sickle. The PreTrib Rapture! And He never leaves His cloud!

Revelation 14:17-20 refers to the Second Advent/Armageddon at the end of the Daniel’s 70th week, where (not the elect, but) the **“vine of the earth”** is reaped. **“And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.”** Clearly a prophecy of a PostTrib advent and the Battle of Armageddon! (Joel 3:9-16, Zec. 12, Rev. 16:12-19:21). Interesting in this context is Joel 2:32, **“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.”** The familiar New Testament reference

Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13 says that **“...whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”** **“...he that endureth to the end shall be saved”** (Matt. 10:22). Joel, in the original caption uses the word delivered. Raptured, or snatched away to safety. Seized by the almighty love of God.

The Luke 21 reference expands on the Matthew 24 and Mark 13 passages, in that the Lord within the Great Tribulation passage of vs. 20-28, actually has a promise that only tribulation saints can grab hold of (primarily Israelites, of course, in Daniel’s 70th week) **“Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh”** (Luke 21:26-28).

Special note must be taken of II Thessalians 2, as the next clearest PreTrib outline in the Bible, where the Apostle Paul follows Christ’s outline with a few more revelations that parallel a study of the book of Daniel. I have written an entire article on this chapter, so I would not do more than just mention that the chapter starts with the Rapture, and all of the events of the man of sin and his revelation follow after, just like every other end time passage in the Bible.

SPECIFIC ANSWERS TO POSTTRIB POSTULATIONS

1. The sign of the man of sin is not necessary before the rapture.

The only signs necessary before the Rapture to occur are the ones listed in Matthew 24:3-14 and parallel passages concerning apostasy, etc. All other signs occur during the Great Tribulation and

are noted as landmarks of that time period associated with Israel.

2. Two comings or three?

Revelation 14:14-20 shows the scriptural picture of Christ coming for His elect in a first reaping, then the angels gathering the wicked (Rev. 16:12-16) for the second reaping of the **“vine of the earth.”**

This also fulfills the requirement of Christ coming for His Bride, then coming a second time with His Bride. Much like the first coming of Christ was a fulfillment of two types of prophesy (born of a virgin) and (a sacrificial lamb for our sin), so, too, is Scripture replete with prophesies of a coming Bridegroom (rapturing out His people) and a furious King (judging the quick and the dead). Two separate “comings” were never mentioned in the Old Testament, either. The Jews did not see Christ’s first advent coming in with at least a 2000 year hiatus before He comes to set up His kingdom (Acts 1:8), and neither do PostTrib ascribers see the necessity of the 7-year hiatus to separate the Rapture from the 2nd advent. But clearly from Old Testament prophesies, there is now seen a necessity for two trips. Even so, it is evident from Bible studying that there are prophesies of the Rapture and also prophesies that cannot occur at the Rapture, but must of necessity require a 2nd phase (or 3rd coming, as it were). Just because the Bible does not call it a third coming, does not invalidate clear prophecy, any more than not speaking of two comings in the Old Testament, can force the Lord’s hand into setting up His kingdom in the First Century A.D.

3. Which is the Last Trump?

The seventh trumpet of the Great Tribulation in Revelation 11:15 is never referred to as a “last

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trump,” but it is the last of the seven. Seven of seven being more important than the terminology of “last.” The “last trump” of I Corinthians 15:52, does indeed signal the end for the Gentiles, during this church age, in a book that is specifically addressed to Gentile (& Jewish) church members (the New Testament Rom. 1:7, I Cor. 1:2, etc.). Daniel 12:1 and I Thessalonians 4:16 is where the clock starts ticking again for Israel. It is the last trump for the Lord’s churches, but it heralds great woe for Israel, although God has tempered that great woe with His perpetual promises for His peculiar nation.

The Matthew 24:31 trumpet again is a pivotal trump sounding the beginning of the Millennial Reign, but also the end of the seventieth week. It is never termed a “last trump” in Scripture, so it is not to be confused with the New Testament’s “last trump” in I Corinthians 15 seven years earlier. That the “I Corinthians 15 trump” is designated so, is peculiar in itself, because trumps typically herald a coming action, not a finishing action.

4. The Timing of the Two Resurrections?

The first to be resurrected are the Saints. The reprobates, almost without exception (Revelation 19:20 has two souls at least participating in “a first phase” of this second type of resurrection) will not be resurrected to stand for judgment, until the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-15. Interestingly, the Bible never actually calls this the second resurrection. It is only referred to as the second death. Specifically, as juxtaposed with the first death physically. Daniel and John (again)

refer to distinct resurrections for the good/evil. **“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation”** (John 5:28-29). Dan.12:1-2- **“And at that time (tms-PreTrib rapture of I Thess. 4:16) shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble (obviously again a specific time/7 year Great Tribulation/Time of Jacob’s Trouble), such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt”** (Dan. 12:1-2).

So, if the second resurrection is never termed thusly, we can tell that the first resurrection is not a chronological “first,” but a first type of resurrection. Namely, the one to everlasting life. The second is simply referred to as a second death or everlasting contempt, that none of the saints will ever experience. It could have been referred to as the second (type of) resurrection, but the point is more important to contrast death with the life of the first (type of) resurrection. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with calling it the second resurrection, because it obviously and evidently is, both chronologically and in species.

5. The Last Day

The “day of the Lord,” “day of Christ,” etc, are indeed speaking about time periods usually longer than one 24-hour day. The context

will determine whether to take it literally or prophetically of a larger period of time. Most of the Old Testament references to “one day,” particularly in Zechariah and Isaiah, that probably actually do refer to a 24-hour day, are references to Armageddon and the fall of Babylon, where the second advent of the Lord on the Mount of Olives will render swift justice (Isa. 47; Zech. 12, 14; Rev. 18; Joel 2; etc.). This is One of the most compelling arguments for a two phase 2nd coming. So many prophecies of the coming of Christ are so diverse and diametrically opposite, that they cannot be fulfilled with just one coming, either PreTrib or PostTrib. The Bible requires two returns: a rapture for His saints, and then it requires a glorious return with His saints in battle (Rev. 19:14, et al).

The phrase “last days” is used Biblically to speak of everything from the present current era of apostasy and cold hearts (I John 2:18), to a PostMillennial resurrection of the dead at the great white throne. Contextually then, we must take the term “last days” to simply exhort us to always be looking forward, for these events are imminent. We have no time of reprieve to be looking for signs and telling others that Christ cannot yet return. That is anathema to Scripture. **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come”** (II Tim. 3:1). The signs are never the goal, but they always point to the supreme goal of Christ and His coming!

6. The Timing of God’s Wrath

The Bible makes no distinction between the three woes of Revelation, the seals, trumpets and vials. All are part of the same judgment and are worldwide catastrophes. **“One woe is past; and, behold, there come**

two woes more hereafter” (Rev. 9:12). **“...The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly”** (Rev. 11:14). With a studious reading of these calamities in Revelation, the credulity is strained to call part of them “Great Tribulation like the earth has never seen before, nor ever shall” and pass the first six seals off as current events (I had one PostTrib pastor tell me that he thought the sixth seal was occurring before our eyes in 2013! Wonder what he thinks now?). The extent of the catastrophic scale of the fourth seal alone is unimaginable. **“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth”** (Rev. 6:7-8). With a total earth population of 6 billion souls, that would mean that 1.5 billion men, women, boys and girls are killed with this one seal. If an 8 billion population is projected, two billion folks are taken out of this earth in one fell swoop.

How anyone can envisage that the earth is currently undergoing that is beyond me. The sixth trumpet follows not much later with another potential 2 billion casualties as one-third of the remaining earth’s population is destroyed further. A sincere searcher for the truth will certainly find the Bible teaches a great tribulation, with the last of the Israeli saints being saved on the 1,260th day of the time of Jacob’s trouble—Armageddon (Zech. 12; Matt. 24:31, 25:31-40).

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7. Harmony of Scripture

I think this harmony of the Scripture is an essential point to make. As we examine passages from Noah's ark, to Lot's Sodom, from Enoch's rapture to John's visions, there are so many pictures and examples of the PreTrib, PreMill Biblical doctrine. A PostTrib view is incomplete and incompatible with so much contemporary Scripture and parallel passages that I could never be comfortable with it.

The passage that is most parallel to Matthew 24:30-31 is Revelation 19:11-16 and other Armageddon passages in Joel, Isaiah and Zechariah, et al. The Matthew 24:30 passage concerns itself with world judgment and can in no way be seen as a "comforting" passage, as the Pauline ones concern themselves with.

