

# 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*

## Christians and Lawsuits

By Matthew Stepp  
of Wayne, West Virginia

There is likely one of two reasons for a person (or Christian) to sue another individual. The first is for justice, the second reason is vengeance. The former one can be okay in certain scenarios, the second is not. Selah! Think about it!

For an easy starter point, if someone murders a family member, we certainly will (and do) press charges. Not only is it right and proper "righteous indignation," but also it is Biblical

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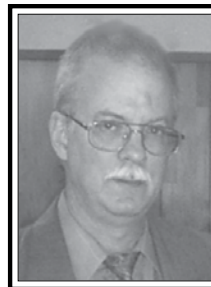


## A Hiding Place for Sinners

By Lucien J. LeSage Jr.  
of Pride, Louisiana

Why would anyone need a hiding place someone may ask? Well there is coming a day when **"...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..."** will be frantically looking for a place to hide. How do I know that? Because the Book of Revelation tells us so. Listen to the words of the prophecy. **"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth**

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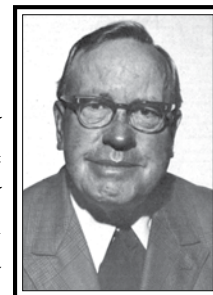
## "Fellowship"

By John R. Gilpin  
(1905 - 1974)

**"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"** (Acts 2:41-42).

The only perfect fellowship the world has ever known was that which existed in the Garden of Eden. This perfect fellowship was broken by the entrance of sin. When you see Adam and Eve hiding from the voice of God,

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## Spiritual Babies Who Remain Just Babies

**"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ"** (I Cor. 3:1).

In verse 14 of the preceding chapter the apostle distinguishes between the natural man and the spiritual. In this verse he distinguishes between spiritual and carnal. In the preceding chapter he says that **"the natural**

**man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."** And then he adds, **"But he that is spiritual judgeth all things."**

When the apostle speaks about the natural man, he has in mind the unconverted man, the man of

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## What Is of Greatest Value to You?

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

**"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD"** (Jer. 9:23-24).

I want to use our text passage to set a distinction between the men and women who love the Lord,



and the men and women who love only the world. I want to use our text passage to remind you and me of the treasures

of Heaven as opposed to the treasures of this world. Hopefully, those of us who are saved, will be renewed in our love and dedication to the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, and the Son of God Who is the Saviour of men.

Is there anything or anyone else who can compare to the value of

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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.

## Spiritual Babies

(Continued from page 1) ♦

the world, the man who is still in a state of nature.

Sometimes we use the word "natural" in an entirely different manner. We speak of a person as being natural when he does not assume unnatural airs; when he is not artificial or affected, does not act differently from what he is, does not "put on," as we often say. In this sense of the word it is good to be natural. Sinners like to be in the company of unnatural people.

When the apostle, however, speaks about the natural man, he has in mind the man who is in a state of nature, which is the very opposite of the state of grace. The natural man is the man who knows nothing of the new birth, never having experienced that wonderful change.

This natural man may be intelligent and well educated. We find in every locality educated men and women who are unsaved. Sometimes they are people of superior culture and refinement, but the things of God are hidden from their eyes, being foolishness to them. This attitude on their part is due to the fact that they lack spiritual discernment; they are spiritually blind though intellectually wide awake.

The story is told concerning a prime minister of England that he was invited to hear a distinguished preacher, who at the time was being widely used of God for the conversion of men. It is said that on that occasion the preacher was at his best and the Gospel was preached in demonstration of the Spirit and in power. On leaving the meeting the prime minister was asked how the meeting impressed him, and his reply was: "To tell you the truth, I gave the man my

most careful attention from start to finish, but I was wholly unable to understand what the man was talking about." Here was a man with a great mind, able to deal with complex political problems, but wholly unable to receive the plain and simple teachings of the Cross. This proves the truth of what the apostle says: **"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."**

If we have this distinction between natural and spiritual clearly in mind, we are ready to consider a second distinction. It is the distinction we find in our text between carnal and spiritual. This distinction is not between Christians and non-Christians, but between two classes of Christians, one of which is carnal and the other spiritual, "Carnal" means "fleshly," and "flesh" in the apostle's writings refers to sinful human nature. What the apostle wishes to say is that, though many Christians are true Christians, born again of the Spirit, still they are so much under the influence of the flesh that they appear to be more carnal than spiritual.

When the apostle in the preceding chapter distinguishes between Christians and non-Christians, he says that every Christian is spiritual as opposed to natural. But when in this chapter he compares one class of Christians with another, he says that one class is spiritual and the other carnal. Carnal Christians are those who, though they are Christians, do not appear to be different from the ungodly.

That the apostle is speaking of Christians when he refers to those who are carnal is clear from the fact that he also calls them **"babes"**

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# Spiritual Babies

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**in Christ.” “I” says Paul, “could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.”**

It is quite impossible to have a babe without having a birth. A babe implies a birth, and a babe in Christ implies a new birth. If a person has received the new birth, he is saved and an heir of Heaven. But if a saved person is still in his babyhood, he is not well developed. No one wants a baby to remain a baby. We want our infants to grow, and we worry if they do not. They must learn to smile and walk and talk and play. Continued babyhood is neither normal nor desirable.

Spiritually, however, some Christians remain babies. They never mature. They lack growth and development. Paul was concerned about that in connection with the Corinthians. He felt that they were remaining too long in the state of babyhood. That is why he complains in the text as he does, saying that he could not speak to them as to spiritual but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. Had they been less carnal and more spiritual, he could have spoken to them in a different way. As he says in the following verses: **“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal.”**

Then to prove that they were carnal and not spiritual, he tells them about the jealousy and party strife which existed in the Corinthian Church. One said, **“I am of Paul,”** another, **“I am of Apollos,”** a third, **“I am of Cephas,”** and a fourth, **“I am of Christ.”** Contention and strife among Christians prove that they

have not advanced far beyond spiritual babyhood.

Let me mention a few characteristics of spiritual babyhood. First, lack of knowledge. There is much for babies to learn. If a baby’s mind did not develop with its body, we would become worried. There are Christians who never develop; they experience no growth in knowledge. The only things they can grasp are the simple, elementary things. They want the plain Gospel, they say, and practical preaching. Deep preaching, preaching on the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity, is beyond their infantile minds.

If you will read further into the chapter you will find that other marks of spiritual babyhood are “envying,” “strife” and “divisions.” If in our homes we are continually wrangling, this is an evidence of a low state of spirituality. Quarrelsomeness is the characteristic of many, but a good Christian is not quarrelsome or unforgiving. In our churches there are many who live in a state of enmity with others and refuse to seek or accept reconciliation, but certainly such an attitude is not a mark of high spiritual development.

Babies cry a good deal, especially when they do not get their own way. Some people in our churches are constantly complaining, particularly when things do not please them. They oftentimes think that they are even superior to others, especially in knowledge. They seem to think that they have a corner on proper Bible interpretation, whereas they often display abysmal ignorance. Let us outgrow our children-clothes!

(The Banner via TBE, July, 1946)



# Christians and

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and will properly keep that murderer off the streets (forever by death penalty/for lifetime in some other cases) and just as importantly, keep him or her from murdering more innocent persons down the line. That is Bible, and we have a “Thus saith the Lord” for it in Exodus 21:12-19, **“He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die. And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.”**

A succinct summation of justice and the unequivocal recognition for going before the judges of the land for restitution, justice and righteousness is found in Exodus 21:24-25, **“Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”**

Lots of common sense justice in the Old Testament. Life for life, eye for eye, etc, but also, the

compensation for lost time due to malicious injuries, etc, are covered, even to the point of requiring caution tape around holes or heights that we expose others to. **“When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence”** (Deut. 22:8).

Justice is something that everybody should desire; the Christian more than any. Criminal charges against (even) other Christians should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, barring some providential circumstances, revelations, and/or the necessary exhibition of God’s grace.

That would be our second point on justice. As we move into the New Testament teachings of Christ and necessarily the Baptist churches, we see another side of this truly equitable justice. Perhaps, even, as Christ reveals His truths to us, we see more than just a ledger of justice, but also a ministry of grace.

**“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them**

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# Christians and

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**which despitefully use you, and persecute you"** (Matt. 5:38-44).

Now, this seems on the surface, to be an outright rebuttal of Old Testament justice and the lawful recovery of injury, indignity or personal possessions, even. The lawsuits of the land are even mentioned in this passage, as something to be avoided, even when justice is at stake. If a man sue you and take your coat, **"let him have thy cloak also."** Selah! Think about it!

So what is the difference? No problemo! Jesus Christ explains it in the next few verses. **"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"** (Matt. 5:45-48).

The purpose of justice is equity. The manifestation of grace has nothing to do with equity. All have sinned; NONE deserve mercy. Equitable justice would condemn us all. Because of the grace of Christ and the shed blood of our Saviour, we do not get our just desserts. We receive perfect grace at the hand of God.

As this passage points out, we are now, the children of God. With not the riches or pleasures or even the "so-called" necessities of life being paramount in our priorities any longer, we are charged with manifesting the perfect grace of God to others, by our actions.

If we, who have been saved by the grace of God from a justice we do not desire (Hell), then why should we desire that same justice upon another? **"And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee"** (Matt. 18:24-33)?

So do we throw out the Old Testament justice with the proverbial bathwater? Selah! Think about it! Not at all! The tenets and cautionary wisdom behind that perfect law of God is still valuable, both to the civil servants of the world and the

Christian saints of Jesus Christ.

**"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake"** (Matt. 24:9). The distinction made between the Christians (children of God) and the rest of the world is that we are living for Christ (primarily and joyfully). Many things will happen adversely to us along the way, specifically because of who we are; what we are doing; and how we are doing it. Satan does not direct his attacks at us, just because we are rich or prosperous Americans. He is not trying to attack Barack Obama's riches or stop Al Gore's prosperity. He is encouraging and enabling them to grow richer and use their affluence to promote the liberal agenda of destruction and carnality. **"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"** (Eph. 6:10-12).

The rule of thumb for Christians, is basically, if we are attacked, sued, persecuted, etc, for serving the Lord, then we are to turn the other cheek. Always and even to the extent of blessedly becoming martyrs for the cause of Christ. Lose your possessions, lose your loved ones, even the children that He has put into your stewardship, if the cause of Christ demands it. **"And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: ...And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this**

**Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? ...And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause"** (I Sam. 17:25-26, 29)?

There are many times that the injustices of this world will come upon our families and nation that are not directly related to our Christian service, but invade into the ordinary life we live, making our pilgrimage through this world. If we are robbed by some druggie looking for a fix, or some member of our family is atrociously gunned down while shopping at the mall or attending a concert, there is a necessity for justice.

