

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

An Ignorant America

By Joseph Sidders
of Pemberville, Ohio

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungerd. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every



word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their

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Why Would Your God Allow Evil?

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

Many times in this world, we run into people that question the existence of our God. They point to cancer, murder rates, poverty levels, tornado destruction, child molestation, serial killers and all of the societal evils that exist in the world, and maybe even those that have become personal, as they have either suffered through one of those evils, or know someone who has. The question



from them, to us Christians, then becomes: "Why would your God allow such terrible things to happen? If He is really God, why does He not stop the evil in our world?" Selah! Think about it!

The purpose of this article is to give you the answer for these

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The People Had A Mind To Work

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the



Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before

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The Devil Also Has His Counterfeit Ministry

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

It is commonly conceded that God calls men into the ministry, and certainly the Scriptures plainly teach such. But what sort of a ministry does He call men to perform? It would be strange indeed for the Lord to call men without specifying what they are to do. Most people, including church members, never take the trouble to ascertain from the Bible what men are called to do. Instead, they define the minister's duties without regard to what the Lord says. When men are elected to county or state office their duties are clearly defined. A tax



collector knows what he is to do. He does not make arrests, or pretend to sit on the bench as a judge in court. He sticks to the duties for which he was elected. In the ministry, however, duties are assigned that the Bible knows nothing about. Back behind this is Satan who desires to divert the called man from his God-appointed duties, so as to render him as ineffective as possible. Let us take note of some of the things laid on the preacher contrary to the Scriptures:

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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 strengthen His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellowship 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.

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WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	95.9	3,000	FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	680	5,000	AM
WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	101.9	3,000	FM
KARL, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.	550	5,000	AM

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hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (Matt. 4:1-11).

In this blessed portion of God's Word we see the Lord Jesus tempted by Satan after 40 days and nights of fasting. In His responses Jesus shows us what we are to eat (v. 4), Who we are to trust (v. 7), and how we are to worship and serve (v. 10). As we continue to see our nation scramble to find a moral compass we must, as born-again believers, remind ourselves of this text.

WHAT WE ARE TO EAT?

Let us first consider what we are being fed here in America. First let us consider the public school system's evolution education. As a student in public school I was taught that the dinosaurs roamed the earth before man...billions of years before man! The Bible says the earth is roughly 7,500 years old. They can not both be right so who do you trust, dear reader? **"Choose you this day whom ye will serve...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"** (Josh. 24:15).

It is important to note that prior

to the 19th century, almost every significant Biblical commentator believed the Bible spoke to the age of the earth in a definitive way. What happened? Compromise happened! Over 277 cultures worldwide share a story of a man who saved humanity and animals from extinction by building a vessel to survive a catastrophic deluge; yet evolutionists, who as I have mentioned now have a very strong influence over what the public school students are fed, continue to deny the "Noah truth" of the Bible.

In public school I was taught of an ice age that was brought on by a possible meteor that hit the earth in such a way that its massive size somehow changed the earth's tilt rather than obliterating it. This ice age is supposedly what killed the dinosaurs years before man existed, yet they are mentioned in the Bible together. Twenty-one times in the Old Testament and 12 times in the book of Revelation we see the word "dragon" (The term "dinosaur" was not actually coined until 1841 so you will not find that word in your KJV). Job chapters 40 refers to the dinosaur as a Behemoth and Leviathan: Job 40:15-19 **"Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him."**

In school we were taught that early man was primitive and even referred to him as the caveman. Yet we find Noah was a shipbuilder, as well as a preacher

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WATCHING THE CAT PLAY WITH STRING?



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Light Contemplations

By Luke Austin
of Cadillac, Michigan

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD" (Psalm 107:43).

I CHOOSE WHAT I LOVE

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

It is not a bold statement to say that people will always choose what they prefer. And love is a stronger verb than prefer. But somehow modern "Christianity" tries to convince people to choose that which they not only do not love as they do darkness, but they hate. People are not indifferent to Christ, they are not neutral. They hate Christ. But I am to believe that men and women will choose what they hate over what they love? **"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved"** (John 3:20).

Now if I preach a false christ, an idol, they will choose him. If I fashion an idol that wants to give you health and riches, they will choose that idol. But if I preach the crucified Christ that died for their sins, they will not choose Him. They hate Him for He commands that you repent of your sins. But you love darkness, you love your sins. You will not turn from them. You will not leave them behind. You choose them over Jesus Christ. This is why you must be born again. **"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"** (John 3:3).

Until God grants new life you

can not and will not have Jesus. You do not want Him. You want your darkness. It takes a miracle from the Holy Spirit to breathe new life into a wretched sinner. Then and only then will you repent of your sins and look to Jesus.

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44).

(Luke Austin is a member of the Cadillac Baptist Church of Cadillac, Michigan.)



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and farmer. He used tools and measurements to fulfill the work God called him to do. By the way, we also see tools mentioned later with the tower of Babel and as the Israelites constructed the tabernacle.

A great many dangers have come from Charles Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species*, by Means of Natural Selection, the worst of which has been the bold adoption of its lies against God's truth in our public-school systems. At every turn it robs God of His glory and creates a deafening mistrust between the lost and the born-again believers of this world. After being lied to about history how could our young people suddenly believe in an invisible deity who came and died for their redemption? How could we ask these young people to believe this

public school version of history as well as the Bible's? They contradict one another at every turn.

What of modern man's meal of preferred perversions? These same classrooms today now teach the history of the homosexual movement. They speak of it, not as an atrocity against creation as the Bible firmly does, but rather they focus on it as a movement, praising its supporters and blasting the "bigoted" detractors. The teachers are asked to place emotions and feelings before the precious living truth of God's Word. Is this not the same tactic Satan employed in the garden when he sought to feed Eve the fruit from the tree of knowledge? **"Ye shall not surely die"** he said, "God just wants to hold you back...He does not want you to be as smart as He is." They teach tolerance of sin. The world cries out "Who is the church to call out a sin against God's Word?" or "Do not judge me."

"Coexist" seems to be on every bumper sticker today. Beloved, one of the greatest sins of the nation of Israel was that they were told not to dwell in the land of promise with the other nations or to cohabitate with them but to **"be ye separate."** They teach self-discovery and how to even deceive yourself if God made a mistake in how He made you. "It does not matter what the Bible says!" says the world yet Genesis 18:20 says because of grievous sin there will be judgment. "It does not matter what your chromosomes say!" says the world but Genesis 1:27 says **"Male and female created He them"** and it does not leave room for interpretation. "It does not matter what your heartbeat says!" says abortion clinics and the legalistic way it has been defended by claiming it is "Her"

choice; there is no room for discussing a father's role in this argument. What of the "Pro-choice Christians?" Do we even know that this is an oxymoron? To be a Christian is to be Christ-like, beloved, this means that your life is dictated by the Word of God. Not by our feelings, not by our emotions, not wants but by the will and commandment of God. Does God say that it is ever okay to murder?

In our land of political agendas why have we yet to see a politician campaign to fund adoption instead? Adoption is a Godly term and it is illustrated countless times throughout the Bible. Abortion is listed in the Bible, too, in Exodus 20:13, **"Thou shalt not kill."**

WHO WE ARE TO TRUST

We as a nation display more concern for credit in life than debt to love. One would be hard pressed to turn on the TV or the radio, read a magazine or newspaper, or even answer the phone these days without being told how important their credit score was. It is incredibly easy today to check, barter against, and even to repair one's credit, so that you can get what you want before you actually have the cash to acquire it. Seemingly gone is the generation that would work hard half their lives to purchase something of great value... spending the other half of their lives taking amazing care of it so the next generation could also make use of it. We should be ashamed of ourselves for entering into commitments dealing in credit rather than keeping to our "yea's" and "nay's." Jesus told us in Matthew chapter five that **"whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."**

We have become a nation of

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consumption and all things, as a result, are considered to be perishable and replaceable. The world says keep buying and paying off so that you can keep buying and paying off; earn credit so you can use credit and so the cycle goes. **“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law”** (Rom. 13:1-8).

We have a debt that is more precious, which should be most preeminent in our lives than building credit with man and that is to love one another. If the best we could do in this life is as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6) what good is credit anyways? Jude told us to

love and have compassion that we would “make a difference” pulling some out of the fire with fear but others with love. Paul tells us twice (Eph. 5:16 & Col 4:5) to redeem the time, these days of evil, by walking in Godly wisdom with the grace of God seasoning our speech and the chastity of the Holy Spirit in our works. Do not trust America before God, for that makes this nation your idol. Be wise, dear Christian, with the talents you have been entrusted with.

We need to stop acting as though we have thin skin and thick skulls. Under the First Amendment we have many rights and freedoms protected...and abused. Chapter 9 of the amendment, as an example, protects anything with even the slightest “redemption of social values” (not moral, but social). For example, media (book, film or otherwise) that has “obscenity” is denied First Amendment protection but this same media if it merely has “indecency” is protected. Who do we trust to make this declaration between what is obscene and what is indecent? Webster literally used the word “obscenity” in his definition of the word “indecency.”

Let us consider God’s declaration over the matter. Under God’s Word we are commanded to **“Abstain from all appearance of evil”** in I Thessalonians 5:22. Under God’s Word we are commanded to **“abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication”** in Acts 15:20. God’s Word does not have the same issues with shades of gray that man does. His Word is definitive and should reign preeminent in the heart of the believer. Who are we to trust? Are we to cast ourselves down...count our lives’ forfeit vain or meaningless...give our lives and our modesty to the

world? God forbid!

HOW WE ARE TO WORSHIP AND SERVE

We need more days of prayer to address our hours of need. From our text we see Jesus say: **“Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”** We should note from this that we have a two-fold need: to resist the devil (James 4:7) and to worship God.

Many times throughout our nation’s history, her leaders have encouraged the citizens to pray. In 1952, what is now labeled as a “Hijacking of the constitution by Evangelical Christians” as a measure against “the corrosive forces of communism” Senator Absalom Robertson brought a bill before the Senate to introduce the National Day of Prayer. It passed with the Senate report further claiming: “Prayer has indeed been a vital force in the growth and development of this Nation. It would certainly be appropriate if, pursuant to this resolution, and the proclamation it urges, the people of this country were to unite in a day of prayer each year, each in accordance with his own religious faith, thus reaffirming in a dramatic manner the deep religious conviction which has prevailed throughout the history of the United States.”

This is a history now being denied as citizens begin to once again consider communism as a viable political outlet. While I do not agree theologically with Robertson or Graham, the need to pray for God’s aid in resisting the devil is absolutely supported by God’s Word. The idea of dedicating an entire day to it rather than a minute and a half “as the need arises” is critical. We have heard one another recite prayer almost as a worn-out

poem that we might memorize for grade school, and that has to stop. We must beseech the Lord to bring about revival according to His will.

We must begin to desire peace rather than retribution or getting even. To obtain peace by man’s definition one party has to be deemed guilty and the other innocent. This truth is as old as man’s history and is illustrated by the children in our household. For one to be happy, blame has to be allocated and judgment rendered based on the findings. God’s truth says that all are found guilty in the eyes of the Only one worthy of making such a judgment, God Himself. There is none good, no not one! God’s truth goes on to say that the only way to ever find peace will be to do so by the free gift of His grace and redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Man will grow old and weary at the search for peace in this life but we can store up treasures that shall never expire nor corrupt by pursuing and living for the truth of Christ. **“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and**

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Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of
Clendenin, West Virginia

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

INTEGRITY

"The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them" (Pro. 11:3).