The Rapture passages in Thessalonians/Corinthians are much more comfortable together in their 1) Imminence, 2) Suddenness, 3) Peculiar attention to saints alone, 4) Resurrection focus, etc.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the greatest errors of a PostTrib view are: 1) The ignoring the importance of Daniel's 70th week, where God declares that He will again restore the nation of Israel to prominence at the expense of the Gentile nations. 2) Ignoring (or denying) the imminence factor in our current lives to be watching/waiting for the Lord to come for us. 3) The many clear pictures in the Bible of a PreTribulational deliverance from the world's judgment and a PostTribulational destruction of the enemies of God.

1. Israel's Importance in Daniel's 70th Week

Israel is not, nor ever will be confused with the Lord's New Testament Baptist churches. **"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins"** (Rom. 11:25-27). A patent prophecy is revealed that "partial" blindness has happened to Israel, until a particular time occurs when the **"fulness of the Gentiles be come in."** Then the clock will start again for Israel, and the multitude of Old Testament prophesies will come to fruition, including the "peace treaty covenant," temple worship and sacrifices (including the man of sin's abomination of desolation), and finally the great outpouring of grace and salvation at the end of the last week, during the Battle of Armageddon. **"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon"** (Zech. 12:9-11).

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.

For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew..." (Rom. 11:1-2). Any dealing with end time prophecy had better seriously take into account the nation of Israel. So many folk I have heard leaving the ranks of PreTrib, have not stopped at PostTrib, but have ended up in Preterism or Amillennialism. They have also left the ranks of Landmarkism, because their "theories" saw no place for a distinction between the Lord's church and Israel, so they have combined them into one, necessitating a "universal, invisible" entity, known alternately as the "church" or Israel, but the promises to Israel and the Baptist churches have always been different.

2. The Imminence of the Lord's Return

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there

shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Luke 17:26-36). The imminence and surprise factor is incontrovertibly a PreTrib testament. All PostTribbers eventually must turn Scripture upside down to make provision for one simple statement, **"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only"** (Matt. 24:36). Simply put, when the Great Tribulation starts, the meticulous counting of 1260 days begins. The two witnesses will die at the midpoint and the abomination of desolation will occur on schedule, and finally, 42 months later, Christ will come. Nothing about the PostTrib return of the Lord will be surprising. There are verses that indicate Heaven's window will be open to earthly view and reprobate men will shake their fists up at God's throne and blaspheme His holy name. But they will not be able to stop the inexorable ticking of the clock of Daniel's 70th week. **"And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come;**

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PreTrib Rapture

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...And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory” (Rev. 6:14-17, 16:9).

3. PreTrib Pictures Abound in Scriptural Types and Prophecies

(Matt. 24:37) As it was in the days of Noah, where Enoch (picturing the churches) was translated out (Gen. 5:24), but Noah (picturing Israel) had to weather out the coming judgment. (Gen. 7:10) Why did God wait seven days, after Noah entered the ark, before the 40-day rain began? A picture/prophecy of the Great Tribulation/Daniel's 70th Week.

(Luke 17:28) As it was in the days of Lot and Sodom/Gomorrhah: Lot and the saved are “raptured/snatched out” before the coming judgment.

(Matthew 25:1-13) The 10 virgins parable shows an imminent return, and the Bridegroom coming for the bride before the coming judgment.

(Luke 19:11-27) The 10 pounds parable shows an imminent, thief-like, silent rapture and reckoning of the saints, followed by a separate judgment of the wicked sometime after (7 years!).

(Revelation 4:1/11:12) The words “**come up hither**” are spoken from Heaven to God's saints and speak of an exclusive gathering of the saints/elect.

(Joel 2:1-11, et al) shows an invincible army pouring through the city of Jerusalem at Armageddon. A 2nd advent event, which cannot be reconciled with the many prophecies of the Rapture seven years earlier.

“Little children, it is the last

time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (I John 2:18). John knows the man of sin is coming, but as he concludes his thoughts in this chapter, his exhortation is not to look for the Anti-Christ and then Christ. He simply expects the Lord to come quickly. **“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming”** (I John 2:28). **“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”** (I John 3:2).

Obviously, if you have read Elder Milburn Cockrell's *101 Reasons for a PreTrib Rapture*, you know that pictures of it abound in Scripture, if you do not have a personal bias against it. Sure, not all of them may be clear, stand-alone pictures, but taken as a whole, it is easy to see what the saints of yore expected. It is what the Holy Ghost-inspired writers reported. And I have never felt a twinge of uneasiness in all the writings of any PostTrib expositor. Even as I try to honestly understand why friends of mine think the Bible teaches it. The PostTrib support is just not there in context. It has to take obscure verses here and there, and string them together in inviable lines. And that is not honest exegesis. It is just too clear what God is prophesying, PreMil and PreTrib.

May God bless these words, thoughts and time-honored Bible doctrines to your heart. Please Lord give us instruction and knowledge from your Word.



The Quickening

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one better than the other? I think not. Let us see how both of these thieves reacted to the presence of Jesus Christ who was placed between them at the first. **“Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth”** (Matt. 27:38-44). Notice the **“thieves also”** “**cast the same in his teeth.**” They both joined in the mocking. There were only two and they both joined in with the chief priests and the scribes and elders of Israel in mocking Jesus. Mark's gospel verifies the same when he says **“And they that were crucified with him reviled him”** (Mark 15:32).

So we see from these passages that both thieves were the same in the beginning. Is it possible for a man in such a situation as this and who was joining in with the religious leaders in mocking the very Son of God, to be saved? A man who had no hope of ever getting down from that cross and undoing what he had done. Is it even possible for him to obtain Heaven? When the disciples of

Jesus asked him, **“Who then can be saved?”** He answered and said, **“With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible”** (Mark 10:26, 27). Yes, it is possible for God to save even one or both of these two malefactors if He so pleased. He did save one as we shall see. One was different in the end, but why? Was he just more righteous than the other? Was he a better or good thief?

If one was different in the end, then who made the difference? Was it the thief? Paul gives us the answer when he asks a rhetorical question of the Corinthians. **“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”** (I Cor. 4:7). Both thieves had heard something about this Jesus but in a mocking way. The mockers were repeating what Jesus had said and claimed during His earthly ministry, such as, **“if thou be the Son of God”** and **“he saved others”** and **“if he be the King of Israel”** and **“for he said, I am the Son of God”** and something about the raising of a temple in three days, etc. There was even a superscription of His accusation written over him, **“THE KING OF THE JEWS,”** which these thieves surely had seen. The mockers even said, **“Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe”** (Mark 15:32). And then we read in that same verse of both thieves, **“And they that were crucified with him reviled him.”** The Bible is very clear that there were only two and they both reviled Christ. But what the thieves had heard about Jesus being the Christ, and a savior, and the Son of God in a

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What is the meaning of Isaiah 65:8? Idaho

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I believe we can see two things in this verse that pertain to God's people, but mainly Israel. The new wine that is found in the cluster is the remnant 1) Israel, more specifically the 144 thousand, and 2) the church, and saints of God that are living now. This is Isaiah's prophecy of them both.

If you know anything at all about a cluster of grapes, you will know that not every single grape in that cluster is a perfect grape. Some, the birds have picked at, and others the bugs have eaten, and still others never really have formed. Remember Paul told the local church in Rome and reminded them in Romans 9:6-9, **"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."** The promise was for those Jews that come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is the remnant 144 thousand (Revelation 7 & 14).

Also, Paul told the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:29, **"For I know this, that after my**

departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." There are more Scriptures concerning this, but the point is, not all the Jews will be destroyed (144 thousand) and not all that are in the church and of the true Christians (not the professing ones but the possessing) will be raptured out.

After the battle of Armageddon all the saved Jews during the 7 years tribulation will walk into the Millennial Kingdom (there will be no lost people, they will all be destroyed). And again the Bride (the true church, which I believe is the remnant here on earth right now) and the true saints in Christ will be raptured out before the 7 years.

So it is my belief the new wine are all the elect of God that are here right now, that are in the cluster of Israel and in the cluster of the religion of this world. In other words, God's elect people will not be destroyed. God Bless!

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From the context it seems to indicate that in the midst of God's judgments upon Israel for their idolatry and immorality there is a promise of redemption, restoration, and refreshment for an elect remnant of the chosen nation. Just as there is the promise of new wine in the cluster of grapes,

so also there is a promise of a time of refreshing and restoration for God's chosen nation. The picture drawn by the Holy Spirit here is that God is burning the corrupt and wasted vines in Israel that are no longer fruitful due to sin. One vine that is discovered which has a single cluster of grapes with the promise of new wine in them is spared. So God has promised to never forsake entirely His chosen nation of Israel, but will spare a remnant from judgment when He regenerates, restores, and redeems His elect. The two verses following Isaiah 65:9 support this conclusion: **"And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me."** It seems to give us a glimpse of the promise of refreshment and fruitfulness of the Millennium when Christ shall reign upon the earth with His elect and the restored nation of Israel.