The justice of God requires that we (as a country, but also as individuals) take these dangerous people and impose upon them the penalties of incarceration, remuneration and even to the ultimate death penalty. Our families and neighborhoods must be kept safe. We cannot apprehend the murderer, kiss him on the cheek and send him on his wicked way with instructions to "do better." Our responsibility to our fellow citizens requires a rigorous execution of justice whenever any citizen (Christians, too!) crosses the line between right and wrong, whether it is fighting in the streets, or forgetting to put up the caution tape around the man-hole in the street. Equitable justice is required for peaceful endeavors (such as preaching the Gospel). **"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life**

♦ (Continued on page 5)



# Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of  
Plant City, Florida



## The Lord & Evangelism #3

In our “evangelistic” endeavors, we must follow the pattern of the Scriptures. God has ordained that His Word play a particular role in evangelism. Perhaps this is why there are so many false professions is that God’s Word is not used. As the Lord said, “**..Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God**” (Matt. 22:29). Many are void of a fundamental understanding of God’s Word and His power. Thus they err, because they do not believe that God’s Word and His power alone will accomplish the work of redemption. Let us observe our Lord and Savior.

**HE USED THE SCRIPTURES:** There is no record of the Lord using anything but the Scriptures for the work of evangelism. More particularly, Christ declared the gospel for it is “**..the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth...**” (Rom. 1:16). The Word of God is the seed that is to be sown (Luke 8:11; Mark 4:14). From any of our Lord and Savior’s sermons it is quite evident that Christ used the Scriptures and only the Scriptures for the words that He spoke unto us “**..are spirit, and they are life...**” (John 6:63).

**HE USED SCRIPTURE IN SPITE OF HIS AUDIENCE:** You will notice in the Bible that the Lord Jesus used Scripture regardless of who His hearers were. Whether it was a mixed multitude (Jews and Gentiles; Believers and infidels; men or women; etc.), the Scriptures are

what were declared.

There were some who questioned the authority of the written Word of God; others who down right refused to recognize the authority of God’s Word. The scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Jews all did not recognize the authority of God’s Word. Nevertheless, Jesus declared “**..thus saith the Lord...**” unto them! “**Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me**” (John 5:39).

You and I will come across folks who hold great contempt for the Lord, His Christ, His Word. Yet, God has given us weapons for this war fare and they are “**..mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;**) **Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**” (II Cor. 10:4-5). We must use the Scriptures and only the Scriptures regardless of who we are speaking with.

**HE NEVER DEBATED THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE SCRIPTURES:** I am sure that if you have engaged with anyone they will attempt to debunk the Scriptures. Often times asking, “Well what about these other religions and their books?” Never did Christ fall into this trap. When upon the work of evangelism and someone wants to challenge us to the validity of the Scriptures, we must feel free to say “that is a fine idea

for another time. However, at this moment, let us continue on the course of the question of your salvation...” and continue to declare the gospel unto them.



## Christians and

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**in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth**” (I Tim. 2:1-4).

The balance between justice and grace is impossible for any but a child of God to maneuver. Many times the decisions will not be easy, but God will give grace for us to know the times we need to give grace. This last passage from the Apostle Paul ranges across those lines of justice and grace seamlessly. Read it with our own service in mind, and I pray that God will bless. “**Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all**

men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:9-21). Amen! Selah! Think about it!



## A Hiding Place for

(Continued from page 1) ♦

**seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 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; and who shall be able to stand**” (Rev. 6:12-17)?

So we see that men in the great day of God’s wrath will be looking for a place to hide. And from what? Well the passage tells us from the FACE of God. Lost men can not stand before God. In fact no man can stand before God in his natural condition. Psalms

♦ (Continued on page 6)

# A Hiding Place for

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130:3 states, **"If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"**

## MOSES NEEDED A HIDING PLACE

In Exodus chapter 33, when Moses was speaking with God he desired to see God's glory. Here is what we read concerning that. Moses was a meek man. In fact the Bible tell us **"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth"** (Num. 12:3). Yet as we shall see, Moses could not look upon the face of God. Notice what the Scripture tells us. **"And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen"** (Ex. 33:18-23).

Notice that the Lord told Moses that he would see all his goodness and mercy and that the Lord would bestow it sovereignly. The Lord told Moses that he could not see His face and that no man could see His face and live. But there was a place by the Lord God that He would place Moses. It was a rock that Moses would stand upon and there was a clift in that

rock. Notice carefully that God Himself put Moses in the clift of that rock. Notice the words, **"I will put thee in a clift of the rock."** Not just any rock but the rock at a place that was by the Lord. And his cover was the hand of the Lord Himself. As he said, I **"will cover thee with my hand."**

So what does this all mean? Well, let me tell you about that PLACE that is beside Jehovah God, even at His right hand. About that ROCK to stand upon and the CLIFT OF THE ROCK. Not an earthly rock, but a heavenly ROCK. A spiritual ROCK. We read of a rock that the children of Israel drank from during their wilderness journey. It was a physical rock but it pointed to a spiritual rock. The Apostle Paul tells us, **"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that SPIRITUAL ROCK that followed them: and that ROCK WAS CHRIST"** (I Cor. 10:4) (emp. LL).

We sing a song in many churches that goes like this:

*Rock of ages, clef't for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy wounded side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Save from wrath and make me pure.*

Paul says to the Christian who believes on Jesus that our life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). What a place to be hid. This is what the song writer was speaking of. That Jesus Christ is the rock and we are hid from the coming wrath upon this earth IN Him. It was His blood that He shed on the cross that not only saves from wrath but makes the sinner pure with the righteousness of Christ. How is that possible you might ask? And why would I need such a thing? The Gospel is "good news" but only to those who see the need. The Bible plainly

states that all men are sinners. Paul tells us in Romans 3 that the Jews were no better than the Gentiles (Rom. 3:9). That every man born into this world is unrighteous in himself. That there is not one righteous human being, no not one (Rom. 3:10). That none understand or seek after the true God of Scriptures (Rom. 3:11). In fact in verse 12 of the same chapter we see that none even do good, no not one. That may seem hard to believe but it is true. That which is not of faith, God given faith, is sin. Many will come to Christ one day and tell Him of the great works they did in His name. but He will say unto them **"I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity"** (Matt. 7:23).

## THE BAD NEWS

So all men have sinned as the Scripture declares, but most men do not see that as much of a problem. They may even brag about their sins and their sins do not make them uncomfortable. Not now at least. Herein lies the problem. The blindness of their own hearts. Paul wrote of this when he said, **"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 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: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness"** (Eph. 4:17-19). Paul gives the reason for this in an earlier chapter in that same epistle. He even states that the Christians in the church at Ephesus were in the same state until God worked in them. He said to them, **"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). Notice he included himself when he said **"Among whom also we all."**

## THE PROBLEM FURTHER STATED

Jesus told the religious Pharisees **"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"** (Matt. 12:36). He told this to the most religious men of His day. Right before He said this to them He called them a generation of vipers (Matt. 12:34). These were men that though they dotted every "I" and crossed every "T" were called vipers by our Lord and were as lost as could be. They trusted in themselves that they were righteous (Luke 18:9). The Lord Jesus said this about righteousness: **"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven"** (Matt. 5:20). They were the best of their day and yet it was not good enough. Would you dare trust that you are better than they were? Men like to compare themselves with others, but the Bible tells us that this is not a wise

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thing to do. Paul says, **"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise"** (II Cor. 10:12). There is only one that you should compare yourself to and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. When we compare ourselves to Him we find ourselves severely wanting. So the problem further stated is that we all have sins that we will give an account for and the wages of sin is death. James says that if you offend the law in one point you have broken it all. **"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all"** (James 2:10). Who shall be able to stand? And remember what the Psalmist said, **"If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"**

## THE UNCOMFORTABLE DAY IS COMING

**"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"** (Acts 17:31). In the Book of Revelation we read this: **"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according**

**to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"** (Rev. 20:11-15). Psalms 76:7 tells us, **"Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?"** The Psalmist again said, **"How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors"** (Psa. 73:19).

How can any more be said concerning that day? And yet there are multitudes of Scripture verses describing this awful day that awaits those that do not know Jesus Christ as savior. These words are enough to strike fear into the heart of anyone who believes the Bible is the Word of God. When that day comes where will sinners hide then? Elihu gives us the answer. **"There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves"** (Job 34:22). In other words there is no where to hide when that time comes. It will be too late!

## THE GOOD NEWS FOR THOSE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH SIN

**"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding"** (Prov. 9:10). Knowledge of the Holiness of God is understanding and it is this sort of fear that is the beginning of wisdom. It is the fear of the Lord, not fear of punishment only but to fear HIM. When Isaiah the prophet beheld Him and the seraphim **"cried unto another,**

**and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory"** - what was Isaiah's response? **"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts"** (Isa. 6:5). If that was the response of a prophet of God, how much more someone who has never trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation.

The word "gospel" means "good news" and that good news is that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. The Apostle Paul stated, **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief"** (I Tim. 1:15). How did He do that I might ask? By substitution! By taking the sins of all who will ever believe on Him upon Himself and bearing the full punishment for those sins in His own body and soul. Isaiah the prophet is plain about this when he declared concerning the coming Messiah, **"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities"** (Isa. 53:10-11). Philip confirms that Isaiah's passage spoke of Jesus Christ in Acts 8:32-37. The Ethiopian eunuch was reading this very passage and asked Philip who the prophet spoke of. We read, **"And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of**

**himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus"** (Acts 8:34-35). Paul in many places in his epistles states the same thing concerning Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. Here are a few Scriptures that explain what Christ did when He hung on that tree and resurrected from the grave. **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"** (II Cor. 5:21). So the sins of the **"us"** were imputed to Jesus Christ who knew no sin and yet He stood in the place of sinners bearing their sins. Peter said, **"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed"** (I Pet. 2:24). Paul said the gospel was the message of **"...how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"** (see I Cor. 15:1-4). Paul again said, **"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"** (Gal. 3:13).

## CONCERNING CHRIST'S PRIESTLY WORK

During the Old Testament economy there was a tabernacle made and within the second veil a place called the "holiest of all." The Old Testament high priest would enter that place once every year. Hebrews 9:7 states **"But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people."** But Hebrews

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plainly states all this was a figure. Notice the apostle's words that follow. **"Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us"** (Heb. 9:9-12). So, just as Aaron represented the children of Israel when he went into the holy place so Christ does the same for all who believe on Him. And where was this holy place that Christ entered into? **"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us"** (Heb. 9:24). Let us add that He did this only ONCE. There is no need for any repetition. **"Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto**

**them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation"** (Heb. 9:25-28). Listen to Hebrews 10:10-14, **"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."**

## WE ARE SAVED BY FAITH BUT FAITH HAS AN OBJECT

The Bible clearly says that salvation is by faith. But faith has an object that it looks to. The object of true faith (the faith of God's elect) looks to the work of Christ mentioned above. It is a resting in what He has done in the place of sinners and not resting in one's own works and own righteousness or even faith itself. How can we trust in ourselves when Isaiah said, **"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"** (Isa. 64:6)? Dear reader, there is only one place to flee. There is only one object for a sinner to place his faith in. It is the Lord Jesus Christ and His high priestly work.

The call is for sinners to come to Him for salvation. John the Baptist told the religious Pharisees of his day, **"O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"** We plead with sinners to flee unto Christ for shelter. Jesus is the shelter and hiding place from the coming wrath of God. Knowing this, will bring rest to your troubled soul.