Integrity means to be whole, complete, or sound. A building, with structural integrity, will stand strong when the storm comes rolling in. Or, when people talk about the "integrity of our elections," they are talking about the soundness and reliability of the process. If a person has integrity they are morally whole and sound. To have integrity you need convictions and the gumption to stand upright by them. A man of integrity stands upright. But what is the difference between a man of integrity and a hardheaded individual? Many confuse their cantankerousness for conviction, but how can we distinguish the two? To stand with integrity, you need a foundation. If the structure of your conviction is going to have any integrity, it needs a strong base, the truth of God's Word. It is hard to remain upright, slipping and sliding in the mud, no matter how confident you are about your footing. Having opinions and sticking to them is not necessarily a recipe for holiness. Being truly convinced and being wrong is not a good road to travel. Know truth and stick to it.

When your foundational belief is to do whatever benefits you in the moment, your own crooked ways will be your doom. The sin and its deceitfulness used to get what you want, in the end, becomes your own judgment.

Like wicked Haman, in the Book of Esther, who built the gallows to hang his enemy Mordecai in a treacherous and murderous plot, was in the end the one who was swinging from them when his plan backfired. Having no core convictions or compromising the truth can be beneficial for a little while, but in the end, you will pay a heavy price.

The man of integrity is not going to bend due to public pressure. He will not be swayed by the popularity of his positions. He will not change, even if he knows it will cost him. In Paul's letter to Titus, the second chapter deals with issues he wanted Titus to preach. To the young men in the church, he wanted them to be sound in doctrine and their life. They should believe the truth, speak the truth sincerely and live the truth with integrity. **"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you"** (Titus 2:7-8). If you want to be a person of integrity you need to have integrity in your belief. When Moses sent Joshua and Caleb to spy out the promised land before entering, they came back with an honest report. But the people did not like what they heard. The tide of public opinion was beginning to turn against them. Because they were men of integrity, they stood on the promises of God and rebuked the

people for their lack of faith and exhorted them to take the land. The result? The people wanted to stone them. Men of integrity are rarely popular while they live because they have to stand against the majority.

(Doug Newell IV is pastor of the Buffalo Valley Baptist Church of Clay, West Virginia.)



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followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. 10:32-42).

Where does this study leave you, beloved? Are your wrestling with what you want God's Word to say about your life style and what it actually declares? Are you hurt by the deceitful teachings of this world? Are you tired of watching our youth be lied to and then turning on us when we offer them the truth? Lead them up in the way they should go, at home, and do it every day.

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father:

for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. 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. 11:25-30).



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inquirers. The Bible answers it many times over, so it is not difficult really. Some of these folks that ask this serious question are atheists (deniers of God) and think they already know the answer, and are just trying to get you to question your faith. That is okay. We will tell them the truth, too! But some of the folks asking are truly desirous of reconciling the evil in the world with an Almighty God that seems to be apathetic toward them and their need for peace and understanding. That is even better. These poor folks really need your answers, so let us get them from the Bible.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?

"My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God" (Psalm 42:3)? This is the first question to ask. It is a polarizing question that needs to set the parameters of our conversation. "Do you believe in God?"

Typically, there will be one of three responses: 1) an atheist will

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answer “No!” 2) an agnostic will answer “I do not know!” and 3) the beleaguered believer may answer “Yes, but...” That is fine, beloved reader. Now we know how to proceed with answering them in a Biblical manner that will give them the necessary truth for their particular cases.

THERE IS A GOD IN THE HEAVENS!

Let us start as the Bible does: **“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”** (Gen. 1:1). The Bible imperiously starts off assuming the existence of God. There is no attempt by Moses to start off with a long essay on the necessity of a first cause and the explanation of God’s supernatural and eternal existence. Just keep reading the Bible and that will be all made clear in the exposition and relevance of the Scriptures, but for now, just let me and Moses tell you that there IS a God in the heavens, just like Daniel announces to his own enquirer. **“Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days”** (Dan. 2:27-28).

Creation is where the Apostle Paul starts also, as he speaks to the modern Athenians on Mars’ Hill: **“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription,**

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (Acts 17:22-29).

BUT MAN FELL INTO EVIL, WHEN HE REBELLED AND SINNED

“And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and...took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:8, 15-17). Most folks know this primal tale of rebellion in the Garden of Eden by the first couple of humanity, but we do well to repeat it for those who may not know. As the dark third chapter of Genesis recounts,

Satan entered this paradise of man and deceived Eve into eating of the forbidden fruit, and Adam also, ate and died spiritually. **“Wherefore, as by one man (not God) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”** (Rom. 5:12). The natural state of man is now marked by that characteristic of death, which biblically speaking, means separation. That is how we use the word death, too. When a person dies, it just means that their soul has been separated from their body. No more life in the now, inanimate body, but the immortal soul of man lives on. **“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works”** (Matt. 16:26-27). Yes, it is only logical that there will be an accounting and judgment at the end of our days here on God’s Earth. Selah! Think about it!

THE WORLD IS NOW FULL OF LOST AND SAVED

There is really just two kinds of people in this world. Not black and white. Not rich and poor. Not beautiful and ordinary. Not old and young. Although there are many different ways to characterize the denizens of Earth, for the question at hand, it boils down to either you are a believer in God, or you are an unbeliever in God. Selah!

The reason I say that, is because it is the essence of the question: **“Why Would Your God Allow Evil Things to Happen?”** The answer to that question creates two columns of people on the Earth’s ledger. The first column

is the believers (Christians). God loves the believers and they will be protected, and given strength, courage, comfort, joy, peace, ability and most of all love. No matter what happens and no matter how bad the evil: The Bible says (and I believe!) that God is going to take care of me and the rest of the believers. See that connection? Believe! Believers! and God loves them for that! Note what happens to the Philippian Jailer in Acts 16:29-34: **“Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”** He is definitely a Christian believer in Christ!

But the second column is where the jailer came from. Unbelievers. Before he put Paul and Silas into prison, he obeyed the magistrates and they whipped and beat God’s precious servants of the first column. This is kind of a trend at certain times and ages in human history. The Apostle Paul was no better than this Philippian jailer. Listen to Paul’s testimony in I Timothy 1:13-15: **“...(I) was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding**

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Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of
Pemberville, Ohio

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God" (Deuteronomy 32:2-3).



CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

Like many others out there, I spent a large portion of my early adult life looking for my "calling." For twenty years, I searched various career options hoping there was something I was meant to do.

I was not unemployed, playing video games all day hoping fate would find me, but I would go all in to each and every new opportunity that came, even if it included an entirely different direction than the way I was previously headed. In college, I had quite a few majors before graduating with one. I was an Early Education major, a Music Education major; I investigated Astronomy for a while, then finished after four years with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Marketing with minors in Business Law and Management (Do not forget that I was recently a pastor who delivered groceries for a living).

After college, I had quite a few careers. Each one came with different possibilities of promise, as every new challenge seemed like the one I had been training my whole life for. Yet, before long, for a myriad of reasons, it was not. It was exciting, just not what I was meant to do.

In Matthew 19:16-24 we see a haunting encounter between a man and Jesus Christ. This man, for all intents and purposes, was seeking his calling in life. Jesus would refer to him in verse 23

as a rich man, but this was not necessarily due to his finances or wealth. The man came to Jesus and asked "...**what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life**" (Matt. 19:16)? This man was rich because he had the knowledge that Jesus had something to be desired, and that only He held the answers for how it might be obtained.

Jesus said that if this man desired to be "Christ-like," which is the true definition of Christian, he needed to go and sell all that he had. He needed to be generous and give to the poor. He then needed to come and follow Christ. In Luke 9:23 Jesus rephrases this all into one sentence: "...**If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.**"

To God's children, this is the calling we have desired to hear our entire lives without knowing it. When God enabled me to understand that all of my careers were unfulfilling because I was serving the wrong master, I leapt about as the lame man who had been healed. I left a job paying a substantial salary to take on a calling that pays in blessings that can not be measured. I study everyday with excited anticipation of how I might be used. I do not do it for overtime or for a promotion, but that I might be found watching. I accepted the unpaid opportunity to write this weekly column in our local paper to proclaim the work God has done in my life, so that

it might inspire others to let go of what is causing them to stumble in their own lives.

Some will be as this young man: unwilling to let go of what they have invested in the world, and unable to admit that there is something bigger than themselves. It is my prayer though, that you find your true purpose in life's journey as you follow Him.



God Allow Evil?

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abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

Now, do not get the wrong idea. Notice that the second column is not labeled persecutors of God's people, but merely unbelievers. Not all unbelievers will get to the point of persecuting God's precious children. They simply are not placed in that position during their lives, whether through lack of opportunity or will, matters not. It is not a matter of quantity, or really even the quality of sins that puts folks in that second column- it is really just a matter of unbelief. Do you believe in God? If the answer is "YES!," then first column you go. If the answer is anything else: then, obviously, logically, inevitably- off to the second column for you unbeliever. That is what the Bible says in 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.**"

WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL?

Ok, so there are two columns. Believers in God and those that do not believe in God. Big deal!

We already knew that! Lots of people believe in Allah, Buddha, or only in their own ability to pull themselves up by their own britches. What does that have to do with evil in this world? Selah! Think about it!

Well, the bad news is that while God loves the people in the first column; He hates the people in the second column. If you are in the second column, the Bible says God hates you. "**God judgeth (protects) the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day**" (Ps. 7:11) Two columns. "**For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man**" (Ps. 5:4-6). Want some personal examples of two columns? The Bible has those, too. "**As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated**" (Rom. 9:13). Why did he love Jacob and his grandfather Abraham? "**And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness**" (Gen. 15:6). "**For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness**" (Rom. 4:3). "**Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness**" (Gal. 3:6). "**And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God**" (James 2:23).

Do you see now the importance of the two columns? Jesus, Himself showed the infinite gap concerning the believers and unbelievers, in that He prayed

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only for the believers! **"I pray for them (believers): I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine"** (John 17:9). That echoes what God told Jeremiah in Jeremiah 11:14: **"Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble."**

What we must understand is that the folks in the second column of unbelief are reaping the proper wages of their unbelief and by their stubborn refusal to "repent and believe" they are guaranteeing for themselves the anger and justice of our powerful and sovereign God. Why would they expect any good at all to come upon them and their equally unbelieving families? We might erroneously call it "evil," but God calls it judgment! **"For the wages of sin is death..."** (Rom. 6:23). **"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"** (John 8:24). **"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom"** (Luke

16:19-23). In this story (and every story), column one goes to Glory; column two goes to Hell.

EVIL COMES BECAUSE OF SIN

Hold on here now! You mean God allows evil in this world, just because everyone does not believe in Him as God? Yes! That is it! Imagine with me a special world where there is no sin. If there is no sin, there will be no evil. Actually, one does not have to imagine, that is what Heaven will be. **"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new..."** (Rev. 21:1-5).