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Isaiah 65 is a prophetic chapter that looks forward through many years to the end times far beyond Isaiah 53's prophecy of a coming Messiah, to a coming King of Kings. Within this chapter are precise details of both Armageddon and the Millennial Reign, with even a glimpse into the Eternal Ages in vs. 17. But as

I re-studied this chapter for the question, I was reminded that the central theme is always sovereign grace. Selah! Think about it!

The main focus of the chapter is God's dealing with Israel, as a peculiar nation and people of God. The secondary focus is that God's people (whoever they may be) will continue to persevere as God wondrously preserves them- the "P's" in the TULIP of sovereign grace.

In vs. 1-7, God reveals that He will have grace upon the Gentiles, as Israel finds herself rejecting her Messiah and King. **"I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; ...Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou..."** (Isa. 65:1-5). This rejection is not limited to the Pharisaic element in the Lord's 1st Century, but it is openly displayed there. **"...holier than thou..."** the Jews thought. That the Lord has turned His sovereign grace toward the Gentiles is openly demonstrated by the New Testament in Romans 11:25, **"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."**

Verse 8 is a two-fold prophecy concerning both the Gentiles and Israel. The PreTribulational Rapture can be seen here, as you compare the two reapings of Revelation 14:16 & 19. The first reaping is the "saving" reaping of


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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Who are the some people mentioned in I Timothy 4:1-3? Idaho

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This chapter deals with the pastor's spiritual life and labors. It indicates that a true minister will have three qualities. He will be a good minister preaching the Word (4:1-6).

The danger in verses 1-3 is what the Ephesian church had been warned already about—the coming of false doctrines (Acts 20:29-30). Throughout Paul's letters, the Spirit speaks "in stated words" (expressly) that the church will see apostasy, a falling away from the true faith (see II Thessalonians 2).

The word "depart" in the Greek gives us our English word "apostasy." Paul points out, too, that the cause for the apostasy—not the "growing intelligence of scholars," but the satanic influence of demons so that professed believers deny the basic doctrines of the Bible. Notice I said professed believers. For I believe they are not saved.

The problem is not with the head, but with the heart! What are the marks of these false teachers? (These are the "some" people mentioned) that is being asked. They are false teachers! And to take it one step further, it is the teaching of Catholicism that has infiltrated religion for almost two thousand years with "doctrines of devils" (v. 1).

For one thing, they preach one thing, but practice another. They are such hypocrites that they even "brand" "seared with a hot iron" (v. 2) their own consciences by their willful disobedience to God's Word! They read the Word but explain it away through their self-serving lies. They teach a false piety—namely, asceticism, that is, abstaining from marriage and certain foods.

There are some so-called "Christian" groups (Catholics and others) that have never studied Colossians 2 to discover that bodily disciplines do not automatically advance spiritual life. God Bless!

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Since the latter times or last days began with the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-3, I Peter 1:19-21) the 'some' could certainly include a whole host of individuals and ecclesiastical organizations that have departed from the faith once delivered unto the saints. I think the precise nature of the passage clearly has reference to the Roman Catholic Church who holds devilish doctrines, lies to its congregants every time the supposed transubstantiation of the mass takes place, forbids its clergy to marry which has led to the atrocities of sexual abuse

and pedophilia, forbidding the eating of meat during the pagan celebration of lent, and a host of other heresies spawned by the Mother of Harlots. Application could be made to a whole host of individuals and false religious systems who despise the Lord's church and the doctrines it stands for. PETA, political progressives, feminists, homosexuals, are all against the truths of Scripture, choosing rather to embrace doctrines of devils. Even so come Lord Jesus!

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"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Tim. 4:1). If there are "some that depart from the faith," it must be referring to Baptists. Selah! Think about it!

One has to have the one faith, before they can depart from that faith! Jude 3, **"...it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."**

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (I Tim. 4:2-3). These verses are obviously prophesying of some Romish/Catholic errors some 300-600 years before they even

occur. How any Bible-reading denomination could blindly go down one of these routes is beyond me but perhaps that adjective "Bible-reading" is key. Most folks just do not READ THE WORD OF GOD. And that is where apostasy comes in. Selah! Think about it!

Apostasy is relevant to every generation. In each new generation, our young folk must be inculcated and catechized with the faith and bathed in the truth to enable a progression of the Lord's Baptist churches being the pillar and ground of God's truth—the Bible! **"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"** (I Tim. 3:15).

Apostasy, at its root is change or a departing from the previous stance for the truth. Change is really NOT a good thing for God's churches (and church members) "Standing" is good. **"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore..."** (Eph. 6:13-14). Being rooted in the previous generations' stand for the immutable and unchanging Word of God. It becomes then a very valid point in ANY argument to check Baptist church history for your doctrine. It has always been the Bible for Baptist doctrine, so the reverse is similarly true that Baptist doctrine stands for the Bible.

Except where apostasy comes in, some Baptist churches have departed from the faith. Of course the Apostle Paul predicts it. Some will stop teaching sovereign grace and will call themselves Free

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Forum #1

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the Rapture signaling the end of the Church Age- vs. 16- **“And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”** Whereas the reaping of verse 19 is the Second Advent, where the angel is separating the goats of Matthew 25:33, 41 and Revelation 16:12-16 unto the Battle of Armageddon- vs. 19, **“And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.”** Our verse 8 here in Isaiah 65 is partially referring to that “new wine” of the sovereign grace of the Gentiles’ Rapture. Selah! Think about it!

However, as we connect Isaiah 65:8-10, **“Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.”** God has NOT forsaken His beloved Israelites. There will be sovereign grace bestowed upon the Jews and the Ephraimites during Daniel’s Seventieth Week (Dan. 9:24-27). **“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it”** (Jer. 30:7). Revelation 7 & 14 speak of 144,000 to be separated, sealed and redeemed out of all 12 tribes of Jacob. Zechariah 12 speaks of

the **“spirit of grace”** that will be poured upon the remnant that will **“look upon me whom they have pierced”** and finally believe!

Verses 11-16 enscribe the time of Jacob’s trouble, leading up to Armageddon. That grace is shown upon these wretched rejecters of God in verses 15-16, truly defines the word grace as unmerited favor. As we stated at the outset, the primary focus of the chapter is God’s dealing with Israel, and that dealing is judgment tempered with grace. Sovereign Grace alone can explain the end times and the fact that Heaven will be inhabited by Hell-deserving sinners going there by God’s gift of grace through the blood of Jesus Christ!

Verses 17-25 are some of the most famous descriptions of the Millennial Reign that will follow the Great Tribulation, when Christ will set up His earthly kingdom with power and great glory- the power and glory of sovereign grace! **“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and...The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD”** (Isa. 65:17-25). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ◊

Will Baptists. Ever wonder why those churches do not just call themselves Baptist? They want to make sure everyone knows that they do not believe in Sovereign Grace. No TULIP Calvinism taught here, not anymore. Just departing from the faith. Selah! Think about it!

Some Baptist churches have

stopped using wine in the Lord’s Supper. Again Paul’s appropriate euphemism, departed. Really, does it matter what Catholics and Protestants do? They have centuries ago left apostasy behind and become irrelevant to God. Candlesticks? “What is that?” they ask! But Baptist churches today are fulfilling the latter days prophesy even more by stopping the teaching of the woman’s headcovering in public worship services. All Baptist churches used to teach and practice it. Now some do not. It is not part of THE FAITH anymore. Why do not folks stand for the truth? **“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first...”** (II Thes. 2:3). Some have departed from church authority and landmarkism. Some have departed on alien immersion and do not give a fig about the Baptist Bride. Going to the church of “their choice” instead of the church of “God’s choice!” The key element here is to see that at some point in time, the modern churches have decided amongst themselves to stop doing what they previously had done, and to now start doing it a different way. To start letting Methodist preachers preach in their pulpits. To start letting Presbyterians join the church without requiring anabaptism. To start thinking it is sexist for women to have to wear a headcovering, but not men.

If these modern start’s are good, why not start your own church? Please take Baptist off from over your doors, though. God is putting Ichabod on there for you, because **“...she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed...”** (I Sam. 4:21). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



The Quickening

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mocking way was absolute truth. They both rejected the truth of the gospel. I am reminded that Paul said that the gospel was hid to them that are lost. Without a doubt the message of the gospel concerns that Jesus is the Christ and that He died for His people’s sins in a substituting way and was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures as Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:1-4. Now concerning that message Paul also tells us this, **“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God”** (I Cor. 1:18). And again he said, **“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God”** (I Cor. 1: 23-24). So we see from Paul’s testimony that the gospel by itself cannot cause men to believe it. Something else must take place and it has nothing to do with men’s free will. Notice that Paul said it was the power of God **“unto them which are called.”** These **“are the called according to his purpose”** (Rom. 8:28). Paul said that the gospel was the power of God unto salvation, but he did not stop there. **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”** (Rom. 1:16). It is power to those that believe, but to believe it a man must have a spiritual mind. The carnal mind will not receive it. The heart that all men are born with will not receive it. Something must happen to the heart in order

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The Quickening

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to receive it.