Jesus Himself said, **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"** (Matt. 11:28-30). Is there anyone that is laboring under the load of their sins? Is there anyone heavy laden with their sins? Is there anyone that sees themselves as the "chief of sinners?" If so, then that is not a natural thing. It is **"godly sorrow"** that **"worketh repentance to salvation"** as Paul says in II Corinthians 7:10. I speak not of worldly sorrow, but godly sorrow. Paul said in that same verse that **"the sorrow of the world worketh death."** Do you have godly sorrow? If so, then know that God is dealing with your soul and flee to Christ and be hid IN Him. If you have and that is your testimony then know that **"ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power"** (Col. 2:10).



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you have the symbol of broken fellowship. Since that time, the problem of fellowship has continued.

A lack of fellowship with God causes sin. A lack of fellowship with man causes war, hatred, and blood shed. A lack of fellowship between husband and wife causes marital difficulties, unhappy homes, and divorces.

Therefore, in view of what can be caused by a lack of fellowship, it is imperative that we study this question of fellowship.

### I

The basis of all fellowship is

given us in our text. We read, **"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship"** (Acts 2:42). You notice in the light of this text that the disciples continued both in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. In fact, there could be no fellowship apart from the apostles' doctrine. Therefore, the basis of true fellowship is a continuance in the doctrines held by the apostles.

What a mighty revelation this presents to us. Unless one holds to the doctrines laid down by the apostles, there can be no abiding fellowship. That is why it is that we as Baptists do not enter into any union meeting with folk of other denominations. That is why it is that we do not believe in unionistic evangelistic campaigns. That is why it is that we just do not believe in any kind of a union program. In such a union meeting of various denominations, there are those who do not hold to the apostles' doctrine, and hence there can be no real fellowship.

To be sure, not all Baptists can have fellowship together, for there are lots of so-called Baptists who are exceedingly loose as to their doctrinal beliefs. They not only fail in following the apostles' doctrine, but they also literally reject much of the apostles' doctrine, and therefore those of us who believe in the doctrine of the apostles cannot have fellowship with them.

How sweet though is the fellowship that does exist between those who believe the doctrines laid down by the apostles. I say then, beloved, that the only basis of fellowship is the acceptance of the doctrines given by the apostles.

### II

The Word of God indicates

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that there is some fellowship which we are to avoid. There is first of all the fellowship with the unrighteous. **"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness"** (II Cor. 6:14)? The righteous cannot have fellowship with the unrighteous and remain in a spiritual condition themselves. This then is one type of fellowship which must be avoided.

This actually means that the saved should not enter into any kind of an alliance with the unsaved. A saved person should not be a member of any secret order, for by so doing, he is aligned with those who are unrighteous; and therefore, he is participating in a fellowship which he ought to avoid. Those who are saved ought never to marry with the unsaved, for this likewise means that the righteous are joined with the unrighteous, which fellowship should be avoided. In business relations this is likewise true, as well as in social relations. In reality, beloved, regardless of what phase of life we may be considering, we ought never, as saved people, make alliances with unsaved folk. This is surely a kind of fellowship which we ought to avoid --- the fellowship with the unrighteous.

Then also, we ought to avoid the fellowship with sin of every kind. **"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"** (Eph. 5:11). The **"works of darkness"** spoken of, are the sins of the flesh. It is true that there is a fellowship which may be had thereby, but God tells us that this is a fellowship which

we are to avoid.

Not only are we to avoid fellowship with the unrighteous and with the sins of the flesh, but we are also to avoid fellowship with the heretical and with all heretics. **"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself"** (Titus 3:10-11). **"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils"** (I Cor. 10:20). The child of God has no business having fellowship or even attempting to have fellowship with any one who is given over to heresy. If a man is wrong relative to the church which Jesus built, or if he is wrong on the plan of salvation, or on the second coming, or on the doctrines of grace, or on any of the teachings of the Word of God, we should not even attempt to have fellowship with him.

I once heard of a man who was married to two women---one old and the other young. The young woman did not like gray hair, and every time a gray hair appeared in his head, she would pull it out. The old woman, because she was gray, did not like black hair, and therefore she pulled all the black hairs out of his head. Pretty soon you can imagine what his head looked like. Every time you mix up the various denominations and the different preachers in an attempt at any kind of union service, you have about the same result. One denomination does not like the doctrine of immersion for baptism, and they pull this out; another does not like the doctrine of salvation by grace, and they pull this out; still another does not like the security of the

saved, and this great and glorious doctrine is removed. Presently when all the denominations get through removing the doctrines which they do not like, you would have a bald-headed religion to offer the world. The Apostle Paul warns us that we are not to have fellowship with heretics who thus treat the Word of God.

## III

Realizing that there is much fellowship which we are to avoid, and that we are surely to avoid having fellowship with the unrighteous, and with the sins of the flesh, and with the heretical--realizing this, we come to inquire as to what fellowship there is for us to encourage.

First of all, and above everything else, we ought to encourage fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to this Scripture: **"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord"** (I Cor. 1:9). There is a joy which comes to each of us in having fellowship with our loved ones and friends and close acquaintances; yet, beloved, the sweetest fellowship a believer knows anything about is the fellowship he has with the Lord Jesus Christ. The poet would indicate this is true:

*"I met God in the morning  
When my day was at its best,  
And His presence came like sunrise---  
Like a glory in my breast.*

*All day the Presence lingered,  
All day He stayed with me,  
And we sailed in perfect calmness  
O'er a very troubled sea.*

*Other ships were broken and battered,  
Other ships were sore distressed;  
But the wind that seemed to drive them,  
Brought to us a peace and rest.*

*Then I thought of other mornings*

*With a keen remorse of mind,  
When I, too, had loosed the moorings  
With the Presence left behind.*

*So I think I know the secret,  
Learned from many a troubled way;  
You must seek Him in the morning  
If you want Him throughout the day."*  
A second fellowship which we ought to encourage is that of fellowshiping in Christ's sufferings. This was one thing for which Paul prayed. Hear him: **"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death"** (Phil. 3:10).

The Lord Jesus Christ really suffered. There was mental and spiritual suffering as well as the physical agony. To be sure it was excruciating physical agony thru which Jesus passed. What agony it must have been for Him in Gethsemane to prespire so freely that great drops of blood escaped through the pores of His body. See the nails as they pierced His hands and His feet. Look at His side which was riven with a spear, and see the blood and water as it flowed from His wounded heart. Observe His forehead pierced by the thorns which composed His crown rudely pressed upon His brow. Surely with these wounds in His hands, His feet, His side, and His head---surely the pain must have leaped along the arteries of His body. From Gethsemane to Calvary Jesus suffered excruciating physical agonies. Yet, the physical suffering of Christ was nothing to compare with the mental anguish through which He passed.

Paul prayed that he might have fellowship with these sufferings. That is, that he might be able to understand the sufferings of Christ better. Surely this ought

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to be the prayer of every one of us as saved people. We ought to daily pray that we too might have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings---that we might be able to realize how Christ suffered for us. This certainly would take the pride out of us; it would make us love the Master more; it would make us to be far greater servants; it would cause us to be far less complaining. Surely if we should encourage fellowship with Christ, we should likewise encourage fellowship with the sufferings of Christ.

In the third place we ought to encourage fellowship in regard to missions. I believe in election---that God has elected out of the human family, a certain number to be saved. I am certain that every one of them are going to Heaven. I also believe that God has predestinated that I am to preach the gospel, and that it is through the gospel that all of God's elect shall be saved. In other words, I believe firmly that God has chosen men unto salvation, and that He has also chosen the way whereby salvation is to come to them, and I am sure that way is through the preaching of the gospel of the Son of God.

Any effort which man makes in the preaching of the gospel to the lost, is called missions. It may be district missions, home missions, state missions, or foreign missions. I believe that every one of the redeemed ought to encourage fellowship in missions. Paul spoke of his own experience, saying that as he preached the gospel, he was having fellowship with missions. **"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,**

**who created all things by Jesus Christ"** (Eph. 3:9). He also made a similar reference when he wrote to the church at Philippi. **"For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now"** (Phil. 1:5). In like measure when he wrote to the churches of Galatia he spoke of having fellowship in the world wide missionary endeavor. **"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision"** (Gal. 2:9).

How can we have fellowship in missions? This might be possible in several ways. God may call you to go as a missionary, and thus with your own life, testify and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Again, though you may not go, you may give of your finances that others may go. Still again, you may pray for the cause of missionary endeavour. In these particulars, you can thus have fellowship in missions, and surely each child of God ought to covet such fellowship. How can any one claim to be a child of God who rejects and ignores such fellowship?

In the fourth place, we ought to have fellowship with each other. This was the burden of the message of the Apostle John when he wrote the first of his epistles. **"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another"** (I John 1:3, 7).

Church members ought to be in fellowship with one another. I imagine though today that I

speak to many who perhaps are members one with another of the same church, and yet perhaps do not even speak; or at best, if you speak possibly it is no more than a mere nod, and there is no real hearty spiritual communion and fellowship between each other.

This is truly a great problem so far as our churches are concerned---this problem of fellowship between Christians. There are so many different dispositions and too many likes and dislikes of life that it is truly hard to have fellowship with every one. Yet, it should be our ideal to be in fellowship with all those who know the Lord and who are walking in the light of His Word.

I think perhaps the sweetest human experience that can come to us is that of conversation and communion which we have when we fellowship with those who know the Lord and love His Word. I remember some time ago in riding from Ivor to Richmond, Virginia, along with two young converts who are members of the Immanuel Baptist Church in Richmond. I had been holding a meeting at Ivor, and these two, being close friends, and come from Richmond, some seventy miles away, to drive me back to town in order that I might catch my train that evening to come home. The entire seventy miles' journey was given over to conversation relative to the good things of God. We talked constantly of God's goodness, God's providences, the second coming, and redemption by grace. I do not think I ever experienced seventy miles of such sweet fellowship as on that journey with these dear Christian friends.

You remember, beloved, how it was when you went to see your best girl, and you sat down beside her and held her hand

and talked to her about things of mutual interest---you remember how the time passed by and it hardly seemed like you had gotten there until it was time to leave. Well, beloved, that is the type of experience that we ought to have together as children of the Lord. In our church services, in our prayer meetings in our everyday communion with one another, and in our walks of life we ought to have just that kind of fellowship; and every day ought to be one glorious happy experience with those of our acquaintances who know the Lord.

How we thank God that though there are fellowships which we are to avoid, there are fellowships which we are to encourage and that among these, we ought to encourage fellowship first of all with Christ, and then fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, and then fellowship with the missionary program of Christ, as well as fellowship with believers in Christ.

For nearly fourteen years as pastor of this one church, we have been having exceedingly sweet fellowship in our church. I can never remember the time even when we have had our difficulties, but what I have been happy in the fellowship here in this church. I thank God for the fellowship I have with many who listen to our broadcasts on Sunday---fellowship with them by way of correspondence concerning these broadcasts. And I rejoice because of the fellowship I have with still many others who read our weekly paper, and who are interested in the work we are trying to do and the message that we preach. I thank God for this fellowship, and I pray that He would grant to us even sweeter fellowship as the days come and go.