Evil will always be in this world as long as there is a second column in this world. Let us look at one scenario, so that everyone sees the logic behind God's handling of the matter. What about if we get a call from the doctor and hear that dreaded word? Cancer and/or other diseases will remain, because God is judging sin. Okay, so what is our response? 1) Unbeliever's varied responses: "God, how could you?" "God, I hate You!" "If there is a God that is powerful enough to heal

my child, but does not, He is a Monster!" It can vary much, but they are all consistent in one thing: They do not believe in God (and His attributes).

GOD GIVES HIS CHILDREN GRACE WHEN EVIL COMES

Now contrast it with the first column's responses: 2) "Please LORD, if it be Your Will, heal my child." "LORD, give me Grace! I do not understand, but I Trust You!" "Weeping is my lot, O God, O please do not take my child from me! But if You do, I know that she will be in Heaven with You..." (II Sam. 12:15-23). Now, again, the answers vary, but a true believer, even though it may take awhile for the trust to kick in, will inevitably be brought into a "peace that passeth understanding." **"While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly"** (Job 1:18-22).

I use David and Job as Bible examples, but I know from God's promises that God will give each of His precious children that love Him (column 1), the grace sufficient for the day's evil. **"But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find**

him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them" (Deu. 4:29-31). **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"** (Matt. 6:3-34). **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"** (I Cor. 10:13).

As Job's wife lost her hope, she did not lose her faith, God's people can not. **"So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips"** (Job 2:7-10). Notice that as Satan delivered "evil" unto Job's family, Job retained his integrity.

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Brief Truths

By Randy Johnson of
Texarkana, Texas

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13).



YOU ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

Please allow me to explain an especially important fact, ignorance will not excuse anyone from judgment and hell. It is true that God is God, He is a very Sovereign God, He is a very holy God, He is a very righteous God, and He is the very God of judgment. God is not a Judge that excuses people. While He is a loving and forgiving God, that forgiveness is extremely limited. One of these days all the population of the world, that is the world in totality from start to finish will stand before Jesus Christ in judgment, the saved at one time and the lost at another, but all will stand before Him and account, even for their ignorance. People have rejected and hid from God since the fall, but they will not hide in the judgment. Adam and Eve hid from God after the fall and man has been hiding ever since, even today mankind hides under the rock of ignorance, Paul wrote these words to the church in Rome, **"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God"** (Rom. 3:11). God said it is not that they do not understand, but they do not seek Him. It is for this reason they are **"without**

excuse" and will suffer judgment and condemnation in the fires of eternal hell.

People also hide under their ignorance of God, for example, **"there is no God"** (Ps. 53:1), but that is just a bush to hide under. To doubt that God exists, or that God is not what He truly is, is simply human ignorance and people are hiding from God. The fact that God exists is without question or argument because there is only one explanation of creation, God created it. If you search to find another source which all creation comes from you only find more questions than answers. The most common opposite thought is the one Charles Darwin invented back in the 1800's called "the science of evolution." The problem with this theory is it does not explain where "life" comes from. Another thought is called "The Big Bang Theory" and according to this theory, our universe sprang into existence as "singularity" around 13.7 billion years ago. Without getting too deep in this thought, "singularity" is thought to exist at the core of "black holes." Black holes are areas of intense gravitational pressure. And it was from this the Big Bang came, and the world was created from it. However, once again it is full of holes, for example where did the "singularity" come from or the elements of it? People hide under these theories and one day they will find out ignorance is without excuse. The Bible is the best and most logical

explanation of creation but with mankind. **"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God"** (Rom. 3:11).

The Bible answers every single question about creation, it has the answer of where life came from, it has the answer where the heavens came from, it has the answer where man and every other created being comes from, it even answers the greatest mystery question of all "what came first the chicken or the egg," the chicken! God says just look around, read the Bible, and you will be without excuse about the existence of God. The same is the salvation of the human soul, salvation is not hidden except by blindness. A refusal to understand God and His gift, Jesus Christ. All we need to know about salvation is found in two verses, Ephesians 2:8-9: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."** But mankind hides from the **"faith"** **"not of yourselves"** **"it is the gift of God"** and **"not of works."** People, even them that call themselves Christians and churches eliminate all these points from their reasoning of salvation. Therefore, they hide behind humanism believing that they must create their own salvation excluding the entire Godhead, the Father from grace, the Son from His acts of that grace on the cross, and the Holy Spirit from His power of giving us the new birth.

Folks, when you eliminate God from things you never have answers for, you only have more unanswerable questions. Therefore, hide if you please, but when you stand before the Great White Throne of judgment, Jesus will tell you why you did not

come out from hiding, **"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"** (Matt. 7:23). Because non-believers are without excuse!

(Randy Johnson is pastor of the Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Texarkana, Texas.)



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His wife struggled and felt like it was hopeless, but as a child of God, notice her words. She did not say, "Curse the gods! Curse Satan! Curse our bad run of luck!" NO! She knew WHO was responsible for everything that happens in the universe. She told Job to curse God Almighty (and in doing so, to die, because of such great blasphemy against the very real God of the universe that she BELIEVED in!) Beloved reader, she is in column 1. She believes in God, and it is counted to her for righteousness, just like Abraham. She, who had lost her hope, but could not lose her faith. Husband Job reminded her that they (as Adam's descendants) were going to receive both good and bad/evil in this world, but that we just needed to continue to trust Him. Selah! Think about it! It will be alright, as long as we do not give up. This then is the principle of life for column one people of belief. They have faith and they do trust their God (eventually, even all of us) Check out the last chapter of Job, and there is Mrs. Job having her faith validated, too, with the birth of more children to the glory of her God.

IS GOD OBLIGATED?

But what about column two people? The unbelievers? The truth is that God is under no obligation whatsoever to rebels

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Little Valleys

By Timothy J. Hille of
Ashland, Illinois

"He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills." (Psalms 104:10).



THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS CONCERNING THE SON OF MAN

Luke 18:31-34

It is difficult to imagine how our wonderful, merciful, and glorious Savior pursued so unflinchingly the course that He did, knowing all the while that it would take Him to Calvary. He knew all along when, as He called it, "**mine hour**" (John 2:4), would come, and all that hour would entail. All that was appointed Him He gladly and graciously fulfilled. All that was ordained He accomplished. All that was involved He undertook and completed. All that hindered, obstructed, impeded, and opposed, He overcame.

*What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
That caused the Lord of bliss, to bear
the dreadful curse,
For my soul ...*

*When I was sinking down beneath
God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside His crown for my
soul.*

(from the hymn, *What Wondrous Love Is This*)

All His elect He shall bring into the fold. All the saints He will bring home to glory. How can my heart do anything but love Him, and be in awe of Him. How can my lips do anything but praise Him. How can my time be yielded to anything but His will. How else can my life be spent but to please and honor Him.

Jesus was at this present time headed toward Jerusalem for the last time. He had been avoiding Jerusalem, and many of the places where the Pharisees, Sadducees, and other leading sects of the Jews held sway, because they were

seeking to kill Him (John 7:1; 11:7-8; Mark 10:32-34). The disciples were frightened at the prospect of once again going to Jerusalem, and were in amazement at the Lord because of His solemn, stern, unflinching, and at the same time willing and cheerful demeanor. Beloved, it may seem strange to others, and they may think you are, at the least, making a mistake, and, at the worst, beside yourself, when you are whole-heartedly pursuing the will of God for your life. I remember when the Lord called me into the ministry, and I had a friend who claimed to be saved, and possibly even to be some sort of Baptist or other; but he did not care for the course I was taking, and he began to tell others who knew me that I was taking this "religion thing" a little too serious. How serious did Jesus take going to the cross for you and me, beloved? How undeterred was He from doing the will of the Father Who sent Him, and finishing His work? How glad are we that He did so! You cannot take your service to the Lord too seriously, nor can you be too unflinching in your devotion to the will of God. If you have done all, then you are but an unprofitable servant. But thanks be to God that we profit from the work of the Son of man, the faithful Servant of Jehovah, who took up the cross and finished the work which the Father gave Him to do, though it meant being delivered into the wicked hands of sinful men, and being bruised by Jehovah for our sins.

Jesus took the twelve disciples aside from the rest, and from the multitude, to explain to them

what was going to take place. He had already told them on previous occasions (Luke 9:18-22, 43-45). Now He tells them again. They were slow to understand, even at this time, and as we know, until He was risen. We can thank God if He has worked graciously in us, so that having not seen yet we have believed, even to the saving of our souls.

I would like to encourage you at this time, that if there is something that you do not understand, do not let that deter you from following the Lord fully. The disciples did not understand all that Jesus told them, but they continued to follow Him. Sadly, there are many following things today that they do not understand, but they think they do, and they are deceived and following things that are vain and of no profit, and many are even devilish. You never need to fear following Jesus. He deceives no one. He defrauds no one. He described in plain and unmistakably accurate detail to the disciples what was going to happen to Him at Jerusalem. Beloved, our Lord and Savior tells us what is going to take place. He makes no false promises. He makes no false claims. He does not exaggerate in order to inflate your enthusiasm. He does not seek to motivate you with grandiose inspirations that are merely being said to get you to do what He wants, like some sort of motivational speaker or salesman or politician. No, beloved, He speaks the truth and is the truth. You may not fully understand the truth, but it remains true nonetheless.

I would like to encourage you as well to go aside with Jesus and be taught by Him when there is something you do not understand. Do not be afraid to be taken aside to be with the Lord in the school of wisdom. Do not be afraid to learn more and more of Him. I will tell you that the times I have learned

some hard things or things I did not understand were the times I earnestly asked the Lord to show them unto me. I have prayed, and my pastor at the time would preach on the very thing or from the very text of Scripture about which I had prayed to have understanding. Beloved, look to the Lord for understanding, just as you ought to look to Him for all other things. You looked to Him for salvation, did you not? Then look to Him for understanding, yea, for all things.

I want you to notice that Jesus said, "**Behold ... all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished**" (Luke 18:31). Beloved, you can count on "**all things that are written**" in the Word of God, that they "**shall be accomplished.**" (Read II Peter 1:19-21). Notice the minute detail that Jesus describes of His sufferings – and every jot and tittle was fulfilled. He was delivered to the Gentiles, being handed over to the Romans to be condemned and crucified. He was mocked, insulted and insultingly treated, and spit upon. He was scourged, and then put to death. He did rise the third day! Oh, we have an infallible and unfailing guide and resource in the Word of God. Your best reason for believing anything and doing anything is "because the Bible tells me so." Sad, is it not, that we will behave as though what is said to us in the Scriptures is uncertain, but what men say is certain. Nothing could be more backwards than that. Beloved, God's Word is sure and certain, and therefore may we, like Jesus did, proceed with certainty in doing the Father's will in everything. Jesus did not go about in doubt. Never did He behave as though the things which were written in the Scriptures were uncertain, or merely possibilities,

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maybes that may or may not come to pass. We need to imitate Him in this way, and be unflinching and undeterrable in our devotion to the paths of righteousness and the course which He has called us to finish, as He was in finishing His course (I Cor. 9:24-27). We do not run an uncertain race, beloved; and so we should not run it in an uncertain manner. There is no question that they who overcome as Jesus overcame shall receive the crown of life and the crown of righteousness. Let there be no question as to our allegiance to Him and our surrender and submission to His will in everything.