In the Gospels we read of a parable that our Lord spoke concerning the sowing of seed which illustrates the point I am making. In this parable the Lord tells us exactly what it means so there is no doubt about its meaning. **“A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”** (Luke 8:5-8)

Now we must ask. What is meant by the seed that the sower is sowing? And what is meant by the **“good ground”** which is the only one that produces any fruit? Well the Lord tells us. He says that the **“seed is the word of God”** (Luke 8:11). But it is the Word of God that is preached indiscriminately which is different than the voice of Christ. When Christ said, **“let there be light”** there was light. When Christ said, **“Lazarus come forth”** we read that **“he that was dead came forth.”** When Christ calls the dead they will hear His voice and live. When Christ commands that the heart be opened it is opened.

Now what is the **“good ground?”** I have said in the past that the good ground was plowed ground and that it was plowed up by the Holy Spirit. While that may have a ring of truth to it let us see what

the Lord said the good ground was, for He tells us, **“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience”** (Luke 8:15). **“They, which in an honest and GOOD HEART...?”** Please notice that the seed, which was the preached Word of God, did not make the ground good but fell on ground that was already good or was made good by something other than the seed that fell on it. So, the Lord did not use the seed to make the ground good but made the ground good apart from the seed and then because the ground was made good by His grace the seed brought forth fruit. The same seed fell on three other types of ground and no fruit was ever produced. Only when it fell on good ground was any fruit produced. Only the voice of the Son of God can make the ground good. Here is the great blunder of gospel preaching regeneration. But please, I am not saying that the Holy Spirit works apart from the preached Word. I am simply trying to show cause and effect. If what Jesus says is true and I do not dare doubt it, then according to those that hold to the preaching of the gospel as causing regeneration, the gospel only regenerates good people. As we have already pointed out the sowing of the seed did not make the ground good. So how is the ground good when Jesus said that **“there is none good but one, that is, God”** (Matt. 19:17)? And did not Paul say that **“there is none that doeth good?”** Well, that is absolutely correct. Now notice in Luke’s account of this parable Jesus spoke of the heart being honest and good and yet Jeremiah says **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it”** (Jer.

17:9)? Do we have a contradiction here? No, a thousand times no! A. W. Pink said, **“The heart is the same to the soul as the eye is to the body.”** Therefore just as a blinded eye cannot see natural light, the blinded heart cannot see spiritual light. So we read of Paul saying, **“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). Now if this is true then what has to happen in the heart? Well Jeremiah did say, **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it,”** but he also said concerning the Lord, **“And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart”** (Jer. 24:7). Again the Lord said through the prophet, **“And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them”** (Jer. 32:39). Then we read of Ezekiel declaring the words of the Lord. **“And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh”** (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26).

Now notice in the book of Acts we are told about a certain woman named Lydia that heard the preaching of Paul. This is what is said concerning her. **“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul”** (Acts 16:14). It does not say that the Lord used the preaching of Paul to open her

heart but opened her heart that she heard his preaching in the heart with the understanding. You see quickening or regeneration is the opening of the heart while conversion is the response of an opened heart to the Word of God. Someone will certainly ask, what about I Peter 1:23 where Peter said, **“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”** Well Peter uses a different Greek word than John does. I would like to quote Elder Curtis Pugh on this point. **“Jesus used the word ‘gennao’ both times that we have the word ‘born’ in these two verses (John chapter 3). He speaks of the work of the Spirit in infusing life into a spiritually dead sinner. But Peter in his statement used a different word. He uses ‘anagennao’ - a related word, but with an important difference in meaning and in a different tense. Surely every Baptist knows what the prefix ‘ana’ means. It has to do with redoing something such as baptism. Our anabaptist forefathers always denied that they re-baptized saying that they only baptized aright for the first time those who had been baptized by other sects. The tense is clear in the English for it says ‘being.’ It does not say ‘having been,’ (in the past), but present tense, ‘being’ - an ongoing birthing. Jesus spoke of regeneration as a birth. Peter spoke of the Christian’s ongoing conversion or sanctification. Jesus said regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit. Peter said conversion is a work of the Word of God. It is important to remember that it is the spirit of man that is dead prior to regeneration. The spirit of man is that which, if alive, is capable of knowing God. His soul is very much alive for by a man’s soul he**

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is self conscious and conscious of his natural surroundings. A man's soul does not need life, his spirit does. A man's spirit does not need conversion, it needs regeneration. It is a man's soulish life – his life as a natural man – that needs conversion. And so, rightly understood, there is no conflict between the Lord Jesus and Peter.” (end of quote). Then there is the verse in James that will be called into question. **“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures”** (James 1:18). But this word speaks of being brought forth or delivered which is exactly how the word was translated in James 1:15 where we read **“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”** So there was a conception of lust which brought forth or begat death. So again James is speaking of the Word of God delivering the quickened sinner. Converting his soul and fashioning the new creature in Christ by the Word of God. In Jesus' parable without the seed that was sown there would have never been any fruit.

Before we get to the thief I would like to point out one more account concerning the parable of the sower. In Matthew's account it is the understanding that is different. The difference was that the good ground hearer is he that **“understandeth”** (Matt. 13:23). But again we read, **“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God”** (Rom. 3:11). So how is understanding brought about? We read in Luke, **“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the**

scriptures” (Luke 24:45). It does not say that he used the scriptures to open their understanding. The potential to understand must be given first. A spiritual mind is necessary first and that is given in regeneration or quickening. The Scriptures give understanding but they do not open it. Spiritual understanding involves the heart as well for Jesus said, **“For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them”** (Matt. 13:15). Notice understanding with an opened heart and then conversion. Listen to Paul, **“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). Being quickened by the spirit of God is what enabled us to know. Concerning the seed that was sown let us point out again that while it was not the seed that made the ground good yet it was the seed that caused the good ground to bring forth fruit. Without the seed there is no fruit. Without the gospel there is no object for our faith. We are not hyper-calvinist. We believe that the Holy Spirit always works in connection with the preaching of the gospel. **“How then shall they**

call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher” (Rom. 10:14)? But before they can hear that spiritual message they need to have their spiritual ears opened. A blinded eye cannot see light but a seeing eye cannot see without light. Both must be present for sight. A hearing ear and sound must both be present for hearing.

In the parable of the sower the Lord also said: **“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear”** (Luke 8:8). So I ask, “what is needed first, the hearing or the hearing ear?” A man needs a hearing ear before he can hear. This is true in the natural world and is true in the spiritual world as well or else Jesus would have never used it as an example. One must be present before the other can take place. The potential to hear must be present in order to hear. Where does the hearing ear come from? Where does the seeing eye come from? **“The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them”** (Pro. 20:12). Both physical and spiritual.

Let me add a couple of statements by Milburn Cockrell and W. E. Best before returning to the thief. Brother Cockrell said that, “The Holy Spirit regenerates or quickens the spirit of man. The spirit of man - when made alive by regeneration is that which can know and experience God. The Word of God converts the soul of man. The soul of man is that by which man has self consciousness and is also aware of natural surroundings.” W. E. Best said that “Regeneration is not in itself an experience; conversion is a series of Christian experiences.... A person knows nothing of the beginning of his

existence. Conversion, however, is always an awareness of what is taking place; therefore, it is experimental. Repentance and faith are experiences known to the person born of God.” I would add that the Word of God is what gives knowledge and brings forth and delivers the sinner out of darkness into light, but it is the Holy Spirit that quickens the dead sinner. Only the Holy Spirit can bring spiritual life. As we have endeavored to demonstrate, a blind man needs to have his blindness cured before he can see but without light he still sees nothing.

Now let us get back to the thief on the cross. I have labored to show that what happened to this thief was not the result of his making a decision for Jesus any more than Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. Paul was apprehended by the Lord Jesus. It was not that this thief decided to turn over a new leaf in life. No, as we have shown he was the same as the other in the beginning and then something happened. I contend that when it did it was immediate and what followed was his conversion. It was something from without that worked within him. It was wrought by the Holy Spirit of God resulting in his conversion which was an experience.

Let us now look at the progression that took place in this thief that Luke gives account of. No man will be saved apart from repentance and faith in the gospel. Repentance is always first. **“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 20:21). And again, **“And saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the**

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gospel" (Mark 1:15). Men must repent and as Jesus said, **"except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."** But there is something that worketh repentance. Paul tells us, **"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death"** (II Cor. 7:10). I would like to show you all of this in the thief on the cross.