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However, beloved, in order that you might have fellowship, you must first of all have relationship. By this I mean that you must be rightly related to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that relationship can only come through an acceptance of Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. It is through redemption and faith with a definite trust in Him that He becomes your Redeemer. With this in mind, may you now receive Him as your Saviour in the light of this closing text of Scripture: **"Repent, ye, and believe the gospel"** (Mark 1:10).



## What Is of Greatest

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such an One? Is there anything or anyone else who is deserving of our attention or our high esteem, except the Lord Jesus Christ and our Father in Heaven?

As we read our text passage, we find that there are several types of persons mentioned. First, the wise are mentioned, and they rejoice and glory in the wisdom of this world. Second, the mighty man is mentioned, and they trust and magnify the strength of men. Third, the rich are mentioned, and they are enamored by the riches of this mortal realm. These are all spoken of from the negative perspective – the Lord says, **"Let not"** the wise man glory in his wisdom; **"Neither let"** the mighty man glory in his might; **"Let not"** the rich man glory in his riches. Instead of glorying in the wisdom, the might, and the riches of this world, the Lord encourages these to glory in the fact that **"he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord**

**which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth..."**

As we study this passage, I want to ask you (and myself) the question: "What is of greatest value to you?" Are you glorying in the wisdom, might, and riches of this world? Or, are you glorying in the simple – yet tremendous – truth, that the Lord has made you to know Him, and that you have a personal knowledge of, and relationship with, Jesus Christ? The world is full of people. In the end, though, there are really only two types of people on this earth: those who trust in and glorify the human and mortal aspects of Creation; and those who trust in and glorify the God Who has made all that exists, and Who has bestowed His loving kindness upon us.

"What is of greatest value to you?" Or, I might ask, "What (or who) do you trust in?" Do you find your greatest pleasures in the things of this life? Do you place your trust and your confidence in yourself, others, or the wisdom, strength, and riches of this world? Today, I want to look at what the Lord had to say to Judah, through the prophet Jeremiah. And, I want to notice how similar his place and time is to ours. In fact, if you study the book of Jeremiah, you will find a city (Jerusalem) and a people (Judah) who are on the brink of destruction, which could mostly be attributed to their sins, and the fact that they had turned away from God; and yet, they are entirely engrossed in the matters and the pleasures of the flesh, and are deliberately ignorant, and purposely self-blinded to the terrible and imminent destruction which awaits them. There is no hope in the flesh or the things that the flesh values! Our only hope is in the Lord – the Lord of

loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness!

## THE WORLD VALUES WISDOM, STRENGTH, AND RICHES

*Worldly Wisdom.* As we have seen from our text passage, the world places a high value on wisdom. And yet, the wisdom of this world is not the wisdom of God. Notice in our text that the wise man glories in **"his wisdom"** – this is not the wisdom of the Lord, nor the wisdom of those who know the Lord. Is not this true in our world today? **"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain"** (I Cor. 3:18-20). This world is only wise to do evil. **"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies"** (Matt. 15:19).

What the world needs is not more wisdom from men, but rather the wisdom and knowledge of God – the simple truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward"** (II Cor. 1:12).

*Mortal Strength.* The world of our day and age – just like the people that Jeremiah ministered to – is also enamored with mortal strength. This strength could be purely physical – notice how many men and women are sucked

into the fitness movement, not out of a sense of health and responsible behavior; but out of a desire to accentuate the strength of their own bodies. This strength that the world desires might also be described as a strength, or power, in our relationship with others. In other words, many exalt and glorify those who rule, or dominate others through their strength of will, or through a domineering and arrogant attitude or demeanor. These are the types of persons that the world looks up to. And yet, this mortal strength will never be enough when the worst of trials come upon a man. **"There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength"** (Ps. 33:16-17). There was no mortal strength that could save Judah and Jerusalem from Babylon. And there is no mortal strength that can save our Nation from the sin and destruction that we have brought upon our selves. Even less, is there any strength or mortal power that can save any of us when we stand before our Creator in judgment?

We need to remind ourselves (and others) that the Lord requires that we trust in Him, and in His mercy – not in our own strength. **"He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy"** (Ps. 147:10-11). Our value and high esteem should be on the fear of the Lord, and the hope that we have in the fact that He is merciful, gracious, and kind to His people. Our mortal strength may be of some value in mere mortal

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. In Luke 8:15 what does **"and bring forth fruit with patience"** mean?

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The key word here in Luke 8:15 that is asked in this question is **"patience."** The word **"patience"** means cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy; enduring, patient continuance (waiting).

It is a call to steadfastness, constancy, endurance. In the New Testament it is the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings!

This person (Christian) is steadfastly a patient man or woman, sustaining and persevering. In other words, once we are saved by the grace of God we can present the gospel to other lost individuals that need Jesus Christ as their Saviour. We need to be patient, cheerful (or hopeful) that they will come to the saving knowledge (fruit) of Jesus Christ. But all we can do is plant the seed in what we hope is prepared soil by God, water it, and be patient that God will give the increase. **"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase"** (I Cor. 3:6). If the seed falls on stony and unprepared ground there will be no fruit, as told us in the previous verses 8-14.

We should not get discouraged, but keep on planting and hoping the soil will bring forth good fruit. We may plant a garden and all the

seeds may not make it, depending on where the seeds fell. I can till the ground, fertilize, plant the seed, and water, but I can not make it grow; only God can do that, if it is according to His will and purpose.


In the book of Philippians Paul discusses four things a Christian needs in order to have joy and to be at peace with our endeavors to sow the seed of the gospel. 1) We need a "single mind," 2) We need a "submissive mind," 3) We need a "spiritual mind," and 4) We need a "secure mind." If we truly want to **"...bring forth fruit with patience"** we need to cultivate these four things in our own lives first. What this means, is we need to put Christ first, others second, and ourselves last.

May God help us to prepare ourselves to be good sowers of the seed. God Bless!

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Luke 8:14-15 declares: **"And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring forth no fruit to perfection. 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."**

These verses are found in The Parable of the Sower where Jesus reveals four types of hearers represented by a certain type of soil, and their reception or rejection of the seed sown which represents the Word of God. Three out of four hearers do not bring forth fruit because they are unregenerate and incapable of bearing spiritual fruit even though the pure seed of the Word has been sown. They are dead in trespasses and in sins, wholly incapable of producing spiritual affections, desires, or fruit such as repentance and faith. Lost men, though responsible to repent and believe, are incapable of doing so because they have only a carnal nature that rejects God and His Word. Romans 8:7-8 confirms why lost people cannot bring forth spiritual fruit with patience: **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."** In another place Jesus declared that **"the flesh profiteth nothing"** (John 6:63) illustrating why the natural man who is blinded and captivated by Satan (II Cor. 4:4; II Tim. 2:26) fails to discern the spiritual glories of the Gospel of grace (I Cor. 2:14). Interestingly enough, the Parable of the Sower enforces the command to preach the Gospel to every creature, on every type of soil, regardless of the results. All the while knowing that statistically an overwhelming majority of people we witness too will never be saved and bring forth spiritual fruit. Our responsibility remains the same, to sow the good seed of the Word of God everywhere we go on every type of soil.

The one type of hearer that brings **"forth fruit with**

**patience"** is contrasted with the previous three hearers who were unfruitful. The hearer that brings forth fruit is said to be a **"good ground"** hearer, who has **"an honest and good heart."** Certainly this hearer is not good, honest, or fruitful by nature because he is in the very same condition as the other hearers. All that was stated above about the unfruitful hearers may also be said about the natural condition of the good ground hearer. All men are spiritually dead, ignorant, unfruitful, vile, and sinful due to their fleshly kinship to Adam: **"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doth good, no, not one...For all of sinned, and come short of the glory of God...Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"** (Rom. 3:10-12, 23; 5:12). The total depravity and inability of the natural man is an indisputable fact of Scripture.

So how can any man be brought out of spiritual deadness to life, out of ignorance to repentance and faith, out of the darkness of depravity to light, out of being unfruitful to bearing fruit? The answer is simple and profound, yet rejected by a majority of professing Christendom. The difference between the unfruitful hearers and the fruitful one is the regenerating, life giving power of the Holy Spirit in the new birth. According to Jesus the only way a man can see (spiritually discern) and enter into the kingdom of God is to be born of the Spirit (John 3:3-5). In the context of John 3

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. We see the wicked follow after error, should we condemn them in it, or just let them alone?

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David and Jeremiah both were affected by the disobedience and ungodliness of the wicked as evidenced by Psalm 119:53 and Jeremiah 9:1: **"Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law...Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"** Certainly as believers we ought to be affected, grieved, and concerned about the wicked round about us.

It is not in our power to ultimately condemn the wicked for their ungodliness and cast them into the Lake of Fire. Only a Holy God can exercise that kind of righteous judgment and wrath. However, as believers and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ our testimony of light and godliness will serve as a rebuke to their unrighteousness. I think this is what Paul was illustrating in Ephesians 5:1-17. Ephesians 5:7-13 declares: **"Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth:)** Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And

have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." We are responsible to reflect the light and glory of Christ in a world filled with darkness and sin. Yes we are called upon to witness to the ungodly and this involves reproving their sin, exhorting them to repent and believe the Gospel. When we agree with the Word of God and call upon men to repent it means we are telling men to have a change of mind about their sinful course of life as rebels against the government of God. Jesus declared that the message of repentance and faith in the Gospel should be preached among all nations: **"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"** (Luke 24:46-47). The early churches definitely carried out this command as evidenced by their zealous activity that is recorded throughout the Book of Acts (2:22-24, 38; 4:10-12; 18:22-28). They confronted sinners in their sins and pointed them to the only way of salvation. Part of their message was to expose the darkness of the ungodly with the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ. It is for this very reason

they were often persecuted, jailed, beaten, and sometimes put to death. II Timothy 3:12 declares: **"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."**

I fear that many Christians are so worldly and calloused they feel little concern for the lost. Others fear that folks will not like or accept them if they are openly living for Christ and sharing the Gospel of His grace. It is a grievous sin to be careless and apathetic about the condition of the wicked. We must be faithful to follow the admonition of Philippians 2:14-16: **"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life..."** Over and over again, by precept and example, the Word of God furnishes us with admonitions to take the Gospel of grace to sinners where they are imploring them to repent and believe. There is no doubt this will involve confronting the ungodly with their sin and urging them to turn from their wicked ways and trust Christ.

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American Christians are accountable for our actions. Personally, collectively and certainly politically. Our vote is one of the most precious privileges that we have, but it is also one of our most important

responsibilities. This Democratic Republic goes the way of "the vote." If we, as a people vote for a baby murderer, we have blood on our hands. If we vote for someone that promotes and furthers the cause of sodomy, we are just as guilty as he is of obamanation, err... abomination.

**"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works"** (Pro. 24:10-12)? This passage brings out our need to stand up for the babies of America against abortion. As I take in that exhortation from Scripture, I can only practically say that to fight against abortion, we are going to have to dismantle the Democratic Party that is the driving force behind this monstrous murdering of entire generations. Selah! Think about it!