What was it that the Holy Spirit-inspired prophets had written **"concerning the Son of man?"** **"He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on"** (Luke 18:32). Truly indeed these very things were prophesied centuries beforehand by the Old Testament prophets, and they were all fulfilled to the letter, proving that Jesus was the One whom the prophecies of Old Testament Scriptures called **"the Son of man,"** the Messiah, the prince, the Redeemer, and Jehovah's anointed, the Christ, the Son of God. Again, how can we not but marvel at His great love for us. From the foundation of the world He has been **"the Lamb slain"** (Rev. 13:8), our Passover, our Redeemer, our sin-bearer and substitute. He wrote the things which were written concerning Himself, **"for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"** (Rev. 19:10). It has been said, and rightly so I think, that He created trees in the beginning, knowing that by the cruel and wicked hands of unbelieving, sinful men

He would be hanged upon a tree. He created the iron that is in the earth, that would be used to make the nails that were driven into His hands and feet. He created the thorns that would be placed upon His head as a mocking crown. And all those things that were done to Him were due to you and me. We should have been the ones treated like criminals and transgressors, for so we were toward God and men; but He **"was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification"** (Rom. 4:25).

Not only was He treated in so humiliating a fashion, and with such disdain and contempt, such hatred and disregard, like a worm and not a man, but they also, as it was written of Him, **"put him to death."** Beloved, how can we shirk any difficulty, shame, ridicule, or mistreatment for the name of Jesus' sake, when the Son of man bore all that He did on account of our sins? How can we ever not take up our cross daily, denying ourselves, and following Him? I should be ashamed to be ashamed of Him, and to not gladly suffer for His sake, whatever form that suffering may take. Shall not they who suffer with Him also reign with Him? Can I not bear to be mocked, to be insulted, to be disrespected and disregarded, to be counted as nothing, to be spit upon, to be beaten, to be imprisoned, to be tortured, to be killed, if it is for His sake? Is it not fit that I should in such a way identify with the suffering and dying Son of man, prove my love and loyalty to Him, and bear witness of Him?

Beloved, the Holy Spirit of God through the prophets **"testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"** (I Pet. 1:11). **"And the third day he shall rise again."** And now we joyfully anticipate through Him to partake of that first and

blessed resurrection. Though we die, we shall live with Him. And if we bear shame for His name, how much more glorious shall that blessed resurrection be, when we see Him as He is, and rejoice in His presence, and receive from Him a crown that fadeth not away.

"Here our Saviour deliberately thinks and talks about his death, yet he never flinches, or looks back, but he prepares his heart for the solemn event, and sets his face like a flint to go through it all so that he may save the souls of his people. We also ought to think and talk much of our Lord's death, since he thought and spoke so much about it" (Exposition on Luke 18:31-19:10, between Sermons 2458 and 2459, Spurgeon, C. H.).

How deliberate was the Son of man in His work to save His people from their sins. How deliberate we ought to be in our work for His sake to which He has called us, in our fishing for men, in our holding forth the Word of life, in our being living epistles known and read by all men, in our thoughts and words and deeds. How much He set Himself for Calvary. Paul said, **"I am set for the defence of the gospel"** (Phil. 1:17). Are we set to live for Christ this day, and every day? Do our thoughts run constantly in that direction, to live for Christ? Are we seeking daily to deny ourselves and do His good and perfect will? Are we in prayer, meditation, and forethought of how we shall witness to those about us of His death on the cross for sinners? Are we in earnest to be found faithful when He comes?

"And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." Ah, the poor disciples and their hardness of heart! We are no different. May the Son

of man be as gracious to us as He was with them. Has He not been so? Must we not confess that He is gentle, forgiving, kind, and glad to instruct us, weak-and-stubborn-minded though we be?

"It would be hard to imagine our Lord speaking more plainly. He tells them — of his sufferings in detail — describes exactly what happened. But their thoughts did not run that way; and when you are not expecting a thing, it little matters how very plainly you may be told of it. You are doting upon something else, and, therefore, you do not readily perceive the meaning. You know how; when you are expecting to hear a thing said, you can hear it even at a great distance, or think you hear it, from the very motion of the man's lips. But if he should say something clean contrary to what you expect, then you do not so readily hear. And these disciples of our Lord were looking to see him made a king, and they could not comprehend that the only crown he was to have would be one of thorns, and that the homage paid to him would be to be scourged and to be spat upon. They did not understand. And do not you think that the run of our thoughts sometimes may be so contrary to divine truth that we may not be able to understand some very plain things in the Bible, which are only difficult to us because our thoughts are not yet running that way? And when one day we shall be more completely cleansed from the grossness of this world, many a riddle will become plain enough to us" (Exposition on Luke 18:31-43, between sermons 3497 and 3498, Spurgeon, C. H.).

(Timothy J. Hille is pastor of the Pleasant Plains Baptist Church of Pleasant Plains, Illinois)



END

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Was there something supernatural that occurred when Jesus spoke in John 18:6, since the men went backward and fell on the ground?

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"As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18:6).

Absolutely it was supernatural! It was more than that, it was the assertion of the indescribable Name of God. A. W. Pink says, "It was the Divine majesty. It was a quiet exhibition of His Divine power. It was a signal demonstration that He was "the Word" (1:1)! HE did not strike them with His hand—there was no need to; He simply spoke two monosyllables and they were completely overcome.

Beloved, He is the Lord God Almighty, the great **"I AM"**! The One that spoke this world into existence. **"And God Said"**:

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3).

"And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters" (Gen. 1:6).

"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so" (Gen. 1:9).

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree

yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so" (Gen. 1:11).

We can go on and on...He is **"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."**

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8).

"Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea" (Rev. 1:11).

"And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6).

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Rev. 22:13).

To think or say less of Him would be a disgrace and an Abomination to the Godhead. As stated above, He is absolute Divine Power, just a whisper from Him and the universe would be totally obliterated. In my opinion, what Jesus did...the Great **"I AM"** is incomprehensible (unintelligible) and can not be truly explained by mere mortal men. Supernatural would be just the tip of the iceberg for a thorough explanation of what happened in John 18:6.

If we would have a better understanding of His Divine Supernatural Power, I would dare to think that there would be less sin in our world today. God Bless!

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John 18:4-7 states: **"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth."**

1. As God manifest in the flesh, Jesus knew why the multitude led by Judas was approaching. Jesus knew that the betrayal of Judas signaled the beginning of intense physical and soul suffering that was incomprehensible to our finite minds. Jesus knew that He would be falsely accused, spat upon, beaten, humiliated, nailed to a tree, and that His physical life would expire. In spite of a perfect knowledge of the approaching events our Lord remained in the garden awaiting those who would arrest Him. His actions speak volumes about the voluntary nature of His sacrifice. Our Lord gave Himself for us freely, and without compulsion. It was His earnest desire to fulfill the Father's Divine will and die in the stead of the elect even though it meant He would have to endure an eternity

of suffering God's wrath on the cross.

2. Jesus went forth to the multitude and with a voice of supreme authority asked who it was that they were seeking for. The multitude did not know that it was Jesus who was doing the speaking. Their eyes were blinded to the Lord Jesus Christ. Even Judas failed to perceive that it was Jesus who was speaking. Their physical inability to see Christ mirrored their spiritual inability to recognize Jesus as Lord and Saviour. They answered by saying that they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth. In their minds they were there to apprehend a mere man. Even though the Light of the world was in their presence the multitude that came to arrest Christ comprehended it not. They were spiritually blind as II Corinthians 4:3-4 declares: **"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."**

3. When the multitude answered that they were seeking Jesus of Nazareth a most remarkable and miraculous thing occurred. Jesus used His voice of great power, the same voice He employed in the creation of the universe and said **"I am he."** As soon as Jesus said that, Judas and the multitude that were with him, fell to the ground backward! A secret invisible power accompanied the Saviour's voice of thunder, that knocked an entire detachment of battle hardened Roman soldiers flat on their backs. What a scene it must have been! What power the voice of the Son of God must have! These armed soldiers were utterly

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Can you please comment on I Peter 1:16?

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"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15-16).

Holiness in its highest sense belongs only to God and is the underlying attribute of His deific character. Holiness defined is to be perfectly sanctified to a particular purpose and/or person. In the case of the Almighty, He is perfect in every sense to His righteousness and to His own person, thereby He claims, "I AM HOLY!" Selah! Think about it!

In the common usage of the word, sinless perfection is typically inferred. God exhibits that perfect holiness in every attribute and emotion; characteristic and nature: His holy love, wrath, justice, mercy, works, hatred, righteousness, eyes, kingdom, etc. There is nothing about God that is not holy, both essentially and practically. In a very real sense, the holiness of God, as it speaks to His perfection, also speaks to His uniqueness (the only impeccable One) and His position as moral arbiter of eternity (He alone defines right/wrong and good/evil). Righteousness and the concept of being incomparable are thus implied by the holiness of God. When we are sanctified (holy) unto our service to God,

we are separated from what is common or ordinary. Therefore the act of being holy can be termed uncommon, or extraordinary. I think a very good picture of the absolute holiness of God can be seen around the throne of God in Isaiah 6:3: **"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."**

What do they mean, with this chant? "Sinless perfection, righteous, incomparable!" As we recognize the absolute holiness of God, the refrain is actually saying, "amazing, astounding, inimitable." God has sanctified Himself so far from the ordinary, that He is "solitary, unique, perfect" or as the Holy Lamb of God is so often referred to in His holiness: "flawless, without blemish, spotless," summing the angels chorus is the eternal and infinitely proper: "holy, holy, holy!"

I mentioned that holiness in its highest sense could only refer to our triune God. But since the root definition is still sanctified to a purpose or person, holiness is something that God can confidently command His children, as He requires His people to be holy to Him like He is (I AM). We can no longer be carnally profane or common, but we must spiritually apply ourselves and our desires toward Him. This again (see above) requires us to be uncommon and extraordinary, as the unholy world around us continues in common acts and ordinary characteristics. It would of course be impossible for us to attain to the degree of holiness (as He is holy), but it is

not impossible to be sanctified to His will and person, as the Lord gives us sufficient grace to obey His commandments and submit to His will.

It must be reaffirmed that holiness is not primarily defined as perfection (although that would be the goal of holiness); and so it will be that some saints will be more holy than others by the mere fact that they are more fully sanctified to our merciful Master. When we sin, we are unholy, but when we repent and reapply ourselves to sanctification, we are once again holy. God's grace and forgiveness are the means, but holiness ultimately must be something that we desire, therefore the phrasing of our text verse: **"...be ye holy..."** Oh, that we would desire to be: extraordinary, uncommon, flawless, righteous, and even perfect for a few moments, in a exceptional endeavor. Selah! Think about it!

As we peer into the hallowed (holy) future of glorious (holy) Heaven, we can take comfort and joy in His promises that He will make us perfect, flawless and, yes, holy with new holy bodies, mind, and spirit. As we finally attain perfect holiness, there will be no pride or self involved, because only the supreme holy power of God will be the source and maintenance of our extraordinary righteousness, supreme flawlessness, and amazing perfection. "Holy, holy, holy?" No, not us! In a certain perspective, our holiness will become common in that glorious land of universal holiness, until we look into the unique, incomparable person of our Lord and Saviour. Multitudes of holy angels; innumerable holy saints, but one holy, holy, holy triune God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Selah!

Think about it!

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"For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Lev. 11:44).

