

# 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

## The Power of the Gospel The God of the Universe

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

My text today comes from Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The title of my message is "The Power of the Gospel." Now as you can readily ascertain, this Scripture is the basis for my article. And what I want us to notice is not just that the gospel of Christ is powerful, but I want us to notice some of the effects of that powerful gospel of Christ.

### POWER OF GOD

To begin with, let me simply state that the gospel of Christ is powerful because it is the power of God. Our text plainly says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God. . ." I know that the sentence we



have just read, if we continue, connects the gospel and its power to the salvation of souls. However, I want to wait just a minute before we get into the effectual power of the gospel unto salvation. And what I would like to first address is the power of God that is tied inseparably to the gospel of Christ.

First of all, I want to establish that the gospel of Christ is the power of God because it contains the Word of God--or rather, the Word of God contains the gospel. What I mean by this is that the gospel of Christ, as

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By Larry J. Killion  
of Tacoma, Washington

Isaiah 40:25-26 says, "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth."

Even at our best, we fall short in our estimates of the God of the universe. Believers should have a higher view of God than unbelievers, but there are times when agnostic scientists picture a greater God (if there be one, they say) than those of us who claim to know Him.

The late Carl Sagan challenged believers who try to "contain" God in



their worldview. Sagan was an unbeliever but his challenge was valid. Why? Because the Creator fills the universe but He is not contained in it. Too often believers have a view of God that is too small.

Psalm 19:1-4: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun."

There is a vast difference between  
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## Baptism and the Lord's Supper

By Doug Newell IV  
of Wake Forest, NC



I Corinthians 11:1-2 "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you."

More harm has come from the misunderstanding of the ordinances of the church than perhaps any other teaching in Scripture. Roman Catholicism, the heresy of the Cambellites, Covenant Theology, even post-millennialism and other eschatological heresy have been influenced, some way or another, by

infant baptism. This earth is soaked in the blood of Baptist martyrs, who have earnestly contended for the faith, much of which was in defense of these ordinances. Men such as Luther, Calvin, and other so-called eminent men of faith were all enemies of the Baptists, and persecutors of the Baptists, not on account of the doctrines of grace, not on account of the attributes of God or justification by faith, but on account of the ordinances and authority of the Lord's Church.

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### Hypocrisy



"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing; but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

Matthew 7:15

## The Compromising King

By Raymond Bennett  
of Ithaca, New York



"And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that

hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.

And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem:

and he went out again through the people from Beersheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto the LORD God of their fathers.

And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against

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If you care not for the lost around you;  
Why should the lost care to be around you?



Have faith and pray for the lost that are around you,  
For someday they may be able to pray with you.



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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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## Power of the Gospel

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it was first delivered by John the Baptist and those that followed him; as it was delivered by Christ Himself; as it was delivered by the disciples of Christ; as it was delivered by the first churches; and as we have it today, comes forth from God Almighty, and it is preached and taught and witnessed using His Word. For this reason there can be no doubt but that the gospel of Christ is powerful!

There are many Scriptures that we can turn to in the Bible (the Word of God) that remind us of the glory and power of the Word of God. For instance, we read in Psalm 138:2: **"I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."** Though this may seem to be too incredible a thought for us to comprehend, the Bible says that the Lord God **"has magnified thy word above all thy name."** This means that the Word of God takes on the authority and power of God Himself! Therefore, if we are to equate the gospel of Christ with the Word of God in authority and power, then we must attribute the very power of God to the gospel of Christ.

This is no mean or insignificant gospel which we carry to the people! This is the Word and the power of God that we hold in our hands! If we miss out on the power of the gospel or the power of the Word, then we miss out on the very power of God. I think that this is what the Lord Jesus taught the Jews when He said unto them, **"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God"** (Matt. 22:29). The error that folks made in the time of Christ is that they did not acknowledge the Scriptures. And, in so doing, they did not partake (know) of the **"power of God."** Well, the same thing is true today. Folks preach false gospels, or they misinterpret the true gospel, or they don't seek to understand and know the gospel. And, in so doing, they are ignoring or misunderstanding or misinterpreting the very power of God.