Certainly, if any person stays within the Democratic Party after having knowledge of their positions on godly moral issues, it is a sin for them to be affiliated with the Democrats any longer. Absolutely no excuse! And to vote for a Democrat is a sin that God will hold us accountable on the day of judgment. To quote a deacon here at Big Creek Baptist: **"If my best friend was running on the Democratic ticket, I would vote for anybody but him."** I agree! It would be a sin to do so.

**"If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences"** (Eccl. 10:4). This is an excellent verse, and one that

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# Forum #1

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it is important to note that you must be born of the Spirit (3:3-8) in order to believe on Christ (3:16). The Spirit of God must be in you in order to see and believe the glory of the Gospel of Christ for you. It is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, who prepares the heart to receive the good seed of the Gospel in saving faith. There must be spiritual life before the exercise of saving faith as illustrated by the fact that **"faith"** is said to be the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), meaning that faith is a product of the Spirit's work. All spiritual fruitfulness in a believer, from beginning to end, is traced back to the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in the elect: **"For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"** (Phil. 2:13). The reason why the good ground hearer received the seed and brought forth fruit is because the Spirit of God gave spiritual life in regeneration, and immediately enabled the hearer to exercise the gifts of repentance and saving faith. I Thessalonians 1:5 states the truth this way: **"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."** The unfruitful hearers in the parable had the very same seed sown unto them as the fruitful hearer. The difference is the power of the Holy Ghost creating spiritual life in the sovereign work of regeneration, thus enabling the sinner to receive the good seed of the Gospel and appropriating it by the gift of saving faith (Eph. 2:8-10). Unlike the hardshell, I believe the Spirit's work of regeneration is always

and immediately followed by the exercise of the spiritual gifts of repentance and faith. There is a logical order, spiritual life must precede or come before faith, but there is no measurable time lapse between regeneration and conversion.

Another thing that separates the good ground hearer from the other three is that he brings **"forth fruit with patience."** This again is not due to any intrinsic superiority in the good ground hearer, but rather by the fruitful presence of the Holy Spirit who now indwells the believer. The Spirit of God begins the work of spiritual fruit bearing in the elect in regeneration and carries it forth in sanctification. The indwelling of the Spirit sanctifies the truth of Scripture in the heart of the believer and the spiritual product is called the **"fruit of the Spirit"** (Gal. 5). This spiritual patience is marked by abiding in Christ, walking in Him, and obeying His commands. This joyful abiding, walking, and fruit bearing can only be done by those in Christ, empowered by the Spirit. John 15:7-11 states: **"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."** God's elect will inevitably bring forth spiritual fruit due to their inseparable union to Christ and the indwelling of the Holy

Spirit. This cannot be said of the unregenerate. There is a stark contrast between the elect and the reprobate set forth in Romans 2:7-8: **"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath."**

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**"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 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 8:11-15).

Strong's Dictionary defines "patience- cheerful endurance, constantcy." Webster's as: "the suffering of afflictions, pain, toil, calamity, provocation or other evil, with a calm, unruffled temper; endurance without murmuring or fretfulness. The

quality of bearing offenses and injuries without anger or revenge." Christian patience is then the endurance of persecution and afflictions of this life, giving God the glory. Job summed it up well, **"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food"** (Job 23:10-12). Selah! Think about it!

**"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"** (Luke 21:16-19). The parallel passage to this verse on patience is Matthew 24:13, **"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."** In the Lord's clearest outline on the end times, this verse declares that we are patiently enduring until the Rapture ends this age of the Lord's New Testament Baptist churches.

So our text verse does not just mean planting the seed and "waiting" for the plant to emerge from the ground and grow until we can pick the fruit for our Master. It means, that we are gonna have to endure REAL WORK along the way. The seeds in the thorns are the lazy man's patch. Our garden will ONLY have fruit brought to perfection, if we patiently endure, faithfully weeding, watering and singing songs of praise. Selah! Think about it!

We cannot lightly esteem God's **"goodness and forbearance and**

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# Forum #1

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**longsuffering**” in giving us our vineyards to labor in! God, **“..will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life”** (Rom. 2:4, 6-7). There CERTAINLY is a harvest coming. We need to labour toward that end. **“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: ...But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it”** (Rom. 8:23-25).

**“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. ...Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us”** (Heb. 10:35-37, 12:1).

**“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing”** (James 1:2-4). Sometimes we focus so much on the seed, that we forget the REAL fruit is us. The seed goes to ALL FOUR types of ground, but fruit only comes from the PATIENT ground. How we patiently

endure, labor, and run is what is really important to our Heavenly Father. Does it change and transform us? Then the harvest will be plenteous. Without fruit, we have wasted our time. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



## Forum #2

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does not give us an out for sticking our head in the sand. We cannot (scripturally) “leave our place” of standing for the truth. We must vote, we must witness, and we must stand up against wickedness in high places! **“Yielding pacifieth great offences”** is what actively voting for an ungodly party is, or in apathy, ignoring the sin of voting for a person in any party that is ProChoice or for gay rights (now, there is an oxymoron! Should be gay wrongs). Not only do we have the responsibility to cast judicious votes ourselves, but we also must inform those round about us about the evils of the Democrat Party and others.

Perhaps this should be our theme verse. **“Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not. ...An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked”** (Pro. 29:24-27). We cannot condone the **“cursing”** of God’s Word and order. We must be an **“abomination to the wicked.”** What an encouragement from God’s Word. A thorn under the saddle of the wicked! It is a sin to be anything else. **“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”** (James 4:17).

Abortion has been my own personal litmus test on Election

Day for decades now. If the candidate is off on this paramount issue of godliness and the authority of the God of life, then it does not matter what “good” you present to me concerning this candidate. He/She is off the board, and no way will I vote for such a person. So, I have no problem voting straight party ticket against a particular party. Not actually a lever in the polling booth for that, but I will never vote for a Democrat again, until they change their party platform to a godly position on abortion and sodomy.

But, this still falls under the category of judging each candidate on their own merits. It is each person’s choice to run as a Democrat for Wayne County Sheriff here locally. If they cannot see the sinful nature of the party for what it is, and choose to stay in that party; they have just told me everything I need to know about voting for them. It would be a sin to vote for him/her, and I will not do it. They are furthering the cause of Satan, not God, by perpetuating the name and thereby agenda of the Democratic Party. I have said this before, but if every Christian candidate left the Democratic Party, then we would have a chance at saving our beloved America. But if Christians continue to hide behind pragmatism and temporal goals of the “winnability” of party membership in certain Democrat-loaded areas, and explain away their affiliation with this party of obamanation, then we will continue down the path of perdition. Selah! Think about it!

It is a sin to promote the members of such an ungodly party as the Democratic Party has come to be. The Bible condemns such unhealthy alliances in no uncertain terms. **“And Jehu the**

**son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD”** (II Chron. 19:2). **“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you”** (II Cor. 6:17).

Whether it is speaking of the institutions of family, church, or nation our job is clear. Stand for the truth and abstain from all appearance of evil (I Thess. 5:22.) Exactly as the Lord will judge the Catholic church, he will judge the abominations of the Democratic Party. What child of God could rationalize their staying in such a wicked organization? Even in union-bound West Virginia, Christians are finally leaving the Democratic Party and heading Republican or Independent, taking heed to God’s admonitions in Revelation 18:4-8, **“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. ...How much she (the Democratic Party-tms) hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.”** Do you really want to be a Democrat when the Lord comes back? What shame to look into His righteous eyes and

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## Forum #2

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try to justify our miserable actions of compromise and treason.

Surely, just as Moses abandoned the “Democratic Party of Pharaoh’s Godless baby-killers” to become the intercessor for God’s remnant in the Land of Goshen, so we need all godly men to abandon America’s Party of Pharaoh (the one that kills baby boys and girls) and then God will again bless His people. **“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt (the Democrats-tms), not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible”** (Heb. 11:24-27). May the Lord give us Americans the strength to condemn wickedness wherever we find it, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than anything in this world. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

2. Romans 12:19, **“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”**

3. III John 1:11, **“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”**

4. John 3:18, **“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”**

If we keep in mind the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 and that our sole responsibility is to present the gospel to the lost and forget the affairs of this world (II Timothy 2:4), (we should watch less news) and focus on lost souls. If we do that, then we will not have time to worry about the wicked and their error, let God deal with them.

I can have sympathy with this question, and I really get aggravated with how the wicked get away with so much evil, but I have to remind myself of Romans 12:19, it is not up to me to condemn them because God already has if they are not His (John 3:18). We are not to follow after evil, because they do not know nor have they ever seen God (III John 1:11). Let us follow after the good. **“Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged”** (Isa. 51:1). **“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another”** (Rom. 14:19). **“But thou, O man of God, flee**

**these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”** (I Tim. 6:11).

Paul said, **“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”** (I Cor. 2:2). Let us also focus on that and let them alone. I am convinced that the Word of God will condemn the wicked and their error, so let us do as Philip did with the Ethiopian eunuch and preach Jesus unto them. **“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus”** (Acts 8:35).

Jesus should be number one in our lives; our thoughts should be on Him continuously, and to tell the world about Him. God Bless!

ROGER REED



## What Is of Greatest

(Continued from page 11) ♦

matters, but will avail us not at all, in the salvation and perseverance of our souls!

**Earthly Riches.** Also, the world that Jeremiah lived in, and the world that we live in is captivated by earthly riches. The societies of men have always been in pursuit of worldly riches, it only seems that from time to time the desire for the pleasures and the things that mortal man values ascends to such a level that a nation or a people is consumed with their own worldly lusts and their own fleshly desires. The treasures of this world seem to be the only thing that many people have a consideration for. **“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor**

**rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”** (Matt. 6:19-24).

Let me tell you what the Lord Jesus Christ had to say about the riches of this world, and those that earnestly pursue those riches: **“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible”** (Matt. 19:23-26).

Earthly riches themselves are not evil; but, it is the love of money that is the root of all evil – a love for oneself, a love for the material over the spiritual, and a selfish attitude, that is at the root of all evil. However, in the case of those who are saved, who also are blessed with riches in this world, Paul had this to say: **“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches,**

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I know there are others, but these four verses of Scripture come to mind concerning this question:

1. II Timothy 2:4, **“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that**



# What Is of Greatest

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**but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (I Tim. 6:17-19).**

## THE ELECT SHOULD VALUE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD

I know that we have already covered much of this, but as we move on in this sermon, I want to spend a little time considering what it is that we ought to rightly value. In other words, as the children of God, who and what should be of greatest value to us? Who or what should be our glory in this life? The wisdom, the might, and the riches of this world may play a role in the success and the happiness of one who is charmed by the world and the affairs of this life. But, these things are not so important to one who knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour – at least they should not be. The Lord Jesus Christ is our wisdom, our strength, and the riches of our salvation.

I want you to be reminded that to know and love the Lord is better than all earthly treasures. The righteous will glory in the knowledge of the Lord. Consider this exchange between our Lord Jesus Christ and Simon Peter, His loving disciple: **“He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (John 21:17).** Indeed, the

glory of the knowledge of the Lord is not that we know Him, but that He knows us, and makes us to know Him. The glory is His. **“We love him, because he first loved us” (I John 4:19).** Our salvation, our knowledge of God, does not glorify us, it must (and does) glorify God!