What now follows is a manifestation of the instantaneous event that came within him but from without. It was wrought in him by the Holy Spirit. Remember the good ground is he that understandeth and has a good and honest heart and receives the word as Jesus tells us. I read in Proverbs 9:10 that **"the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."** In Proverbs 1:7 it **"is the beginning of knowledge."** Remember also that the mocking that he had heard and joined in with was truth.

Now, what does Luke tell us about what happened first? Instead of joining the other thief as he had done in mocking Christ he now tells him, **"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation"** (Luke 23:40)? He is experiencing the "beginning of knowledge and understanding." The Holy Spirit has opened his understanding and now he has "godly sorrow" which will bring about repentance. He may have feared Roman justice but he now fears the God of Heaven who will judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42).

Next we see his repentance toward God for he now says, **"And we indeed justly; for we receive**

the due reward of our deeds" (Luke 23:41). Justly before God who is to be feared, not simply the law of the land. The thief was now convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. **THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS MADE THE GROUND GOOD TO RECIEVE THE WORDS THAT AT FIRST HE MOCKED.** All those mocking words, **"he saved others,"** and **"if thou be the Son of God,"** and **"if he be the King of Israel,"** and **"for he said, I am the Son of God"** was suddenly truth to his heart. The Lord through the work of the Holy Spirit has taken away the stony heart and given him a heart of flesh.

He now sees the righteousness of Christ and now believes all that had been said about Him in a mocking way. He says **"but this man hath done nothing amiss"** (Luke 23:41). He now believes that Jesus is the Son of God, the King of Israel, and the Lord of the kingdom else he would have never said what comes next. He knows that Jesus is without sin. He believes that He is the sinless Son of God.

He now has no place to turn but the LORD Jesus Christ. He is shut up to the mercy of God. He is hanging on a tree with no way out. He can never come down and try to undo the wrong he has done. What an awful predicament he found himself to be in! He had heard the mockers say **"he saved others"** and indeed he needed to be saved. He knew **"for what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul"** (Mark 8:36)? He now seeks mercy from Christ. This is a plea for mercy and not a demand or a right that he thought he had. He now says, **"Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"** (Luke 23:42). It is a

plea because the Lord is not under obligation to remember him and he knows that if the Lord does not, then he is toast and doomed to eternal damnation. Notice, he knows Jesus as Lord and King before he knows Him as his personal savior.

Then what comes next must have been beyond his comprehension. He now receives such a statement from the Lord that it must have been unfathomable to his lost soul. He receives the assurance of salvation from the Lord's promise. Jesus cannot lie. **"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise"** (Luke 23:43). Oh the peace that must have flooded his soul. Grace had taught his heart to fear God and now grace had relieved that fear of eternal damnation as the song writer wrote in "Amazing Grace." Now he knows Him experimentally as savior. He now has rest and what a rest it was! A rest in the promise of Christ. He is saved from his sins. He is safe for evermore. Death cannot separate him from the love that is in Christ Jesus. He has Jesus' promise. His Lord was taking care of his sin problem at that very time in history by the sacrifice of Himself. Somewhere in there between his mocking of Christ and his question to the other thief when he asked **"dost not thou fear God"** he was quickened by the Holy Spirit and then his soul was converted by the truth he had heard.

Multitudes sing "Amazing Grace" in gatherings across this land. How many have experienced what this thief has experienced? We cannot simply trust in an experience but salvation is an experience. How many are trusting in a prayer they have prayed and have never experienced conversion as a result

of being quickened? **"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)** (Eph. 2:1-5). You see it is not you or me anything. It is **"but God."** We were dead in our sins, even as others, **"but God"** hath quickened us, otherwise we would continue to reject the work of Christ for salvation with the rest of the lost and dying world.

A quick note on responsibility. Men are responsible to keep all the moral law of God not only in the letter, but also in the spirit. They are responsible to love the Lord God with all their heart and neighbor as themselves. They are responsible to live as though they have spiritual life because men were alive in Adam, but when Adam fell we all fell in him. but God's requirements did not change. However, they are not responsible to give themselves life for only God can give life. **"For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law"** (Gal. 3:21). There is no command that can be obeyed that will grant life. The Bible does say, **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"** (Acts 16:31), but when it comes

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to regeneration that is from above we read that **“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”** (I John 5:1), that is already, **“IS”** born, not shall be born. Repentance and faith are the evidences of regeneration. W. E. Best said, “Since regeneration is presented as the act of the sovereign God, it is never presented as a duty of the sinner. The demands of the gospel upon sinners are limited to the terms of repentance and faith.” **“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 20:21). Brother Wilbur Johnson when asked what man’s responsibility was, said, “To believe every word that God has said. To love the Lord with all your heart and soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself, but it won’t get you there.”

How do we know that we have been regenerated or are mere professors? Well, are we trusting in the Lord Jesus with all of our being? Is His substitutionary work on the cross the object of our hope? Have we believed in the heart as well as the mind (Rom. 10:9-10)? Have we been converted like the thief and seen our own sinfulness and lostness with no place to go but the righteousness of Christ? Does God’s Spirit witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God (Rom. 8:16)? Do we love the brethren (I John 3:14)? You say, “Brother Lucien, Yes!” Then God gave all that to you and it started with the quickening of your dead spirit and the converting of your soul by His grace through the preaching of the Gospel.

Give Him the Glory!

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see that a significant number of people in the past adhered to those principles. Baptists especially were a separate people: separated for the most part from wicked living, and certainly separated from the Harlot and her daughters.

But things are vastly different now. Today we see not only the approval and participation in all sorts of immorality and other sins by our countrymen, but also a definite anti-Biblical stand by politicians and government. While liberal and compromising Baptists go along with most everything, sound Baptists shall eventually be refugees – pilgrims once again in this world – unless taken out soon - if this preacher sees aright. What is it, according to the Bible, that has caused this departure from good morals that we see all around us? Why are most people in this country living in the cesspool of sin? Without a doubt we have as a country departed from living moral lives.

I: THE CESSATION OF PREACHING THE GOD OF THE BIBLE WITH THE CONSEQUENCE THAT THE POPULACE CEASED FEARING GOD

The following quotation includes the KJV marginal note missing from most Bibles. **“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. {perish: or, is made naked}”** (Prov. 29:18). (Some disparage the KJV marginal readings, but they have been a part of the translation from its origin). The importance of these marginal renderings in the view of the translators is insisted upon by them in their introductory information to the reader. And

just as those men insisted on the importance of these notes, this preacher insists that every serious Bible student ought to have a Bible with both the introduction to the reader and the marginal notes and be familiar with both, (but I am a dying breed it seems). Sadly, some who claim to love the King James Version love only a part of it because they only have a part of what the King James translators left to us.

First of all let us go back to the above text and deal with the meaning of the word **“vision.”** Pentecostal and charismatic heretics are so popular and their presence so influential on the media that even Baptist folk sometimes are influenced by them. These cultists use the word to mean dreams and that sort of thing. By means of such things they claim to receive added revelations to the Bible. They claim that God speaks to them in this way. On the other hand, some take this word **“vision”** and speak, for instance, of a pastor’s vision for the congregation he serves. Their idea is that if the leader does not have a dream or vision as to what he wants his congregation to become they will not increase whether numerically or spiritually. Surely every pastor ought to want his flock to progress in knowledge, holiness and spiritual maturity, as well as being energetically involved at home and abroad in carrying out the great commission. However, I doubt that God reveals to pastors His foreordained plan for the congregation he serves. If we really believe that revelation ceased with the completion of the Book of Revelation then such **“visions”** ceased when the old Apostle John finished his writing about A. D. 100.

During the Old Testament

period from which we have drawn our text, from time to time God had a prophetic ministry. But there were other times when God’s preachers were absent from this world! Such a time existed between the Testaments. Those four hundred **“silent years”** from the completion of the Old Testament until the preaching of John the Baptist were without a public **“vision”** or preaching ministry. No men were gifted by God with prophecy during this time. The word **“prophecy”** can mean either or both a **“forth-telling”** of God’s Word as well as a **“fore-telling”** of future events. Not all books written by the prophets contain revelations about future events. We ought to remember these last two statements when we read the word **“prophecy”** or **“prophesied,”** etc., in the Bible whether in the Old or New Testaments.

But let us deal with this word **“vision.”** Consider the following verses as to the Biblical usage of the word. First: Nahum 1:1: **“The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.”** This statement is the Prophet Nahum’s introduction to his book. He tells us it was a burden because it was a stern message for Nineveh and was on his heart as a heaviness. That city had backslidden after it was spared through the preaching of Jonah. It is a **“vision,”** not because he was transported to Heaven and saw unspeakable things, but rather because his **“vision”** was the message God had given him.