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

As you can see, Jesus in the Book of Matthew gives us the same thought as does Peter. **"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"** (I Peter 1:16).

God is a Holy being and he cannot sin, it is not that He does not sin, He cannot sin, it is not in His nature to do so. **"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth"** (Isa. 53:9).

The word holy here in Peter means sanctification, or sanctify. It means to make holy; set apart as sacred; consecrate, to purify or free from sin. We are in the world, we, now being **"born again"** are to live separated lives from the wickedness and evil of this world.

God is holy, separated from the sins and the evil things of this world, and has commanded us to do the same as shown in Leviticus 11:44. All though we know we cannot reach sinless perfection in this life and be as our Saviour (one day we will) we still can strive each

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helpless and overpowered by the mere words of Jesus Christ. This singular demonstration of Divine power should cause every Christ rejecting sinner to tremble at the thought of facing Jesus Christ in judgment. What will His sovereign voice be like when He judges the wicked and casts them into the Lake of Fire? Oh, what a dreadful day awaits every Christ rejecter when they hear His voice of wrath thunder **"Depart from me!"**

4. I think it is significant to note that when Christ spoke to this unbelieving multitude they fell backward, not forward. When God's elect are before the Lord you find them bowing before Him in worship, never falling backward. The shenanigans of fake healing charlatans in our day prove that they are not of God. Those who they claim to touch and heal often fall backwards after being smitten on the forehead. Such a response is never recorded in the Bible by those who had been healed of the Lord!

5. What happened on this occasion was the fulfillment of at least two Messianic Psalms. Psalm 27:1-2 declares: **"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell."** Psalms 35:4 states: **"Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt."**

6. After the multitude led by Judas gathered themselves and picked themselves up off the

ground, Jesus once again asked them who they were seeking for. Once again they said they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth. They still did not recognize Him as the Christ, but regarded Him merely as Jesus of Nazareth. Even though He had just demonstrated His Almighty power and majesty, their hearts were unmoved.

A. W. Pink rightly observed:

"No outward means will soften those who are resolved on wickedness. No miracles, however awesome, will melt men's enmity: nothing will suffice except God works directly by His Word and Spirit...Nothing but a miracle of sovereign grace, the putting forth of omnipotent power, can bring a blaspheming rebel out of darkness into God's marvellous light. Many a soul has been terrified, as were these men in the Garden, and yet continued in their course of alienation from God."

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"Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18:3-6).

The power of the spoken word of God was on display in the Garden. The same voice that by fiat called the created universe into existence echoes this night throughout Gethsemane. **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"** (John 1:1-3, 14). Yes, a revelation of the supernatural power of Jesus Christ is paraded before them. Selah! Think about it!

Napoleon or Caesar could use their voices to command soldiers to forcibly knock these subservients on their backs, or perhaps the very fear of such reprisals might cause the men to one-by-one consider their options and bow the knee in fear. Nebuchadnezzar, anyone? But can he force that complete obedience from Shadrach and his brethren? Christ can work in many ways, as in the touching of man's conscience in John 8:9: **"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst."**

But the supernatural power of Jesus Christ in the garden was over their synaptic impulses deep in the musculature and nervous systems of this band of rogues. Like puppets on a string, bereft of any life and power in the presence of the almighty omnipotent One, once He had unplugged their source of power (Himself).

Omnipotence does mean all power. The only power any being has is merely delegated power, (Gk: dunamis) and none have any ability, unless the omnipotent One deigns to impart or infuse such ability/power, and it will only be for as long as He decrees, my friend. Without His consent, they will just fall back helplessly to the ground and ultimately in a grave. Selah! Think about it!

Two points I think necessary to take from this passage. First, the incantation, as it were, was the naming of Himself as the great **"I AM."** The pronoun **"he"** is supplied by the translators for clarity in English, but Jesus Christ literally uttered **"I AM"** and immediately they had no power to stand, much less take Him into custody. The power of the name of God is something not taken lightly, beloved reader. No wonder the third commandment warns us not to take His Name in vain. Watch the consequences. **"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God" (Acts 3:6-8).** **"Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the**

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Forum Question #1

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man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded" (Acts 19:13-16). As surely as the demon could control the limbs and voice of the possessed one, how much more, the God-Man, Immanuel? As Elder Bill Mitchell often says, "The Sovereign Rules and Overrules!"

Secondly, I would like to ask the question, "Why?" It seems like an obscure time for Jesus to manifest this great ability, eh? It happens so quickly, that many folk might even miss it, if they are not reading slowly enough. Perhaps it is answered in context: (John 18:8-9) **"Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none."** Can any imagine arguing with such a One as this? After that helpless feeling, I am sure they were more than happy to cut and run and be glad that He was coming willingly. Makes us Selah! Think about it! though, right? At any point in time! **"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be"** (Matt. 26:53-54)?

"Thus it must be." Last point. Fiat power was not "sufficient" or "proper" for our Salvation. If so, God could have made His elect pure and holy again, with the snap of a finger, as it were. God's power was not the real problem here (still omnipotent), but the Holy Justice of God required "Death"

and "Blood" and that had to be shed experientially. **"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"** (Heb. 5:8-9). Our Perfect Saviour! Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum Question #2

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and every day to be as much like Jesus as we can. We really have no excuse, because that which dwells in us (the Holy Spirit) the inner man, cannot sin. **"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God"** (I John 3:9).

In my opinion, the greatest saying and most humbling to me is the cry of my Saviour when He prayed. **"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"** (Matt. 27:46)? This was the thing that concerned Jesus the most according to the prayer that He prayed in the Garden called Gethsemane. **"And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt"** (Matt. 26:39).

The cup that Jesus asked to be removed was God the Father forsaking Him. For the first time in eternity God the Father turned His back on His Son right at the moment that Jesus took upon Him our sins, because God cannot look upon sin, He turned away. Jesus and His Father had

total separation from one another for that moment which was very grievous to our Lord. And Jesus did what the Father asked of Him, nonetheless **"nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."** That is absolutely marvellous! Muse (ponder) on that for a while, and see if that does not humble you as well.

We should hate sin! We should hate every evil and wicked way! This is what it means to do so. **"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"** (I Peter 1:16). Can you, dear reader, practice and strive to live separated and holy lives? God Bless!

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For context sake we will examine I Peter 1:15-17 which states: **"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."** These verses present scriptural arguments why every believer ought to aspire to be holy as God is holy. The arguments are set forth as:

1. Perhaps the most important argument for a child of God to be holy flows from the fact that our Heavenly Father is holy. The very nature of God is one of absolute moral purity. Our Father is undefiled and unspotted by sin. **"...God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all"** (I John 1:5).

God's ultimate purpose of grace is to make us holy. This is why He chose us before the world began according to Ephesians 1:4: **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."** The purpose of the effectual call was to translate the elect out of the darkness of the world into the light of God's holiness. I Thessalonians 4:7 declares: **"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."**

The greatest desire of the believer should be to glorify the Father through holiness. We should want to be like our Heavenly Father! The sum of the Christian's duty is to be holy, to be conformed to God; to have the same views and sentiments with Him. We ought to love what God loves and hate what He hates. We ought to approve of what He approves and disapprove of what He disapproves. The holiness of God ought to be our standard for living rather than seeking acceptance from our peers or the world. Every aspect of our life boils down to a simple question: "Am I glorifying, pleasing, and delighting my Father through holiness?" If we applied this standard for every day of our life it would affect our thoughts, our speech, and our behavior. Everything about us should be governed by the holiness of God. This is easier said than done, but it is the life that God has called us to aspire unto.

2. The second argument for holiness in every facet of our life is because God has commanded us to be holy. God reveals Himself as Holy and commands us to be holy as He is holy. Every command of God in Scripture ought to be

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cheerfully and promptly obeyed. The Word of God is to be our final authority for all faith and practice in the Christian life. Whatever views, philosophies, and opinions we have that rise from an impure source are to be discarded and purged from our life. Jesus declared: **"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven...Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"** (Matt. 5:45a, 48). Hebrews 12:14 commands us to: **"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."**

3. The third argument for a holy life is the impartial judgment of God (1:17). Everything that we do and the motives why we do things is going to be measured by God at the Judgment Seat of Christ. All that we do should have holiness stamped upon it in order to meet the approval of our Heavenly Father in that day. We should live in light of eternity with an eye on the holiness and glory of God. How different our lives would be if only we were more in love with God and His character! No command would be viewed too hard or strict. Our will and desires would simply delight in what pleases God.

All the things that sway the opinions of man matter little in the eyes of God according to the principle set forth in I Samuel 16:7: **"...for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."** Oh, that our heart's would be fixed on holiness and motivated by love for our Holy Heavenly Father! Our greatest desire should be to hear Him say: **"...Well done, thou**

good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21).

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God Allow Evil?

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and unbelievers. God has obligated Himself to reward the faith and obedience (of column one people) with love and compassion, but how can unbelievers expect compassion or love? Really, the question is not: Why would God allow evil to come upon you if you are an unbeliever? The real question is actually: Well, why would He not? In fact, every breath you breathe is on borrowed time. If any of God's raindrops of blessings that He sends to this Earth to fall on His people's gardens, just happens to fall on yours, do not mistake that benevolence for love. Remember? God hates column two people. That has not changed. If cancer, war, adultery, divorce, hardships or even death comes, what did you expect? Has your attitude toward God changed any at all? Still unbelieving? Then God's mercy, or even pity cannot be expected. Selah! Think about it!

TWO PROMISES FOR THE UNBELIEVERS

"Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Ps. 115:2-3). Unbelievers have no promises from God and His Holy Word, except two: 1) Repent of your unbelief and move to column one. Oh, Lord, please grant the grace of repentance and

faith to the beloved reader. **"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"** (Matt. 11:28-29). Then, everything will be alright, will it not? Even the worst evil that ever happens cannot keep us from hearing at the end: **"His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord"** (Matt. 25:23). How marvelous is that gospel promise, even to those terrible unbelievers that we are.

But the other promise to unbelievers is as terrible as the first one was wondrous. The second surety is that if we do not repent and believe, we will perish. The Lord took the current events of His day, and made such commentary on those that continue in their unbelief! **"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"** (Luke 13:1-5).

HAS YOUR EVIL COME TO CONVICT YOU OF UNBELIEF?

One of the reasons God allows evil in this world is

certainly because it is only holy judgment being meted out upon unbelievers. But, that is not the whole picture is it? Read Genesis 19, and you will see that God could at any moment pour down fire and brimstone upon any city of Sodomites or Gomorrhites. He has not yet on our America, has He?! That means, despite the great evil around us, there is still hope. No great flood will come to destroy all the evil in the world, but the incoming judgment of fire is sure, is it not? But until its appointed time, we are living in a time of grace. Please, as you examine the evil in this world, recognize its source, our unbelief! If the Lord has been gracious to you, recognize that grace, too. If God has shown you the hopelessness of unbelief, please turn away from your unbelief, and use the gift of faith to move over to column one and believe. God is good! Repent and believe! Flee to column one!

Let none ever accuse God of unfairness in the evil of this terrible world. He has laid down Biblical parameters that are certainly more than fair. Call the prophet Ezekiel to the witness stand of equity. **"Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall**

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surely live, he shall not die. Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye (Ezek. 18:25-32). Get out of that damnable column two of unbelief.

"Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets" (Micah 7:7-10). Oh, Lord, You have been right here, all along. Forgive my unbelief. I believe in God! Thank you, Lord Jesus! Selah! Think about it!



The Devil Also Has

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1. He is often expected to be a civic leader. Often large churches call a man who has distinguished himself as a civic leader elsewhere. We had a schoolmate who was voted the leading citizen of a large city because of his civic activities. Back during World War I, pastors got out and led in the sale of war bonds. Often they have helped boost the Community Chest, Red Cross and other drives. God never called any minister to be a civic leader. The Scriptures are absolutely silent as concerns such.

2. He is often expected to be an incessant pastoral visitor. He is supposed to get around ever so often to see all of his members, and if he does not the complaint is raised, "The pastor has never been to see me." This is ego-inflating visitation, designed to compliment people by showing them attention. Often people who practically never go to church want the pastor to visit them. What for? For spiritual benefit? No. If they wanted anything spiritual they would hear him preach. People of that kind are a bunch of selfish backsliders (or maybe lost) who have no concern for the souls of people. Else they would want the pastor to be free to visit and deal with the lost rather than to spend his time pampering them. There is no hint in the Bible that a minister should spend his time courting his members and trying to keep them in a good humor.

3. He is often expected to "play with the young people." One church wanted a man who could play baseball with the boys of the church. Invariably the churches with the biggest social program are the churches steeped the deepest in worldliness. A bunch

of people, young or old, who have to be entertained and stuffed in order to keep up their interest, do not have enough genuine Christianity to fill a mustard seed. Some of the filthiest things we have ever known in connection with church life have grown out of church parties and picnics.

WHAT DOES GOD SAY THAT MINISTERS ARE FOR?

1. He says that they are to give themselves to **"prayer, and to the ministry of the word"** (read Acts 6:1-7). When "serving tables" and the doing of necessary benevolent work grew so heavy that it encroached on the spiritual ministry of the preachers, the first deacons were appointed to attend to such so the ministry would not be hampered.

2. Ministers are to preach the Word of God and to evangelize. **"Preach the word" . . . do the work of an evangelist** (II Tim. 4:2, 5). We have a dearth of real gospel preachers today. Ministers are just about everything except preachers. Seldom does a church ever advertise the preaching of its pastor. Our radio listeners have written by the hundreds to say

that in their community they are unable to find any church with a real gospel message. Preachers are so burdened with a multitude of duties which the Lord never gave them that they do not have time to do what He called them to do.

3. The ministry is to so teach and preach as to develop mature Christians who will not fall easy victims to every heresy and false teaching afloat (read Ephesians 4:11-15). Often it has been said, "So and so is not much of a preacher, but oh, he is such a good pastor and mixer." That meant that he was a good handshaker who could flatter and "butter" people up like a politician. If a man is not a good preacher and teacher of the Word of God, he is a loss so far as the ministry is concerned. The prophets of old were not good mixers, nor were they entertainers. They ministered the Word of God. The Devil is pleased when he can get any preacher off the track and can make him a boot-licking man-pleaser. The world, the Devil, and the worldly church member want such.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Faith of God's Elect

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness" (Titus 1:1).

Titus is one of the Pastoral Epistles. The person to whom Paul addressed this letter was a Greek or a Gentile (Gal. 2:1, 3). He was

converted under the preaching of Paul's ministry (Titus 1:4). He was often in Paul's company (Acts 15:2; II Cor. 7:6-9; 8:6, 17-18, 23; 12:18; 2:12-13) and helped him in his labors (Titus 1:5). Titus was left by Paul at Crete to labor among

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the churches and ordain elders in every city (Titus 1:5).

GOD HAS AN ELECT PEOPLE

Mark carefully the words, "**God's elect.**" Romans 8:33 mentions "**God's elect.**" In Matthew 24:24 and Mark 13:22 we read of the gathering of "**his elect.**" Colossians 3:12 speaks of "**the elect of God.**" Mark 13:20 declares: "**. . . the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen.**" In Luke 18:7 Christ talks about God Who will "**avenge his own elect.**" Some fanatics and free willers may try to deny that the Bible teaches the doctrine of Divine election, but the truth of the Scriptures abides faithfully.

Some attempt to escape election by applying it only to nations or special privileges. The Bible teaches that election is unto salvation: "**But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth**" (II Thess. 2:13). Election is not salvation, but is unto salvation, and all the elect shall obtain the salvation in Christ with eternal glory (II Tim. 2:10). This choice of some to salvation and eternal life is an eternal act of God. It was "**from the beginning**" (II Thess. 2:13) and "**before the foundation of the world**" (Eph. 1:4). This election was not because of any foreseen works (Rom. 9:11), or worthiness (I Cor. 1:26-31), or even faith (Rom. 11:32). It was by God's pure free grace and good will (Eph. 1:4-12).

The elect of God as to their number is comparatively small, "**for many are called, but few are chosen**" (Matt. 22:14). They are the "few" that find the narrow

way that leads to life (Matt. 7:14). There are some "**vessels of wrath fitted to destruction**" (Rom. 9:22). There are some ungodly men before of old ordained to condemnation (Jude 4). The Bible speaks of some who believe a lie and are damned (II Thess. 2:10-12). The things of the kingdom of Heaven are revealed to some babes, but they are hidden from the wise and prudent (Matt. 11:25-26). Some are given to the Son and are brought to eternal life (John 17:2); others are delivered up to the Devil to have their eyes blinded so they might perish justly in their sins (II Cor. 4:4).

Arminian heretics may complain ceaselessly and cavil continually about the doctrine of God's election of a people to eternal life, but when their sound has died on the air the Bible will still teach it. To deny

this doctrine in the seminary class, or the church, does not remove it from the God's Word settled for ever in Heaven. People who take the Bible seriously will embrace this doctrine because it is taught in the Bible. We will bless God that He has put a difference between us and others. We will be thankful for this truth, for unless God elected a people to be saved by Jesus Christ none would have been saved.

William Gadsby has written:

*Election is a truth divine,
As absolute as free;
Works ne'er can make the blessing mine;
'Tis God's own wise decree.*

*Before Jehovah built the skies,
Or earth, or seas, or sun,
He chose a people for His praise,
And gave them to His Son.*

Eternal was the choice of God,

*A sovereign act indeed;
And Jesus, the incarnate Word,
Secures the chosen seed.*

*He loved and chose because He would;
Nor did His choice depend
On sinners' work, or bad or good,
But on His sovereign mind.*

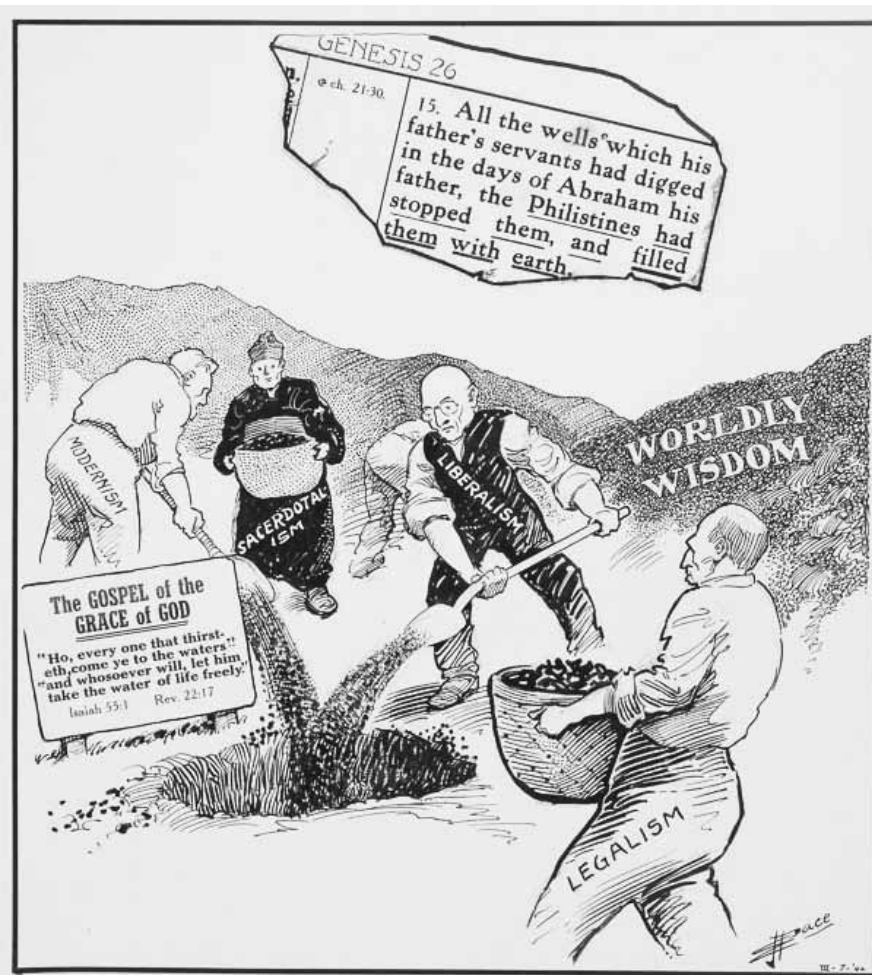
*Nor law, nor death, nor Hell, nor sin,
Can alter His decree;
The elect eternal life shall win,
And all God's glory see.*

ONLY THE ELECT HAVE FAITH

II Thessalonians 3:2 says: "**And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.**" This verse lays the axe to the Arminian heresy that every man has the natural ability to believe in Christ any moment he may desire to do so of his own free will. Paul makes a special reference here to the fanatical and unbelieving Jews at Corinth (Acts 17:13) who showed hostility to him because they lacked faith in the gospel he preached. Saving faith is not possessed by all men. When the gospel is preached there are often believers and unbelievers: "**And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not**" (Acts 28:24). That is why the gospel is a savour of life unto life and death unto death (II Cor. 2:15-16).

Man can not have faith in the gospel of Christ apart from the effectual working of God's power. Believing is the result of "**the operation of God**" (Col. 2:12). Faith is not a product of the natural heart of man. There can only be faith in the heart after God does a work of grace upon the soul: "**This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent**" (John 6:29). Men believe "**through grace**" (Acts

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18:27). Saving faith is the gift of God: **"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake"** (Phil. 1:29; cf. Eph. 2:8-9). Jesus Christ is **"the author and finisher of our faith"** (Heb. 12:2). It takes as much an exertion of power on God's part to bring a man to faith as it did when He raised Christ from the dead: **"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places"** (Eph. 1:19-20).

Faith is imparted to the elect sinner by the Spirit of faith (II Cor. 4:13). I Corinthians 12:8-9 declares: **"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit. . ."** Galatians 5:22 discloses that faith is a fruit of the Spirit, not a fruit of the flesh. The Spirit bestows saving faith on the basis of the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. In I Peter, chapter 1, we are told we are redeemed **"with the precious blood of Christ"** (v. 19). Then Peter adds: **"Who by him do believe in God"** (I Pet. 1:21). Thus faith comes from Him Who made the atonement.

All saving faith rests on the Divine foreordination: **"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed"** (Acts 13:48). This verse makes it plain that faith is the consequence, not the cause, of election to eternal life. The reason that men do not believe the gospel of Christ is because they are not of the

number of the elect. Jesus told the unbelieving Jews: **"But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep"** (John 10:26). The words of Christ in John 10:26 imply that all the sheep will believe.