We might even go a bit further and consider the fact that a love for God should instill a love for God’s Word. The world values earthly wisdom – we value the Word of God. An understanding of the Word of God is our treasure. King David said, **“Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it” (Ps. 119:140).**

To be acquainted with Him and His ways is our desire. We assemble into the houses of God, as the churches of Jesus Christ, in the glorious hope of knowing Him more, and of becoming more like Him. This is true in our day, but it has always been true in the lives of those that serve the Lord – they would assemble together to grow in their knowledge of the Lord. **“And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers” (II Chr. 30:22).**

So, as our text has told us, the world of men will value and desire earthly wisdom, mortal strength, and worldly riches. However, the children of the Lord will value these attributes of God: loving kindness, judgment, righteousness. What a glory it is, to consider the love of God, the justice of God, and the righteousness of God! Other peoples and other (false) religions have gods and have systems of worship, and have patterns and

rules by which they live their lives, but none have such a glorious God as our God, and none have such a glorious and all-magnificent Saviour as our Lord Jesus Christ! We have much to glory in – though it is not ourselves, and it is not of this world. **“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. 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. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (II Cor. 4:5-7).**

If only the world of men would reflect these characteristics of our Creator! The world would be a better place. The world would be rewarded with more of the good things of God, naturally speaking. If there were more love and kindness in the earth – this would please the Lord. If there were judgment and justice among men, this would please the Lord. If there were righteous behavior in the societies of the world, this would please the Lord.

If only the world that we live

in, particularly this nation of the United States of America, would once again be acquainted with God, and would once again show a desire to know Him and honor Him. How much sweeter would this life be. How much more tolerable and just would be the actions of others. **“Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth” (Hosea 6:1-3).** One day, this time will come for the people of the Lord, the nation of Israel. I only hope and pray that the Lord will give our people, and our nation, a taste of such glorious knowledge of the Lord! **“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9).**



THE

# BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

## FIRST AMENDMENT FACT-CHECK

(WNS)--American college students do not understand the First Amendment’s free speech provisions, according to an August survey of 1,500 students on four major U.S.

campuses. When asked if the use of violence to prevent a speaker known for “hurtful” language from speaking was acceptable, 19 percent of students agreed. That number may seem relatively low, but survey

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author John Villasenor, a visiting professor of law at UCLA, said “any number significantly above zero is concerning.” When asked if the First Amendment protected “hate speech,” 44 percent of students said no, 39 percent said yes, and 16 percent said they did not know. By a slim margin of 51 to 49 percent, students agreed it was acceptable to shout down speakers known for “offensive and hurtful statements.” And 62 percent of students incorrectly believed the First Amendment requires a counterargument be offered when controversial speakers come to campus.

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## KICKING THE GENDER QUESTION CAN

(WNS)--The U.S. Department of Education will not change the wording of the gender question on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) after all. Transgender activists protested the plan, announced earlier this year, to ask applicants, “Were you born male or female?” instead of, “Are you male or female?” They claimed it would create confusion and potentially “out” transgender students. Education Department officials initiated the change to help make it easier to check Selective Service registration, required for all men who receive federal student aid. After the uproar, Education officials decided to punt the potential problem to the Selective Service System, advising applicants to check with it to make sure they are not labeled draft dodgers. While it’s no longer the Education Department’s problem, it is still a problem. Should women who identify as men be required to register? And should men who identify as women get a pass?

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## REPUBLICAN ILLINOIS

## GOVERNOR OKS STATE FUNDS FOR ABORTION

(WNS)--Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner, a Republican, signed a bill on Sept. 28 approving taxpayer funding for abortion and protecting state abortion provisions in the event the U.S. Supreme Court ever overturns Roe v. Wade. “I personally am pro-choice,” Rauner said at a news conference before signing the bill. “I always have been. And I made no qualms about that when I was elected governor. And I have not and never will change my views. I personally believe that a woman should have, must have, the right to decide what goes on in her own body.” Rauner’s decision to sign HB 40 came as a surprise to sponsors and opponents alike. In April, his office issued a statement in support of “reproductive rights under current Illinois law” but against the bill.

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## CALIFORNIA BILL THREATENS FREEDOMS OF RELIGION AND SPEECH

(WNS)--California Assembly Bill 569, which would bar employment discrimination based on “reproductive health” decisions, hit Gov. Jerry Brown’s desk in late September. Pro-life groups see the bill as a threat to religious liberty and freedom of speech, as it would nullify employee codes of conduct that cover the use of contraception and abortion. California ProLife Council director Brian Johnston said the bill is “really taking rights away from an employer, who they hire, how they hire.” He added, “I am almost certain this will be litigated, and under a normal court of law, I think we would have a good chance of being successful in the challenge.”

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## BEAUTIFUL PLANT SPIRALS FLUMMOX SECULAR SCIENCE

(WNS)--A Swiss botanist recently conducted an intensive study of

why so many plants sport flowers or leaves with beautiful spiral patterns that conform to the golden ratio, also known as the divine ratio. The golden ratio, approximately 1.618, has fascinated scientists, mathematicians, architectural designers, and artists for centuries because it appears abundantly in nature. The ratio occurs when the sum of two numbers divided by the larger number produces the same answer as the larger number divided by the smaller number. A multitude of psychological studies show people seem pre-programmed to find the ratio aesthetically appealing. It appears throughout creation in things such as plants, seashells, spiral galaxies, hurricanes, human faces, fingerprints, animal bodies, bird flight patterns, and DNA molecules. But science cannot explain its purpose or allure. Perhaps a better starting point for understanding the purpose of the divine ratio is to acknowledge the divine God who designed it.

**“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ...”** (I Cor. 1:27).

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## COLORADO RIVER ‘SUES’ FOR PERSONHOOD

(WNS)--In the past year, New Zealand granted legal personhood to the Whanganui River, and an Indian court attempted to declare, but was overruled by India’s Supreme Court, that the rivers Ganga and Yamuna and two glaciers in the Himalayas were legally protected persons. Now an environmental group in the United States is suing on behalf of the Colorado River for personhood. The New York Times reported. Deep Green Resistance (DGR) hopes to “create a life-centered resistance movement that will dismantle industrial civilization by any means necessary,” according to the group’s website. DGR claims Colorado violated the river’s right to flourish by polluting and draining it

and threatening endangered species. If successful, the lawsuit could set a precedent by which natural features such as redwood forests or the Rocky Mountains could gain legal standing in cases against individuals, corporations, and governments over pollution and depleting resources.

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## RUNNING OUT OF TIME

(WNS)--Religious minorities in Iraq and Syria could become a distant memory soon if the United States does not take significant steps to help them, advocates told Washington lawmakers last week. Christians, Yezidis, and other religious minorities are victims of genocide at the hands of Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria, according to the U.S. State Department. Although ISIS no longer retains control of much of its former territory, its victims still suffer from the aftermath. Thousands of displaced religious minorities have no home to return to. “I am sad to say that if bold action is not taken by the end of the year, I believe a tipping point will be reached and we will see the end of Christianity in Iraq,” Frank Wolf, senior fellow at the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative, told a congressional panel Oct. 3. “In other words, ISIS will have been victorious in their genocidal rampage.”

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## A CONDITION WE CALL FAITH

(WNS)--Another one of President Donald Trump’s nominees faced a Senate grilling over religious beliefs, a worrying precedent for religious liberty advocates. Trump nominated Amy Coney Barrett, a Notre Dame law professor and devout Catholic, to serve on the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. During Barrett’s confirmation hearing Sept. 6, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California led her fellow Democrats in an inquisition of the nominee’s beliefs, questioning whether they would

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prevent her from ruling fairly on matters that conflicted with her faith. "Dogma lives loudly within you," Feinstein told Barrett. Last week, Catholic leaders chastised Feinstein and her colleagues for trying to create a religious litmus test for public service. John I. Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame, urged senators to "respect those in whom 'dogma lives loudly'—which is a condition we call faith. For the attempt to live such faith while one respects the legal system should command respect, not evoke concern."

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## THE CAMBRIAN PERIOD AND CREATION

(WNS)--Paleontologists claim that 50 fossil remains they recently unearthed belong to a new species of marine predator that evolved 500 million years ago during the Cambrian explosion, a time during which multiple, anatomically distinct animal forms appeared suddenly in the fossil record. Evolutionists going all the way back to Charles Darwin have struggled to explain how so many life forms could appear so suddenly at once during the Cambrian period. Intelligent design advocates say the Cambrian explosion offers evidence of God's creative work. And young-earth creationists such as Frank Sherwin, a biologist with the Institute for Creation Research, argue that such fossils indicate that the flood of Noah's time destroyed numerous populations of complex and completely formed animals. "Apart from the greatly inflated ages, the Cambrian explosion is exactly what the flood geologist would predict based on Genesis Chapters 6-9," Sherwin wrote on the ICR blog.

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## FAMILY FARM WINS RIGHT TO RETURN TO MICHIGAN

## MARKET

(WNS)--Steve and Bridget Tennes, owners of Country Mill Farms, returned to the East Lansing, Mich., Farmer's Market Sept. 17 after local officials tried to ban them over their Biblical view of marriage. A federal judge issued a preliminary injunction, allowing the family-owned business to sell its produce at the market while its lawsuit against the city moves forward. The Tenneses' return to the weekly market drew gay-rights advocates who lingered at the Country Mill booth to show support for the city policy, which was crafted specifically to oust the Catholic family from the public square. One demonstrator paced back and forth in front of the red-tented booth carrying a sign urging shoppers to "boycott Country Mill" for practicing "hate and bigotry." But the protests did not dim what the Tenneses saw as a victory. "We are thrilled that the court has ruled to allow our Country Mill family to continue to serve everyone at the East Lansing Farmer's Market," Steve Tennes told me. "This ruling acknowledges that every American should be free to live and speak according to our own sincerely held beliefs without fear of government punishment."

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## SCHOOL VALUES TRANSGENDER LESSONS OVER PARENT RIGHTS

(WNS)--A California charter school embroiled in controversy about a lesson to kindergarteners on transgenderism is not backing down. On Sept. 18, the Sacramento-area school board rejected a proposal by parents to allow children to opt-out of lessons on gender identity. The proposal came after a kindergarten teacher at Rocklin Academy Gateway in June reintroduced a boy in the class as a transgender girl without parental notification. After efforts by the administration to

brush away the incident, concerned parents spoke out to the school board in August, insisting they put the issue on the agenda for the September meeting. "To teach my kid that biologically this boy was born a boy and to teach him that now he is a girl is very confusing and I feel it's a lie," parent Chelsea McQuistan said in the meeting, according to Fox 40 News.