Second: another introductory statement: **“The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem...”** (Isa. 1:1). Again the prophet – this time Isaiah – introduces his book calling it

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a **“vision.”** It was the message of God to Judah and Jerusalem given to him to proclaim.

Third: Take note of one other such statement: **“And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision”** (I Sam. 3:1). Regarding the last phrase in this statement Barnes says in his commentary: “There was no vision promulgated or published.” He further notes: “The song of Hannah, and the prophecy of the **“man of God”** (I Sam. 2:27) are the only instances of prophecy since Deborah. Samuel is mentioned as the first of the series of prophets” (See Acts 3:24). These are the only two instances of any preaching ministry during the entire time of the judges (See Judges 4:4; 6:8). The word of the Lord was “precious” or rare in that day: seldom heard. Surely these verses are enough to demonstrate without a doubt that the word “vision” as used in them means the preaching of God’s message to men.

So let us go back to the first part of our text. **“Where there is no vision...”** Where there is no open or public preaching of God’s message is the meaning of this first phrase. But what of the second phrase? How are we to understand the phrase, **“the people perish”**? First of all notice the KJV alternative reading: **“perish: or, is made naked.”** Young’s Literal Translation translates the phrase thus: “a people made naked.” Barnes comments saying the phrase means “the people ‘perish,’” are let loose, “are left to run wild.” Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary says, first of

all, “Compare Margin” referring to the KJV marginal note which is furnished above in this article. They go on to say that the phrase **“the people perish”** means “are deprived of moral restraints.”

II. THE POPULACE HAS THROWN OFF ALL MORAL RESTRAINT

Like the children of Israel in Exodus chapter thirty-two. While Moses was upon the mountain receiving the Law the children of Israel threw off all moral restraint. They made themselves naked. It is written: **“...the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play;”** (Exodus 32:6). God said to Moses, **“thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves”** (Ex. 32:7). Why? There was not yet among the Israelites even the Law let alone an open preaching of God’s message. So what did the people do in Moses absence? They celebrated Christmas as most of the world does! Well, at least they did the same things that most of the world does not only at Christmas but at all the other pagan celebrations we call “holidays.” They ate and drank and made merry just like pagans and nominal Christians do at Winter Solstice time. Think me wrong? Stephen preached these words: **“And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands”** (Acts 7:41). They made the very thing which they danced around and honored. Because there was no open or public preaching of the Word of God the Israelites made merry in singing, lewd dancing, eating and drinking. Theirs was both the spirit and actions of paganism. And they suffered for their actions when Moses returned to the camp, but we have

not time or space for that here.

Having established that God said the people had **“corrupted themselves,”** by engaging in lewdness, drunkenness, feasting, and rejoicing in typical idolatrous worship we ask this: has not the population of the United States done the same? At every “holiday” opportunity are not the people of this nation – the vast majority of them – doing these very things. And have not the majority of God’s people – Baptists included joined in the frolic? Are not these things viewed by most people as not only harmless, but even good – especially good fun for the kiddies as well as the adults? Has not paganism been brought into the meeting houses of Baptists? Have we not corrupted generation after generation who are now conditioned to expect and relish these pagan celebrations as a part of “Christianity”? Are not most of our citizens involved in paganism? Are not most of them living immoral lives which is always associated with paganism? Do we think God does not take note of such magnitude of sin? Are there not consequences for sin and especially for such depraved and anti-God things as have in the past, and presently are going on in our country? Fanatic! Bigot! Crazy! These and other epithets may be hurled my way – extremest! Hard-line Christian! What else? This preacher cares not for such name-calling if he is faithful in telling the truth whether men hear or whether they forebear.

III. MOST OF AMERICA’S PREACHERS HAVE COMPROMISED OR ARE AFRAID TO PREACH THE TRUTH

A majority of this country’s preachers, then, are to blame in large measure for our present

condition. If we may allude to Acts 2:23: preachers in this country – although **“the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God”** was involved as it is in all things – these preachers: men and women have **“by wicked hands”** prophesied falsely to the harm of their hearers. We do not mean the faithful men of God who preach the burdens laid upon them by God. We do not refer to those who faithfully guard and feed the flock God has given them to serve. We mean the liberals, denominational hacks, mercenary “Reverends,” “Doctors,” motivational speakers, showmen – works-mongers all who pervert the Word of God by substituting a false gospel, entertainment, activities, giveaways and all the other human methods used to gather and keep a crowd.

Our nation’s corruption is now found around the world due to “missionaries” from our country. As it was in the days of Jeremiah it is with us. God said to that prophet: **“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof”** (Jer. 5:31)? Are we not in the same situation today here in the United States? Isaiah was told to write these words as a testimonial against Israel: **“That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits”** (Isa. 30:9-10). The majority of preachers are feeding their goats the things that goats find tasty: thorns and briars!

So how did the U. S. A. get this way? Because the preachers

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have failed in large measure to preach the whole counsel of God. Self-reliant Arminians hold the field. The Protestant daughters of the Harlot and the cultist abominations of the earth are in the majority. Baptists have largely apostatized from the grand old truths they once faithfully proclaimed. Many among those Protestants who claim to preach the sovereign grace of God still hold to infant baptism: pillar of Popery as it is.

IV. THE DEPARTURE OF MOST BAPTISTS FROM BIBLICAL DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

Furthermore, many among the people called Baptists have been so anxious to see folk saved and baptized that they have resorted to eliciting what they call “a profession of faith” from emotionally immature little children not even yet of independent maturity. This is done without Biblical precept or example! (There is not one verse in the New Testament that indicates that children or teenagers were members of the churches of that era!) We mean those so young as to have not given evidence of regeneration. They lack the experience of godly sorrow which works repentance. “Get'em down the aisle and get'em in the water! Get their names on the membership roll! And these little children are so tender as to be easily enticed into professing faith so they can go to Heaven. Oh they claim to “believe,” but most often their kind of “faith” is not the result of an experience of grace. This is demonstrated in many cases of two sorts: (1) in later life many of these “converts” fall away, or

(2) they are genuinely converted later in life and repudiate their earlier “profession.” So among most Baptist churches are many unregenerate members not yet fallen away and not yet genuinely converted who, like the children of Israel cry out, “**Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits**” (Isa. 30:10). Most Baptist churches need to do what Israel did as recorded in Nehemiah 13:3: “**Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.**” (A multitude of mixed nationalities left Egypt with Israel: Exodus 12:38).

“What? The average Baptist cries? Purge our membership rolls? Why we do not even do that when somebody dies.” The reason some organized Baptists can claim such large memberships is because often their people are members of more than one of their churches at the same time. People move to a new place and join another “church” and their previous church either is not notified or for whatever reason keep them on their rolls too. This preacher has observed in more than one instance that obituaries published in the local papers hereabouts will state that a person was the member of more than one church: one a Baptist church and the other something else – often charismatic or “Freewill Baptist.” It is the mixed-multitude within the membership of most churches that cause the problems. It was carnality that caused the problems in the congregation in Corinth and those yet in the flesh today have no interest in spiritual things, being yet dead in their sins, even if they are on the rolls of a Baptist church. We can only conclude that preachers and members alike in the various

sorts of “churches” along with the apostasy of most modern Baptists are a great part in the reason the U. S, has come down, down, down morally to where she is today. They may not be solely responsible, but are nevertheless culpable in the matter. The lying prophets were certainly cited by God as the corrupters of Israel and we see a great parallel between them and the ungodly preachers of our day and nation.

V. THE PROSPECT OF SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY FOR THOSE FAITHFUL TO THE WORD OF GOD

But wait! Our text has great hope for us: not for national revival, but for spiritual well being and blessing upon individuals and by extension, faithful congregations of Christ. The last of our text says, “**but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.**” Being mindful that a part of the Old Testament or “law” was all that the writer of our text in Proverbs had in his day, there is surely an application for us today. That application is this: even in times of no “vision” - in times and in places where there is a famine for hearing the Word of God blessing will come to those who treasure, guard and obey the Word of God. Circumstances need not deprive the child of God of blessing and fellowship with his Father! Is there no sound Baptist congregation in your area? You ought to be a member of a sound Baptist church somewhere. You ought to support it financially, attend the preaching of the Word there whenever possible, pray for its pastor and members faithfully, and serve the Lord where you are. You may have been called upon to have a dual testimony: (1) a testimony for the Lord and His salvation and (2) another one against the apostate Baptists, the Harlot and her daughters in your

place by having nothing to do with their corrupt organizations. Your unwillingness to participate in false churches will doubtless give you opportunity to speak the truth to others. (We do not say that you ought not to fellowship individually with believers around the Lord as you can so that you might minister to them, but we speak of ecclesiastical and moral separation.)

But you must stay in the Word! Your blessing depends upon it! The “fatness” (well being or health) of your soul depends on it! Your joy must be found in the Lord and in His Word. God’s people who lived during times when there was no “vision” (public preaching of God’s message) walked with God, served Him and prospered spiritually.