I want to stress once more that no man has faith of himself. Saving faith is the gift of God. It is given on the basis of Christ's atonement by the Spirit of faith. No one has faith unless he is among those whom the Lord has elected to salvation. This is why Paul speaks of **"the faith of God's elect"** in my text.

Faith is an infallible mark of election, assuring the believer of his salvation as if he were already in Heaven. Those the Father chose to salvation, He gave to the Son to save. Salvation is by the Father's appointment and the Son's atonement: **"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Thess. 5:9). Those given by the Father to Christ in eternity past shall come to Christ in time. Jesus said: **"All that the father giveth me shall come to me"** (John 6:37). But what is it to come to Christ? It is to believe on Him: **"I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst"** (John 6:35). The Bible does not teach that a few of the elect will believe on Christ. The Bible teaches that all the elect will be brought to faith in Christ. All ordained to life will believe (Acts 13:48). All the sheep will come to the Shepherd (John 10:26). Those God chose to salvation will come to **"belief of the truth"** (II Thess. 2:13).

Election can be known because faith can be known: **"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"** (II Cor.

13:5). A person can know whether Christ is in him or not, for Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17). There would be no need for such an exhortation as found in II Corinthians 13:5 unless a person could know He has faith and that Christ is in him. If a person dies without knowing that Christ dwells in his heart by faith, he is a reprobate.

But how can you know you have saving faith and thus be sure of your election? There are some things which accompany faith which a man may discern in his life. First, faith purifies the heart: **"And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith"** (Acts 15:9). Faith curbs and checks unclean thoughts and unlawful lusts. There is no genuine faith unless it purifies the heart and carries on the work of sanctification. **"Now the just shall live by faith"** (Heb. 10:38). Faith will cause a man to follow after holiness (Heb. 13:14). Those who do not live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world may well conclude they have the faith of demons (James 2:19).

Second, saving faith may be ascertained by works of love, for **"faith worketh by love"** (Gal. 5:6). True faith in Christ causes us to serve God by serving our neighbor. Faith is not a work, but faith works out of love for God and the brotherhood. The heart is affected by the faith that is in it. William Tyndale rendered Galatians 5:6: **"...faith, which by love is mighty in operation."** A genuine faith is an active faith, and faith without works is dead (James 2:20, 26).

FAITH IS WROUGHT BY THE GOSPEL

It would appear from my text that one of the reasons God chose Paul to be an apostle was to subserve the faith of God's elect: **"Paul, a servant of God, and an**

apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth. . ." To the Romans he wrote: **"By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name"** (Rom. 1:5; cf. 16:26). Here we see the importance of the gospel ministry. Peter taught this same truth: **"Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe"** (Acts 15:7). The end of preaching the good news about Christ is to bring the elect to faith (Job 33:23). According to I Timothy 3:16, Christ was **"preached unto the Gentiles"** and then **"believed on in the world."**

Preachers are not to proclaim political ideas, or to merely explore the dark mysteries of the Word, or to entertain people in the pew. It is their business to preach the gospel of God's grace and to bring the elect to faith. The Bible tells us that **"it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"** (I Cor. 1:21). Before there can be faith in the gospel there must be a minister who preaches the gospel: **"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man"** (I Cor. 3:5)? God does not save His elect as infidels and unbelievers.

The elect are brought to faith by an acknowledgment of the truth of the gospel **"The acknowledging of the truth"** in my text means the truth of the gospel. In Galatians 2:5 and 2:14 Paul speaks of **"the truth of the gospel."** In Colossians 1:5 he mentioned **"the word of the truth of the gospel."** The ground of faith is knowledge. There can be no belief of the truth apart from the preaching of the Word of truth.

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"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). Paul regarded Titus as his child as he was the instrument of his conversion to the faith (Titus 1:4).

The doctrine of the gospel is the greatest truth in all the world. This Word of truth comes from the God of truth, and it concerns Christ Who is Truth itself, and it is inspired by the Spirit of truth. The truth of the gospel is received by the elect. The reprobate receives **"not the love of the truth, that they might be saved"** (II Thess. 2:10); they believe not the truth that they all might **"be damned."** But II Thessalonians 2:10-12 implies that all the elect will be given **"repentance to the acknowledging of the truth"** (II Tim. 2:25).

Error is not as good as truth. Men cannot acknowledge the truth unless they hear it. Ministers must preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. They should purely preach the gospel, wisely apply it, and faithfully dispense it so men and women can acknowledge the truth. Do not take your lost children to hear a false prophet preach a false gospel! People who repeatedly hear nothing but the Devil's lies, instead of the truth of the gospel, have little hope of ever being saved.

THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL LEADS TO GODLINESS

Faith and a full knowledge of the truth of the gospel produces godliness: **"...which is after godliness."** Godliness is the possession of God's likeness and spirit. It is from God, and it is

revealed in the truth of the gospel. The fruit of faith in the truth of the gospel is designed to promote holiness of life and character. It would be impossible for this knowledge of the truth to be morally unfruitful. Let no man's religion be taken seriously unless the truth he received cleansed his heart, energized his will, quickened his conscience, elevated his taste, and sanctified his life.

The elect live godly in Christ Jesus. They are God-like men and women. **"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye"** (Col. 3:12-13). Each hearer of the truth of the gospel must examine himself to see whether the truth he embraced produced in him a godly life. Did the truth you received kill sin in your life so that sin is not the law of your life (Rom. 6:6)? Did it cause you to set your affections on things above (Col. 3:1)? If not, your position before God is both dangerous and damnable.

Many people make a profession of faith in the church under high-pressure evangelism. They follow the Lord in baptism and become a member of the church. But there is no change in their life. They cursed and drank liquor before their profession; they still do even though they have now joined the church. Such people have fancied they possess the faith of God's elect, and they have confused error with truth. They live in a fool's paradise, and soon they will wake up in the fires of Hell.

When you see a man who fears God, who shuns evil, who shows humility, who endeavors to obey God, who loves the Word

of God, who keeps the Sabbath, who reverences God's house, and who loves the image of God in his brethren, you can be sure that he possesses the faith of God's elect. The truth that such a man received when he received Christ had a sanctifying influence on him (John 17:17), and the Holy Spirit has possessed his heart.

CONCLUSION

1. All of God's elect will be brought to faith and the acknowledging of the truth of the gospel. This is the teaching of Titus 1:1.

2. Divine faith rests, not on fallible reasonings and probable opinions, but upon the infallible Word.

3. Election is not equivalent to faith, nor is faith the cause of election. Election is the cause of faith. It is because God chose us to salvation that we are brought to belief of the truth (II Thess. 2:13-14).

4. A full knowledge of the truth is after godliness. Right doctrine and right living go together. The doctrine of the gospel of Christ is a doctrine **"according to godliness"** (I Tim. 6:3). Any thing less than this is to turn **"the grace of our God into lasciviousness"** (Jude 4).

5. Not all men have the gospel preached to them. If God in His sovereignty has sent the gospel to you, it is a great blessing. May this be the day you will acknowledge the truth of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. May you with all your heart believe **"unto righteousness"** (Rom. 10:10).



The People Had A

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thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders. So built we the wall; and all the

wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Neh. 4:1-6).

When the Israelites returned to Jerusalem from the captivity, they found a city that was in terrible shape. The people were fled, and foreigners and unbelievers dwelt there. The name of God was not known, or at least was not properly feared in the place. So, the children of Israel had a lot to do to prepare the city of Jerusalem as a proper dwelling-place. At the top of the agenda for Nehemiah and the others, was to rebuild the wall around the city, that had been torn down during the invasion of the Babylonians, and that had since suffered much disrepair.

These who returned to Jerusalem from the captivity are good examples to us who seek to serve God today. These men and women were ready to work – and they were ready to do the will of their God as that will was delivered to them by the hand of the servants of God. These people who worked so hard, and who gave so much in the service of God, ought to be an inspiration to us today: We, too, should be ready to serve God and to do whatever is needed to advance His cause and to bless His people. These valiant Jews brought with them very little after the flesh, and yet they were able to accomplish very much in the rebuilding of the temple of God and even in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. They kept working despite the opposition of the world of men; despite the dangers of attack from without; despite the enormity of the project, and their own doubts and fears that assailed them. They had a mind to work, they diligently worked together, and they accomplished much in the cause of God.

Now, I want to consider the manner of the work, and the

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Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON - BIBLE SURVEY #16 MOSES

TEXT: Numbers 12:7-8

DEVOTIONAL READING: Heb. 11:23-29

AIM: An over-view of the life of Moses.

INTRODUCTION: From Moses birth to his death, we find various types of him as the Lord Jesus Christ. Our text verse summarizes the life of Moses: **“who is faithful in all mine house”** (Num. 12:7). Moses = drawn. Let us observe—

I. MOSES' BIRTH—Ex. 1:7-2:3—Moses' birth pictures that of the Christ. When Moses was born his life was in danger. So, too, was Christ's (Matt. 2:13-18). Yet the faith of others in the will of God preserved both.

Moses was born for the purpose of delivering God's people from bondage (Ex. 3:10). So too was Christ born to deliver His people (Matt. 1:21; Gal. 4:4).

We see the sovereign providence of God in the life of Moses in guiding his own mother to nurse him after he became the child of Pharaoh's daughter (Ex. 2:3-10). The sovereign-providence of God has done many things in our lives to spare us unto this day, the day of our salvation (II Cor. 6:2), the day in which we would be willing in the day of His power (Ps. 110:3).

II. MOSES' FAITH—Ex. 2:11-14; Acts 7:22-29; Heb. 11:24-28—Moses believed the Lord. At the age of 40, having been raised up in the house of Pharaoh as one of Pharaoh's own grandchildren, he rejects all the privileges of that house and identifies himself as he was—a Hebrew.

In doing so, Moses believed God. When a person is saved by the grace of God they must reject the world, resist the devil, submit to God, draw nigh to Him (James 4:6-10). Just as Moses, by faith, chose to reject Egypt, and chose to suffer afflictions, so, too, must the child of God today. We must reject being like the world, even if it means suffering affliction as a Christian (I Peter 4:16). By faith we identify as God's people by submitting to scriptural baptism—through which we join the Lord's church.

III. THE CALL OF MOSES—Ex. 3:1-12—This call of Moses by God is one of service. NOTE: It was not until after Moses was separated from the Egyptians that the Lord called him to service. For some 40 years Moses had been in Midian shepherding (Acts 7:30-34). When God saves a person He sets them apart for His service (Eph. 2:8-10). We are called unto salvation as well as service. One cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). We must be completely severed from the one in order to serve the other.

Moses was called to specific service. He was to be the one whom the Lord would use to deliver Israel. This was something of which Moses had previously sought to do in his own power and failed (Acts 7:23-25). Whenever we seek to do the Lord's work by our own power, we will

fail. Now, at the burning bush, God calls Moses to deliver the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage by the power of God (Ex. 3:10-12). This has not changed. We cannot serve the Lord in our own power, but in His power! (Zech. 4:6; Rom. 1:16). It is through prayer and study of Scriptures that leads to faith, which leads to strength or power to do the Lord's work (Heb. 11:11).