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## U.S. DOCTORS TAKE OFFICIAL STANCE AGAINST EUTHANASIA

(WNS)--Amid increasing attempts to legalize euthanasia at the state level, the nation's second-largest network of physicians officially spoke out against it. The American College of Physicians (ACP) wrote in a position statement published Sept. 19 in the Annals of Internal Medicine that the organization of 152,000 medical professionals stands against the legalization of physician-assisted suicide, "the practice of which raises ethical, clinical, and other concerns." The position paper came in response to increasing public interest in legalizing euthanasia to promote patient autonomy at the end of life. The ACP said it remained "attentive to all voices" but decided to oppose legalization efforts.

".. Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder.." (Matt. 19:18).

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## TEXTBOOK RIPPLE EFFECT

(WNS)--Gay rights groups are lobbying the California Department of Education to expand LGBT influence over textbooks set for review this year. In 2011, California mandated students learn about the historical contributions of those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender. During a state commission hearing last week, advocacy groups insisted that simply mentioning historical figures would not cut it. They want each person's orientation and relationship status

outlined in specific detail. "It is not something to appease a particular part of the population but to truly include inclusive history throughout grades K-8," said Renata Moreira, executive director of San Francisco-based LGBT advocacy group Our Family Coalition. Their success will have a ripple effect: California is the biggest market for textbooks and publishers peddle books crafted for California elsewhere.

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## ACLU FIGHTS FAITH- BASED CHILD PLACEMENT AGENCIES

(WNS)--The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is challenging a Michigan law that allows faith-based foster care and adoption agencies to operate according to their Biblical convictions. The lawsuit, filed against the state Sept. 20 in federal court, could jeopardize similar laws across the nation and force faith-based agencies to close. The lawsuit names Bethany Christian Services and Catholic Charities, which are not defendants, as foster care and adoption agencies that turned away two married lesbian couples trying to adopt children. Michigan law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, but laws passed in 2015 provide an exception to that statute for religious agencies. Alabama, Michigan, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, and Virginia also have laws providing religious groups legal cover from lawsuits by LGBT activists.

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## NEW FOSSIL FIND PUTS EARLY HUMANS OUTSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF DARWINISM

(WNS)--Researchers just discovered ancient human footprints on the Greek island of Crete that undermine the Darwinian theory of the descent of humans. Per Ahlberg,

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one of the study authors, admitted in a statement, "This discovery challenges the established narrative of early human evolution head-on and is likely to generate a lot of debate." The new discovery presents difficulties for evolutionary theory in two ways. First, evolutionary scientists believe human beings originated in Africa and remained isolated there for a long time before they migrated to Europe and Asia. But the footprints could indicate humans trekked on the Greek island long before evolutionists thought they migrated out of Africa. Second, the appearance of the footprints does not make sense within an evolutionary framework. The unique structure of the human foot—with a long sole, five short, forward-pointing toes, no claws, and a big toe larger than the other toes—does not appear in any other animal, including apes.

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## INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS CHRISTIAN TEEN BEATEN TO DEATH BY MUSLIM CLASSMATES IN PAKISTAN

(WNS)--Sharoon Masih, a Christian student in Pakistan, died Aug. 27 after his Muslim classmates beat him to death at a school in Burewala, Punjab, according to Pakistan's The Nation newspaper. Witnesses gave conflicting accounts about what led to the attack, but some, including The Independent in London, reported the 17-year-old drank from a Muslim's water cup. Police have arrested only one student, Muhammad Ahmed Rana. Masih's relatives and the British Pakistani Christian Association told The Nation he was killed because of his religion. His parents used their savings to send Masih to MC Model Boys Government School this year because he had done so well in school

up to that point. But he immediately encountered hostility. Following his first day, "Sharoon complained to his father that the teacher had slapped him for not wearing a uniform" and made him stand in the sun all day as punishment, his uncle said. He said people also called him "chura," an insult that means "sweeper," and referred to his low-caste background. Days later, school administrators and teachers failed to stop the fatal beating.

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## DENMARK FUNDS MORE ABORTIONS

(WNS)--Denmark has set aside nearly \$50 million for international abortion funding in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's reinstatement of the Reagan-era Mexico City policy that had been rescinded by President Barack Obama in 2009. The policy blocks U.S. funding for any non-governmental organization that provides abortions. After Trump put the policy back in place, other nations jumped to pledge money to international abortion groups like Marie Stopes International and the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

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## THE POLITICIZATION OF FATHER'S DAY

(WNS)--Ahead of a national ballot survey on gay marriage, an Australian regulatory agency said a television commercial celebrating Father's Day was too political. The ad by Australian nonprofit Dads4Kids featured a father singing his baby a lullaby. The organization had released ads leading up to Australian Father's Day on Sept. 3 for the last 15 years to encourage and honor dads. This year's ad was rejected because it was a "comment upon a matter which is currently the subject of extensive political debate," said legal advice sent to Dads4Kids by Free TV Australia, an industry body representing all of

the country's free-to-air networks, according to The Australian. "It is extraordinary that this is where we have come to as a country; we can no longer celebrate Father's Day without being forced to look at it through the lens of the same-sex marriage debate," Dads4Kids said in a statement on its website. "It is a tragedy that a political motive is now implied in any mention of fatherhood. Not everything is about same-sex marriage."

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## TEEN REVERSING HIS GENDER TRANSITION

(WNS)--An Australian teenager went public earlier this month about his decision to transition back to his birth gender after taking female hormones. At age 12, doctors diagnosed Patrick Mitchell with gender dysphoria. Soon after, he began taking puberty-blocking and cross-sex hormones. By 14, he had breasts, long hair, and feminine features. But earlier this year, Mitchell decided he wanted to stop the process. He said he began to have a change of heart when a female teacher referred to him as "one of the girls." "I began to realize I was comfortable in my body," said Mitchell in an interview with Woman's Day. "Every day I just felt better." Mitchell's mother, Alison, said that while she doesn't blame the doctors who diagnosed her son, she does wish they would have waited before recommending treatment. "They were wrong to pigeonhole him so quickly," she said.

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## SEX CHANGE REGRET SILENCED

(WNS)--As rates of sex change surgeries skyrocket, one of the world's leading genital reconstruction surgeons is speaking out about an issue not being addressed: gender change regret. In an interview with The Telegraph of London last week, professor Miroslav Djordjevic lamented the lack of research on

transgender people changing their minds and undergoing surgery reversal. Djordjevic, an acclaimed surgeon and researcher who performs about 100 sex change surgeries every year, recounted in the interview a discussion he had with U.K. graduate student James Caspian in 2014. Djordjevic told Caspian he was seeing a growing number of patients who were expressing regret about their gender reassignment surgeries and wanted to "detransition." Caspian decided to research the trend of sex change surgery regret for his master's degree at Bath Spa University in Bath, England. But after preliminary research, the university rejected his proposal. Officials told him they were afraid of online criticism about a "politically incorrect" topic.



## The Short Pews



Brief  
Articles  
by Curtis  
Pugh

## THE IMPORTANCE OF A CORRECT DIAGNOSIS

Everyone recognizes the importance of a correct diagnosis when it comes to illness or injury. The prescription of an inadequate or incorrect medicine or other improper treatment for sickness or injury is not only useless, it can at times be harmful. No thinking person will disagree with that. Administering a band aid to a deep puncture wound is foolishness. Stitching up a wound that is filled with filth or rotten flesh is dangerous and can result in death. Cleansing and proper care of wounds is absolutely

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necessary and a correct diagnosis of the problem will dictate that such things be done.

But what about spiritual matters? It is necessary to make a proper diagnosis in spiritual things? Or will any idea result in spiritual good being done to men in the area of their spiritual needs? Surely thinking people will agree that a correct diagnosis in eternal spiritual matters is of more importance than even a correct medical diagnosis in mere physical and therefore temporary matters.

One more observation: sometimes hearing the doctor's words describing your diagnosis – even when it is a correct one – is unpleasant. Some people run from the doctor's diagnosis. Foolishly they think that by ignoring what ails them is a remedy and will eventually cure them. Imagine someone with gangrene in their body rejecting the doctor's diagnosis because they think their likely fatal medical condition will somehow go away.

The Bible gives us a correct diagnosis of the human condition as it naturally occurs. Of the feet it says, **"For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood"** (Prov. 1:16). A diagnosis of the heart of man is given in Jeremiah 17:9: **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"** Matthew 15:19 records the words of Jesus Christ regarding the heart. He said, **"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."** The mind of man is likewise diagnosed in Romans 8:7: **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the**

**law of God, neither indeed can be."**

We could go on, but Paul gives a complete diagnosis in Romans 3:10-18 which says: **"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."**

The only cure for man's terrible and hopeless spiritual condition is the Great Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ who never lost a patient yet.

## LEFT HAND BIBLES

The phrase "a bible in the left hand" is used to describe the practice of some folk who let something or someone tell them what the Bible means. Instead of studying the Bible and learning what it teaches, it is popular among professing Christians to believe whatever their particular authority says on the subject.

This "bible in the left hand" supersedes the Bible. It corrects the Bible or adds to the Bible or takes away from the Bible. So it promotes not the truth, but the ideas of someone else. Now this bible in the left hand may actually be a book or books. Back in the early to mid 1800's there seems to have been a sort of "gold rush" in this area: by that I mean that several men claimed to have received additional revelations

and wrote books that are now revered by their followers as final truth from God. Prior to that time there arose men often referred to as theologians whose writings are still with us today. Their books are often regarded as very nearly the final word on truth. Even before these men arose, even from apostolic times, men have been set up as having all truth and being the rightful interpreters of the Bible.

So this phenomena is nothing new. Paul warned about it as recorded in Acts 20:29-30 saying, **"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."** Paul spoke of his death as his "departing." Once those men Christ designated as His apostles passed off the scene these folk with their peculiar doctrines came to the forefront.

Whether it is the theological books of a certain man or woman or the confessions of faith of sincere men or the supposed revelations that men and women have claimed as being from God, each and all such things are foolishly regarded by some folk as definitive of what they believe.

It is absolutely wrong to accept anything as being God's message to humankind other than the sixty-six books we commonly know as "the Holy Bible." **"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"** (Isa. 8:20). Each individual is thus responsible to know from their own study what the Bible actually says. Then and only then can a person be assured of what the truth on a matter is. Then an individual can be free from the

domination of the "wolves" about which Paul; wrote.

Jesus said, **"...If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** (John 8:31-32). Do you want to be free from error? Free from the domination of men's enslaving ideas? Then learn for yourself what the Bible says and what it means. Study it yourself!

## WHO IS YOUR ENEMY?

Both natural enemies and spiritual enemies walk among men. We easily recognize our natural enemies. On the other hand, spiritual enemies often parade themselves as our friends. They are most often nice people outwardly and may be quite sincere in their words. In speaking of his enemies the Psalmist wrote: **"For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue"** (Ps. 5:9).

Flattery! When pretended friends compliment and praise you to your face in order to gain your trust. Once having your trust they may try to use you by feeding you lies. These are deceivers. Such deceivers are to be found in all parts of our society: politics, business, schools, etc., and yes, even churches – especially religion! Paul foretold of the increase of religious deceivers after his death. He wrote, **"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them"** (Acts 20:29-30).

When Paul was alive he

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# The Short Pews

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constantly warned his hearers and readers of the dangers of such deceivers. He used plain words in doing so. Some people were upset at what he said and wrote. They concluded that Paul was wrong in speaking to them in such a manner. His answer should serve as a guide to us today. He asked them this question: **"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth"** (Gal. 4:16)?