Whether or not you find yourself far from one of the Lord’s congregations consider this warning from the Lord Jesus: “**And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear**” (Mark 4:24). There are some things that a child of God ought not to hear. There are some ideas he should not even entertain. There are many preachers today of the same class as those of whom Paul wrote. He said, “**For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works**” (II Cor. 11:13-15). These wolves in sheep’s clothing and their dangerous doctrines and practices are to be avoided! Remember the illustration and warning of Paul to Timothy: “**But in a great house there are not**

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How the U.S.A.

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only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:20-21). Just because some preacher is a "nice guy" and has a "nice church" and does "nice things" in the community does not mean he has God's endorsement. Probably most of such men who are "nice" and about whom the population has good things to say are in reality Satan's ministers.

CONCLUSION

The terrible spiritual and moral condition in which these United States now are shall be remedied, but at what cost! Some of the population will be found to be "vessels of mercy" which God has before prepared for sharing His glory. These shall be taken out of this world for they have escaped judgment through the Lord Jesus Christ. Others – the vast majority – will be found to be "vessels of wrath" "made up" (KJV margin) "to destruction." (See Romans 9:22-23). God has determined the time – when the cup of iniquity allotted to this nation has become full God will straighten out this corrupt immoral mess. And we the citizenry of this country have made it such a stink hole of corruption that only Christ personally ruling this world shall make things right and pure and holy. For there has come one who is presently in Heaven: "a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron" (Rev. 12:5). He is our only hope!

THE

BIBLE AND 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.

SUITS IN OHIO, MINNESOTA JOIN LIST OF TITLE IX CHALLENGES

(WNS)--Lawsuits recently filed in Ohio and Minnesota have joined the burgeoning docket of cases challenging the Obama administration's Title IX guidance on gender identity and restroom use in public schools. The suits illustrate the issue's divisiveness—the Ohio school district refuses to accept the federal government's demands, while the Minnesota district accepted the redefinition of "sex," prompting parents to sue. Families in Virginia also are challenging a local school district's decision to adopt new definitions of gender and sex, and last week the state supreme court agreed to hear that case in the coming months. An unidentified student and that student's parents, along with a school district resident, sued the Fairfax County School Board after it voted to include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in its nondiscrimination policy. A lower court upheld the policy, and the families appealed.

EDUCATION SECRETARY'S COMMENTS RATTLE HOMESCHOOLERS

(WNS)--U.S. Education Secretary John King created a flurry of frustration and fear among homeschool advocates recently with comments viewed as ignorant at best or, at worst, hostile toward alternative education. "Students who are homeschooled are not getting kind of the rapid instructional experience

they would get in school," King said in a press conference hosted by the Christian Science Monitor, adding that's true unless parents are "very intentional about it." But homeschool advocates say students' performance proves homeschooling's success—homeschoolers perform better than average on standardized tests and in college.

CHURCHES IN THE 'CIVIL RIGHTS' CROSSHAIRS

(WNS)--Massachusetts has become the latest state to approve protected class status for transgender persons, and churches should not expect any exemption from the law that goes into effect Oct. 1. According to the Gender Identity Guidance report by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, churches be can considered places of public accommodation and subjected to fines and penalties for not accommodating transgender persons in accordance with their gender identity. The push to revoke religious liberty protections for churches and faith-based organizations that object to the new definitions of sexuality and gender extends to the federal government, which recently issued its own report about ways to enforce the new cultural order.

WHERE'S THE PRIORITY TO HELP GENOCIDE VICTIMS?

(WNS)--A bipartisan group of lawmakers on Sept. 22 bemoaned the Obama administration's lack of action since acknowledging the

ongoing genocide of religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East. "They made the genocide declaration—and we are glad they finally did—but now what? And the now what has been a big zero," said Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., who leads The Helsinki Commission, an independent government agency which works to advance human rights around the world. Secretary of State John Kerry admitted in March the Islamic State (ISIS) is committing genocide against Christians, Yazidis, and other minorities within Iraq and Syria. Advocates had asked the State Department to make the determination for years. But today, lawmakers on the Helsinki Commission accused the Obama administration of saying the right things but not making genocide victims a foreign policy priority.

NAVY READY TO TRAIN SAILORS ON TRANSGENDER ACCEPTANCE

(WNS)--The U.S. Navy has announced its plan for training all personnel on the Pentagon's new policy allowing transgender service members to serve openly. The announcement, delivered by Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Robert Burke, outlines the service's strategy to prepare both senior leaders and rank-and-file sailors for the changes, according to Military.com. "This training will emphasize policies and expectations of personal behavior," the all-Navy message stated. The first phase of the training starts Nov. 1. Mobile training teams will present face-to-face briefings to senior Navy officers and enlisted leaders—the "command triad" of commanders, executive officers, and command master chiefs, according to Military.com. The training teams will include Navy fleet representatives as well as subject matter experts. Commanders will then be responsible for

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administering the training to the rest of the fleet.

HAPPY 40TH BIRTHDAY, HYDE AMENDMENT

(WNS)--Forty years ago, the Hyde Amendment, a spending prohibition banning federal funding for most abortions, became one of the pro-life movement's first major legislative victories. But after decades of bipartisan support, the life-saving policy is in jeopardy. "Lives are literally at stake in this election," said Mallory Quigley, spokeswoman for the Susan B. Anthony List. "This is for the soul of our nation." Congress ratified the first Hyde Amendment on September 30, 1976, and lawmakers have included the language in spending bills each year since. The policy rider bars taxpayers from paying for abortions through Medicaid and is responsible for saving as many as 60,000 babies each year. But despite years of wide-ranging support, the Hyde Amendment's survival could hinge on the election in November. For the first time ever, the Democratic Party committed in its platform to dismantling the long-standing legislation during the party's convention in July.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL SUES FOR RIGHT TO PREGAME PRAYER

(WNS)--When Cambridge Christian and University Christian high schools met for the Florida Class 2A championship football game last December, announcers used the Camping World Stadium public address system to introduce the players, make announcements, advertise sponsors, and play music for the cheerleading squads. But one form of speech—prayer—was banned from the PA system. To allow a pregame prayer for two Christian

schools and their fans would violate the Constitution, argued attorneys for the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA). Both schools disagreed, and on Sept. 27, one of them sued. First Liberty and local Florida attorneys filed suit on behalf of Cambridge Christian School following a months-long effort to convince the FHSAA, which governs high school athletics in Florida, that its policy and interpretation of the Constitution were in error. "The FHSAA rejected Cambridge's request for prayer specifically because it was religious in nature," said Jeremy Dys, First Liberty Institute senior counsel.

NAVY DROPS JOB TITLES IN PUSH FOR GENDER NEUTRALITY

(WNS)--In a decision the Navy Times called "a tectonic shift in the Navy's personnel system," the service recently abandoned the time-honored tradition of referring to enlisted sailors by their rating, or job title, as well as their rank. Ratings such as Gunner's Mate, Boatswain's Mate, and Quartermaster have a lineage going back hundreds of years to the Continental Navy and the British Royal Navy. Even more recently established rates, such as Information Systems Technician Second Class (IT2) or Electronics Technician Third Class (ET3), give many sailors reason to be proud of their naval heritage. The move to eliminate the rating system follows Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus' decision in January to eliminate use of the word "man" in any Navy or Marine Corps job titles. The Marines have removed "man" from 19 occupational titles but were, as yet, unable to find suitable gender-neutral terms for "rifleman" or "mortarman."

D.C. PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATH BILL MOVES AHEAD

(WNS)--A District of Columbia

city council committee voted Oct. 5 to advance a physician-assisted suicide bill. The 3-2 vote by the Committee on Health and Human Services sends the bill to the entire city council for a tentative Oct. 18 hearing. While supporters celebrated the narrow victory, critics of the legislation called on the council to vote down the measure, saying the legislation harms doctors, patients, caretakers, and communities, and is ripe for abuse. The law, called the "Death with Dignity Act," is modeled after Oregon's physician-assisted suicide law, enacted in 1997. If passed, the nation's capital would join Oregon and four other states—Washington, Montana, Vermont, and California—with legal physician-assisted suicide.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS BELGIAN LAWMAKER CONFIRMS TEEN'S DEATH BY ASSISTED SUICIDE

(WNS)--A terminally ill 17-year-old, the first minor approved for legally assisted suicide in Belgium, died recently. The Belgian lawmaker who helped craft the 2014 law legalizing euthanasia for all minors confirmed the teen's death to the media on Sept. 17 but declined to provide details to protect the grieving family. While Liberal Senator Jean-Jacques De Gucht and other supporters hailed the child's death as humane, opponents call such lax attitudes toward life worrisome. In recent years, efforts to legalize euthanasia have gained ground in the United States, but pro-life advocates do not expect Americans to follow Belgium's example any time soon.