IV. MOSES' LIFE—Ex. 40:16—Obedience sums up the life of Moses. This could only be done by faith. Faith takes hold of the promises of God. Staggered not at the promises of God. But believes that what God says is not only possible, but will come to pass. Faith leads to obedience. This is manifest in the life of Moses in that it states, **“Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he”** (Ex. 40:16).

Moses' objections to the will of God were swallowed up in the LORD Himself—**“And he said, Certainly I will be with thee...”** (Ex. 3:12). All our objections to God's will for our life are dealt with by God in the same way—He will be with me. We must behold this by faith. That the Lord is with us to do His will.

Ex. 40:33—Moses finished the work. God had given Moses a work to do. To deliver His people. Our text tells us of the building of the tabernacle. This is particularly representative of Christ Jesus Who finished the work of our redemption at Calvary's cross (John 19:30). At present, Christ is finishing the work of building His church (Matt. 16:18; Ps. 127:1). We, too, must be about the work our Heavenly Father has given us (Luke 2:49). Paul stated, **“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”** (II Tim. 4:7). We too must finish our course. We must finish the work that Christ has given us to do.

V. MOSES' DEATH—Deut. 34:1-8—Moses' death was just as miraculous as everything in his life. We are told that at the time of his death (120 years old) **“his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated”** (Deut. 34:7). Beloved, may this be so with you and me spiritually. Moses died in strength, not in weakness. So, too, shall the child of God persevere in strength to the end of his/her days upon this earth.

His death was according to the word of the Lord (Deut. 34:5). Was not this so concerning the Christ? His death was in accordance with the word, will, and command of God (John 10:17-18; Acts 2:23). Christ's death fulfilled many prophecies: Cursed of God (Gal. 3:13); His legs not broken (John 19:33); His side pierced (John 19:34); His garments divided (John 19:24). And many others show that it was in accordance with God's Word. MOSES—was truly faithful in all God's house (Num. 12:7).

(Nathaniel Hille is pastor of the Bible Baptist Church of Plant City, Florida.)



The People Had A

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attitude of the people who claim to serve God today. Actually, what we will consider is the willingness, or the lack thereof, of men and women who claim to serve God in Christianity today.

SOME FOLKS HAVE ONLY HALF A MIND TO WORK

It says in our text passage that the children of Israel who returned to the city of Jerusalem, and who were engaged in the rebuilding project, were able to accomplish much, because **“the people had a mind to work.”** I suppose this is true of nearly any vocation, and true in the success of nearly any project: success usually hinges on the amount of effort or work that is applied to the endeavor or project. Now, I am not saying, in spiritual things, that our salvation hinges on the amount of effort we apply, or that a successful salvation is directly proportionate to the sum of our own contributions. However, I am saying that the visible successes, or the accomplishments that are evident in our service unto God, these are measured by, and meted out, according to the sincerity and the diligence of the ones who labor in the pursuit of God and His will. So, if **“the people had a mind to work,”** and they accomplished much in our text passage; would it not be the same for us today? If the people in God’s service today **“had a mind to work,”** would we not also accomplish much in His service?

Sadly, this is not the way that things are today. The people that populate Christianity today are more likely to be classified as having “half a mind to work.” It seems that their focus is split between Heaven and Earth. It seems that their love is divided between God and the world. It seems that they desire

the best that the world has to offer, while still aspiring to the service of God. Instead of having a “mind to work” for the Lord Whom they claim to serve, they are evidently only applying a half of their mind and devotion unto God, while remaining at least half-way under the control of the desires of the world and the pursuit of riches, prosperity, and the life of ease that God’s true servants must be ready to leave behind. The Lord Jesus preached this way during the Sermon on the Mount: **“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).

These present-day followers of Jesus Christ are the ones that we might call “part-time servants.” This is obviously true, because they are apparently only “partly” engaged in the pursuit of God, and in the discipleship of Jesus Christ. For most of Christianity, it must be said that they will only serve God as long as it is convenient, and only serve Him up to the point that their own desires and their own wants and the earthly pleasures of this world begin to be at risk.

Maybe these “part-time” servants, or Christians with only “half a mind to work,” are best described in Matthew 13:22: **“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”**

SOME FOLKS HAVE ONLY A MIND TO WORK FOR A WHILE

To have only part of a mind to work for the Lord, is a way to describe those who are not fully involved in the cause of Christ. We have just noticed that some folks in Christianity are obviously more concerned – or, at least, equally concerned – with the pleasures of life as they are with the love and service of God. This trend continues through Christianity to include those who are also simply lazy, weak, or fearful when confronted with the service of God and the obvious hatred or animosity of the world that opposes God. These types of Christians may say all the right things, and even do many of the right things; but, when the world comes barging in with enmity and anger, these so-called Christians are revealed as those who do not have a “mind to work.” They may have had a mind to work for only a little while, and when things get too difficult for them they fall by the wayside. Elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew we read these words of Jesus Christ: **“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more**

than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matt. 10:34-39).

The Lord Jesus Christ often reminded His disciples of the fact that the world of men was against Him (and God), and would therefore be against His followers. He said in the Gospel of John, **“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me”** (John 15:18-21). If we are to properly serve the Lord, it cannot be with only “half a mind to work” and the other half of our mind full of fear, worry, or trepidation. This type of servant is all too common in Christianity, but this is not to be the way to succeed in the work of the kingdom of Heaven.

These servants who do not fully commit to the Lord, and who will fail at the first (or second, or third?) sign of opposition; or who will falter and fall away when the going gets tough; I suppose we can liken these types of servants to “fair-weather servants.” **“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with**

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joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (Matt. 13:20-21).

**SOME FOLKS ARE
COMMITTED WHOLLY
UNTO THE LORD GOD**

Our text passage speaks of the faithful Jews as **“the people had a mind to work.”** In reality, this is nothing more than a description of those who are fully dedicated unto the Lord, and a people who are fully engaged in the work of God. I know that it seems that what passes for Christianity today is full of people who only have “half of a mind” (or less) to work in the service of God. But, I want to begin to give you a more positive perspective of the servants of God, and the advancement of the cause of Jesus Christ. We know that God is sovereign and that He is in control. We know that God has a purpose and a will and that it must be accomplished. And, we know that our God uses means to advance His cause, and to perform His will. You and I are the means to the end that God has determined to bring about. Therefore, since He will use the kingdom of Heaven on this earth to do His will – despite the failures of many, and despite the lack of desire in the hearts of most, and despite the half-hearted efforts of those who pose as Christians – it must be that He will use His true servants, and His faithful people to accomplish whatever positive and good plans that He has for the souls of men in our current age. Therefore, I want you to know that there are still some in our place and time who are reminiscent of those faithful Jews who labored in the city of

Jerusalem after they returned from the captivity in Babylon and elsewhere. These faithful saints today are dedicated unto God, and they, too, have **“a mind to work.”** And, even though our labor is not as obviously physical and literal as might have been these particular Jews, we do not have an actual temple structure or a physical city wall to build, still in the service of the Lord there is much that must be done. The half-hearted, or the weak hearted; those with half a mind or a weak mind; these will not be used by God in a positive and scriptural fashion. Rather, it remains for those of us who are fully dedicated unto God to go on and do the performing of His will. It must be, then, that the Lord still yet has those who are of a **“mind to work”** in His service. I hope and pray that you and I will be counted in that number of willing and faithful servants! The Lord still has those faithful few who are counted worthy to labor in His service and to bring forth fruits on His behalf. **“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you”** (John 15:14-16). The unfaithful will be separated from the faithful, and we will know them by their labors. This was true even in the time of the Jews and those who labored in Jerusalem. **“Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper**

◇ (Continued on page 24)

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a. Total Number of Copies (in this space only)		
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Beginning Balance\$172.81

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Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	300.00
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Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	50.00
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Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	24.00
Anonymous	2,200.00
Dividing checks	300.00
Sub Total	\$4,894.00
TOTAL	\$5,066.81

EXPENDITURES:

Printing.....	490.00
Postage	569.04
Supplies	122.25
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.90
Dividing checks	300.00
Bank charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,970.19
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,096.62



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.....	725.00
TOTAL	4,182.35

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time	403.98
Program production (6 months)	390.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	793.98
.....	3,388.37
Interest	+0.03
ENDING BALANCE	\$3,388.40

The People Had A

(Continued from page 23) ♦

us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem” (Neh. 2:20).

If we return to our parable of the sower and the seed, we can see these faithful witnesses and servants of God described: We read in Matthew 13:23: **“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”** Those who have **“a mind to work”** have existed in every age, and in every place where the name of God is known. God will use these, in a positive way, to accomplish His will in the lives of men. And, rewards will be granted, one day, to those of us who are willing, ready, and diligent in the service of the Lord.

CONCLUSION

As the children of God in this world, we are the workers and the servants of God. In all of the world, of all of the vocations that one might have, what better or more important, or more honorable vocation is there, then, that the children of God should be considered the servants of God? **“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (Col. 3:22-25).**

As the servants of God, we must have a mind to work. A servant that does not work, is not much of a servant. Or, a servant that works, but only against his will is also not much of a servant. I pray to God that we would all be able to deal with the laziness that afflicts us so much. I pray to God that He would give us courage in fearful times, and boldness in times of apathy! And I pray that God would give us a willingness to perform His will and His purpose in our lives!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The West Jefferson Baptist Church of West Jefferson, OH is looking for some Berea Baptist Hymnals 2nd addition.

If anyone knows where they could locate some, please contact Pastor Roger D. Reed at 419-589-2398. They would appreciate it.

The Grace Landmark Baptist Church of Buckhannon, WV, is seeking a pastor. The church is Sovereign Grace and Landmark in doctrine and practice. Any interested called pastor of like faith may contact Brother Brad Butcher at (304) 669-4738 or (304) 745-6226.

The Stephens Branch Baptist Church of Martin, Kentucky is in need of a pastor. They are an Independent, Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Missionary Baptist church holding to the doctrines of grace and the King James Bible. If you are interested in being considered or would like more information on the church you can call Brother Lonnie Edwards at (859) 629-1413 or write the church at: Stephens Branch Baptist Church, 1025 Stephens Branch Road, Martin, Kentucky 41649.

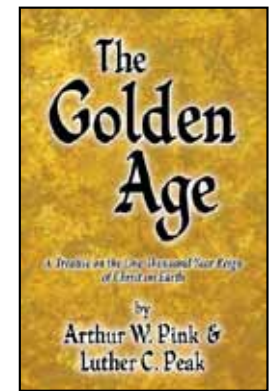
The Lord's Baptist Church in Tacoma Washington is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Gaylen Russell at 360-879-5565 (home) or 253-495-4567 (cell) or by Email: gaylenr@rainierconnect.com.

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.

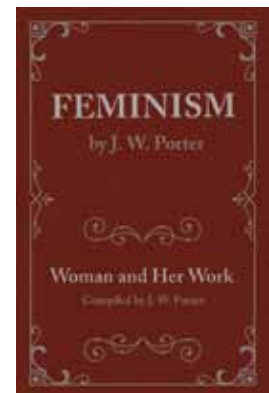
The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

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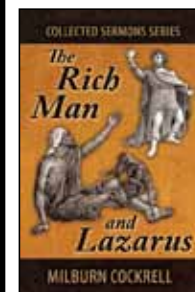
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