Who is your true friend? Are those who tell you how good you are really your friends? Are those who tell you that you can do this or that and get in good with God by your works your friends? Are those who tell you that you have the ability to please God in your own strength by "making a decision for Jesus" or by "exercising your own faith in Christ," or by "praying the sinner's prayer," etc. - are these your true friends?

Or is the best friend the person who will speak the truth to you. Is he not your friend who points you to these words: **"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God"** (Rom. 8:8). Your pretended friends may try to tell you that you can please God by keeping the Old Testament Law. Your true friend will show you believers are not under the Law: **"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster"** (Gal. 3:24-25).

Your true friend will tell you the truth of Ephesians 2:8-10: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created**

**in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."**

## CHRISTIANS WITHOUT HOPE

Lost people are described as being hopeless: Ephesians 2:12 says of them: **"...having no hope, and without God in the world."** In contrast the children of God can be called children of hope, for those of the New Testament era were characterized by hope - which is faith in the promises of God toward the future. John wrote of this expectant faith saying: **"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).

This hope of the appearance in the clouds of Jesus Christ to catch away His bride and her friends is clearly stated: **"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 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. 4:13-18).

Simple easy to understand

words these. And it is obvious to those who are familiar with the New Testament that in every period since the days of the apostles believers have rightfully expected Christ to return. It has been possible at any time since those days. Believers are to live in expectation of His return. This is their hope or faith toward the future.

But there is a danger: some teach that the children of God do not have that hope. They do not believe in the imminent return of Christ. Instead of looking for Christ, they are looking for the anti-Christ and believe that the Lord's churches are going to endure the time of Jacob's trouble (the tribulation). No catching-away to meet Christ in the air for them. No moment by moment expectation of the possibility of the Lord's return. They think they shall be well warned of Christ's return and so need not be hopeful or in readiness for that prophesied event.

What a joyless life that must be for those who live in anticipation of bad things instead of hope in Christ and the preciousness of His soon return. Are these not doing the same thing as those in Paul's day whom he said, **"...have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some"** (II Tim. 2:18).

## WHEN WORDS HAVE NO MEANING

When people cease understanding the meaning of words truth is lost. It is imperative that we understand the meaning of the words used in the Bible. God used words to reveal Himself. He used men to write down what He revealed. To be assured that we know the truth we must know what the writers meant by what they wrote down. The first step

in knowing what they meant is knowing the meaning of the words they used.

Today the meaning of some words has been changed so as to be misleading. Consider a word that appears in the New Testament 61 times: the word "saints." On his travels Paul **"came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda"** (Acts 9:32). These people called "saints" were not dead, they were not perfect, they had not worked a miracle and no official body had proclaimed them to be a saint. A saint in the New Testament is a person who is saved, baptized and a member of a New Testament kind of church. In I Corinthians 1:2 Paul addressed his letter to one church this way: **"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints..."** New Testament church members are called with a call that makes them saints.

Consider the word "baptize." In Mark 3:16 we read: **"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water..."** Logically if He went up out of the water He must have first gone down into the water! For what purpose? - that He might be plunged or dipped by John the Baptist into the water. And guess what: the meaning of "baptize" is "to dip." There is no sound basis for saying that "baptize" means pouring or sprinkling with water instead of dipping or plunging in water.

One more: the Greek word translated "church" means a group of people called together: an assembly. There can be no assembly that does not assemble. No gathering that does not gather. The Bible does not teach the existence of a "universal invisible church." It is an invention of men

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# The Short Pews

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based on the idea that salvation is in a church. The Bible speaks of **"...the church which was in Jerusalem..."** (Acts 11:22). This was the only church then in existence. It was a local church: the only kind that there is. The definition of the word proves this.

Be diligent to make sure that you know the precise meaning of the words used in your Bible. Knowing the truth makes you free (see John 8:32). Study these words: those "saved" are delivered or rescued – not that an attempt at saving them has been made or that they are temporarily saved. Being "born again" means regenerated by the Holy Spirit, not something that sinners do in order to go to Heaven. "Jesus" means deliverer or savior. It does not mean one who attempts to save or deliver, but one who actually does.

## THE DIRECTION YOU TAKE

We humans have nothing to do with the circumstances of our birth: neither as to place, time, health, parentage, family, nationality, nor the financial or social position of our parents. Yet we assume that we have not only the right, but the ability to determine the events and outcome of our lives. Based upon that assumption we presume to set about choosing a course in life. We plan our lives and set about living them all on our own. However, the prophet said, **"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"** (Jer. 10:23). First of all none of us are able to control events or even our own bodies so as to bring to pass what we may plan. We cannot make one hair of our heads white

or black, we cannot change the color of our skins, we cannot cease from sinning, we cannot extend the number of our days beyond that which is determined for each of us – and yet we presume to plan our lives without taking God into consideration.

Not only is man incapable of directing his steps, he often mistakenly follows the wrong guide. Many advise "follow your heart," or "let your heart be your guide." The problem with this advice is that the heart of man is not a safe guide. Your heart will not steer you right because, **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it"** (Jer. 17:9)? Your heart is filled with sinful desires. If you follow your heart you will remain a spiritually dead pleasure-seeking animal. Whatever "tickles your fancy" will be that which you seek after and that will be the direction of your life.

Well, says proud man, if my heart is not a safe guide, I will follow my intellect. I will educate myself and pursue intelligent goals in the direction that I take in life. However, **"...the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"** (Rom. 8:7). Educate it, refine it, discipline it – do all that you are able to do – yet the human mind remains absolute enmity: absolutely contrary to and in rebellion against God. Even if you bend your mind toward religious pursuits your heart and your mind remain unsafe and deceitful guides for your life and its direction.

**"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom"** (Ps. 111:10). It is wisdom that each person needs to direct his or her path. But a summation of man's predicament is this:

**"There is no fear of God before their eyes"** (Rom. 3:18). Paul wrote that it is **"...Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"** (I Cor. 1:30). Young and old, all need wisdom to guide them in the direction they take in life and that wisdom is only to be found in Jesus Christ.



## The Church Today

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you as an old-fashioned, narrow-minded, fossilized person and say, "Where is the harm?" In short, laxity of ideas among young men, and "fastness" and levity among young women, are only too common characteristics of the rising generation of Christian professors.

A Scriptural view of sin is one of the best antidotes to that vague, dim, misty, hazy kind of theology which is so painfully current in the present age. It is vain to shut our eyes to the fact that there is a vast quantity of so-called Christianity now-a-days which you cannot declare positively unsound, but which, nevertheless, is not full measure, good weight, and sixteen ounces to the pound. It is a Christianity in which there is undeniably "something about Christ, and something about grace, and something about faith, and something about repentance, and something about holiness;" but it is not the real "thing as it is" in the Bible. Things are out of place, and out of proportion.

Stand up for the truth and you are called narrow, illiberal, old-fashioned, and a theological fossil! (Copied from *The Communicator*, April, 1994)



## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 9-1-2017 to 9-30-2017

Beginning Balance ..... \$2,092.69

### RECEIPTS:

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX .....	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV .....	200.00
Carol Willet, 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., Rural Hall, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR .....	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	25.00
Sovereign Grace, B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	34.00
Anonymous .....	1,220.00
Dividing checks .....	0.00
Sub Total .....	\$3,021.50
TOTAL .....	\$5,114.19

### EXPENDITURES:

Printing .....	490.00
Postage .....	520.38
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.96
Dividing checks .....	150.00
Bank Charge .....	13.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,649.34
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$1,464.85

## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 9-1-2017 to 9-30-2017

Beginning Balance ..... \$3,324.87

### RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Calvary I. B. C., Everson, WA .....	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	100.00
.....	425.00
TOTAL .....	3,749.87

### EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time .....	843.98
Program production .....	195.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	1,038.98
.....	2,710.89
Interest .....	+02
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$2,710.91



## Postage & Shipping Chart

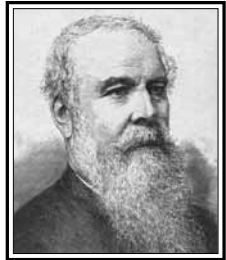
Order Value .....	Add
Minimum .....	\$5.00
\$25.00-49.99 .....	\$6.00
\$50.00-74.99 .....	\$7.00
\$75.00-99.99 .....	\$8.00
\$100.00 and Up .....	FREE

# The Church Today

By J. C. Ryle  
(1816 - 1900)

There is an amazing ignorance of Scripture among many, and a consequent want of established, solid religion. In no other way can I account for the ease with which people are, like children, **“tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine”** (Eph. 4:14.) There is an Athenian love of novelty abroad, and a morbid distaste for anything old and regular, and in the beaten path of our forefathers. Thousands will crowd to hear a new voice and a new doctrine, without considering for a moment whether what they hear is true. There is an incessant craving after any teaching which is sensational, and exciting, and rousing to the feelings. There is an unhealthy appetite for a sort of spasmodic and hysterical Christianity. The religious life of many is little better than spiritual dram-drinking, and the **“meek and quiet spirit”** which the Apostle Peter commends is clean forgotten, (I Peter 3:4.) Crowds, and crying, and hot rooms, and high-flown singing, and an incessant rousing of the emotions, are the only things which many care for. Inability to distinguish differences in doctrine is spreading far and wide, and so long as the preacher is “clever” and “earnest,” hundreds seem to think it must be all right, and call you dreadfully “narrow and uncharitable” if you hint that he is unsound.

I must honestly declare my conviction that, since the days of the Reformation, there never has been so much profession of religion without practice, so much



talking about God without walking with Him, so much hearing God’s words without doing them, as there is at this present date. Never were there so many empty tubs and tinkling cymbals. Never was there so much formality and so little reality. The whole tone of men’s minds on what constitutes practical Christianity seems lowered. The old golden standard

of the behavior which becomes a Christian man or woman appears debased and degenerated. You may see scores of religious people (so-called) continually doing things which in days gone by would have been thought utterly inconsistent with vital religion. The ancient tenderness of conscience about such things seems dying away and becoming extinct, like the dodo; and when you venture to remonstrate with young communicants who indulge in them, they only stare at

♦ (Continued on page 24)

phone: 770-881-1486; Email: Preacher@royal-lion.com or Mail: P.O. Box 861, Fairmount, GA 30139.

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

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

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We are pleased to announce that *The Church That Jesus Built* by Roy Mason is once again available. We have reprinted a limited number of copies. The type has been reset for this edition as all previous editions were copies of copies of copies. Paperback, 147 pages. 50% discount given on orders of five or more. (For shipping see postage chart on page 23).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is seeking a pastor. Please contact Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228 for more information.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Grace Baptist Church of Fairmount, GA is in need of a pastor. Due to old age and health reasons Bro. Al Lyons is planning to retire in October.

The church is looking for a man that believes like they do. They are Sovereign Grace, independent, landmark Baptist. Visit their website which states what they believe: <http://gracebaptistchurchfairmountga.com>.

Interested parties should contact Pastor Al Lyons,

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