NORWAY ALLOWS CHILDREN TO LEGALLY CHANGE GENDER

(WNS)--Norwegians as young as 6 can now legally change their gender using an online form—without a doctor's approval, counseling, or

surgery. The law, adopted with a 79-13 vote by the Norwegian parliament in June, makes Norway the fifth country in the world to pass a similar law, and the second behind Malta to include children. While the process in Malta requires a parent to seek court approval for the gender change, children in Norway apply for the change using the same process and paperwork as adults. While transgender activists celebrated the new law, experts warn treating gender dysphoria so lightly could multiply harm for children who most likely will shed feelings of confusion as they become adults.

FRANCE PLANS BAN ON PRO- LIFE WEBSITES

(WNS)--The French government announced in September that it plans to ban pro-life websites found guilty of "deliberately deceiving" women with the appearance of neutrality. Under an amendment to a current "Equality and Citizenship" law, owners of pro-life sites could face a 30,000 euro fine (about \$33,600) and two years in prison, the same penalties that currently apply to "the offense of obstruction to abortion," which has been illegal since 1993. "Being hostile to abortion is an opinion protected by the civil liberties in France," Laurence Rossignol, minister of families, children, and women's rights, told Rue89. "But creating websites that have all official appearances to actually give biased information designed to deter, guilt, traumatize is not acceptable."

ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNCOVER CITY GATE DESTROYED BY HEZEKIAH

(WNS)--King Hezekiah abhorred the idol worship rampant in Judah. When he began his reign as the nation's 12th king, Hezekiah "removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the

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Asherah ...," according to the biblical narrative in II Kings 18:4. Now, the Israel Antiquities Authority reports archaeologists have uncovered a city gate-shrine they believe Hezekiah's men demolished at the city of Lachish in the eighth century B.C. "Before our very eyes these new finds become the biblical verses themselves and speak in their voice," said Ze'ev Elkin, minister of Jerusalem and heritage and environmental protection. Lachish, a walled city that guarded a main road between Jerusalem and Egypt, was the second most important fortified city in the kingdom of Judah, second only to Jerusalem. It fell to Assyria during King Sennacherib's siege in 701 B.C. The siege is documented in several sources, including the Bible, Assyrian documents, and in a series of reliefs that once decorated King Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh.

POLAND PUNTS PROPOSED ABORTION BAN AFTER PROTESTS

(WNS)--Following street protests in the country's major cities, Poland's parliament voted on Oct. 6 to reject a total abortion ban it previously agreed to consider. Members of parliament struck down the citizens' initiative 352-58 in response to thousands of women across the country wearing black, refusing to work or attend school, and marching through the streets with signs protesting the bill. "We are dealing here with a giant misunderstanding," said Jaroslaw Kaczynski, leader of the ruling Law and Justice Party. "We have the utmost respect for those who signed the proposal. But we have come to the conclusion, observing the social situation, that this would be a factor leading to protests."



The Short Pews



Brief
Articles
by Curtis
Pugh

BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY A REVEALED RELIGION

Most groups professing to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ assume a dangerous thing. They assume that man is capable of reading and understanding the Bible apart from Divine intervention. Stated another way, they think that God has revealed His mind in His Word, the Bible, and that is all that is needed. They think they can know God, His will, and how God saves sinners just by reading the Bible. Now we grant that the Bible is a unique and magnificent collection of Books. We certainly believe that the 66 Books of the Bible are in fact the Word and Words of God. We know that it is by the Scriptures that the way of salvation is known. As Paul wrote to Timothy, **"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"** (II Tim. 3:15). So we want to be careful not to take away anything from the written Word of God.

But there is more. There is a work of the Holy Spirit in which He opens the eyes of the spiritually blind. There is a work in which He quickens the dead. There is a work of the Holy Spirit by which He births people anew into the family of God. Along with this comes the ability to understand the Bible in a spiritually profitable way. Proof of this is in the following: **"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" (Matt. 11:25-27). The Scribes were Pharisees (religious fundamentalists or conservatives) who copied the Old Testament in those days before printing was invented. By repeatedly copying the Old Testament Scriptures they came to know them. Sometimes they were called lawyers because of their knowledge of "the law" - another name for the Old Testament. Even though they knew the Book of God, God had **"hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."** The Lord Jesus made it clear: no one can know God unless the Son reveals Him. That was true back then and it is true today. Therefore we titled this article, "Biblical Christianity is a Revealed Religion." We could cite other Scriptures, but we want to get on to the personal revelation God makes to individuals. Even though we have the complete revelation of the Bible, it is still necessary that God take the initiative and make Himself known to individuals.

In his first letter to the congregation in the city of Corinth, Paul goes to great length to teach them that God must inwardly work in an individual to make him or her know the truth. Just reading the Bible as a spiritually dead sinner is not enough to understand the Bible in a spiritually profitable way. Paul quoted the Old Testament as proof and went on from there

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BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 9-1-2016 to 9-30-2016

Beginning Balance	\$4,136.66
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	50.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	25.00
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	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Rual Hall, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway L. B. C., Springfield, OR	200.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	18.00
Anonymous	210.00
Sub Total	\$2,283.95
TOTAL	\$6,420.61
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	662.46
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Total Expenditures	\$3,628.42
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,792.19



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 9-1-2016 to 9-30-2016

Beginning Balance	\$6,844.17
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Calvary B. C., Sumas, WA	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
.....	425.00
TOTAL	7,269.17
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	603.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	603.98
Interest05
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,665.24

The Short Pews

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as follows: **“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 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. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ”** (I Cor. 2:9-16). When Paul writes **“Eye hath not seen...”** he is not talking about Heaven or the New Jerusalem and things not revealed about those places. He is not writing about that which is presently unknowable. He is saying in this whole context that God has revealed them unto men and they are both knowable and known. He wrote, **“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.”**

As we quoted above in I Corinthians 2:12 Paul wrote these words: **“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.” In II Corinthians 4:6 Paul wrote: **“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”** The aged Apostle John wrote: **“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life”** (1 John 5:20). These three verses are sufficient to prove that more than just the written Word is needed in the salvation of sinners. There must be a work of the Spirit of God to enable a spiritually dead sinner to profitably understand God’s Word. Apart from **“the spirit which is of God,”** and the life that He brings in the new birth, lost sinners run from one ditch to another. Remember the Lord Himself said, **“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”** (Matt. 15:14). In this last quoted verse the Lord Jesus was speaking about the religious conservatives, the fundamentalists of that day who knew the Old Testament. However, they knew it in their heads only. They were intellectual converts only. There

are a multitude of such folk today who have “head knowledge” of the truth only. That is one reason there are so many different churches and doctrines today. Lost men have read the Bible and not been taught by the Holy Spirit what the Bible means. Paul wrote, **“Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth,”** and again, **“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him”** (I Cor. 8:1-3). Here he says that those who do not love God have only head knowledge. They are proud. But the love he writes about is not human love for God. The Greek word he uses for both “charity” and “love” in these last verses is what we usually call “agape” or “agapao” and means Divine love. It is far greater than human love and not to be confused with that which man knows as a natural man. It is the love that the Holy Spirit produces when He births a person into the family of God. We know this because the Bible says, **“the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us”** (Rom. 5:5).

The psalmist prayed, **“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins”** (Ps. 19:13). Is it not presumption for a man to think that he can figure out the Scriptures with his own mind and intellectual prowess – apart from

the working of the Holy Spirit? Apart from dependence upon the Holy Spirit and the actual work of the Holy Spirit in an individual, the individual is a blind man. And if he takes it upon himself to teach other sinners, he is a blind man leading a blind man. Therefore, humble follower of the Lamb, do not be intimidated by mere intellectual religion. Those religious groups who say that the new birth comes about in baptism may indeed have an intellectual apprehension of some truth. But they cannot know the Bible in a way that is spiritually profitable apart from the work of the Spirit of God. Those who see only “do this” or “do that” in order to become a child of God lack a spiritual understanding of the Word of God. Intellectual religion is shallow bargaining with God. It is works religion. The legalist and the works-for-salvation advocate will come against those who have been given light to see that salvation from beginning to end is all of grace. They hate free grace and will have none of it unless the Spirit of God brings them to see such glorious truth. Depend upon the Word, to be sure, but depend upon the Spirit to teach you the Word. He must make it clear to you. Such Spirit-given understanding of the Bible is akin to the blessedness of Peter. Our Lord said unto him: **“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven”** (Matt. 16:17). Seek the truth that is taught you by the Holy Spirit from the Word of God. In this way you will have **“your loins girt about with truth”** (Eph. 6:14). And having such a protective armor from deception is essential to being able to “stand” in the evil days in which we find ourselves.

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