### SALVATION OF SOULS

As I have already alluded to, the power of God, which is found in the gospel, is linked to the salvation of souls. Our text verse, again, says, **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . ."** (Rom. 1:16).

In another place, James speaks of the power of the Word of God---which as we have noticed, is synonymous with the gospel of Christ in the New Testament---in particular the power of the Word in the salvation of souls. **"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to**

**save your souls"** (James 1:21). The **"engrafted word"** of God is powerful, and it **"is able to save your souls."** Now, when we read this verse, we do notice the fact that the Word of God is referred to as the **"engrafted word."** I think this teaches us that the gospel is made effective when it is applied to our individual hearts, through the work of the Holy Spirit. And this is what we pray for: That the Holy Spirit of God would accompany our preaching and teaching and witnessing of the gospel of Christ! When this happens, inevitably, and without fail, souls shall be saved. No matter how wicked; no matter how rebellious; no matter how old; no matter how rich or how poor; no matter how sick or how healthy; wherever the Holy Spirit accompanies the gospel of Christ, souls shall be saved.

Speaking along these lines, Paul says this to the Ephesians in Ephesians 1:13-14: **"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."** Certainly the power of God unto salvation is made manifest in **"the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation."** And without exception on those occasions when a soul believes that gospel, and when a soul is saved by the grace of God, **"the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation"** is accompanied by **"that holy Spirit of promise."**

Therefore, let us not be **"ashamed of the gospel of Christ,"** because through it the power of God is manifest---even unto the salvation of souls. Do we want to see souls saved? If you are like me, I know that you do. Well, we cannot save any soul by ourselves; we understand this and know this to be true. However, we hold in our hands the power of salvation. O, let us make use of that sovereign power of God! Let us turn the focus of His power, through the gospel of Christ, upon all of those that are sinners around us! And then, let us pray unto God Almighty that He will send His Holy Spirit to accompany the **"word of truth"**---the gospel of Christ---so that souls will be saved, to the glory of the grace of God!

### DIVIDES MEN

Most folks in Christianity today will tell you and me that the power of the gospel is found in the fact that it brings the world of men together. Well, I am here to tell you that this is not so. In fact, the power of the gospel is actually seen, in the world, when it drives men apart. The Lord Jesus Christ told His followers, **"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son**

**against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law"** (Luke 12:51-53).

In reality, there is nothing in this world that is more powerful than the gospel of Christ. And when this power is wielded in the world of men, the enemies of God are made plain; and the servants of the world are pitted against the servants of God. Some will love and receive the gospel of Christ; while others will hate and reject the same gospel of Christ. We read in John 7:37-44, **"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him."** It is a scriptural fact (and history bears this out), that when the gospel is preached in the world of men, there will be division. We read an example of this division that is caused by the preaching of the power of the gospel in Acts 14:1-7, **"And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them. They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: And there they preached the gospel."**

In fact, I suppose that we can say that this is an intention of the gospel---that the elect of God will be divided from the world of unbelievers. We read the words that the Lord had for His disciples

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in Luke 6:22-24, **"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."** When the gospel comes unto those that are called and quickened by the Spirit of God; then those folks are hated by the world. Truly this can be a sign or a proof of the power of the gospel in the lives of those that are saved--when the world separates from us, and hates us and despises us, then we can trust that the gospel which has been preached to us is the reason for our belief in God and the hatred that the world has for us.

### UNIFIES MEN

Whenever the world encounters the gospel of Christ, it incites hatred and violence in those that do not accept it. Meanwhile, at the same time, it inspires joy and peace in the hearts of those that are the called. So, even though we have just noticed how the gospel of Christ has the power to divide men in the world, we must, in the very next breath, acknowledge that the gospel of Christ has the power to unite those that accept it and believe it.

David spoke of unity, in the service of God, in the 133<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. **"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore"** (Ps. 133:1-3).

In His high priestly prayer, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke of the unity that must exist in those that are in Christ. **"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me"** (John 17:20-23). When the gospel of Christ is preached unto a man; and that man receives the gospel of Christ and trusts in the Lord as his Saviour; then that man will become one with Christ--he in Christ, and Christ in him. Likewise, that newly saved individual shares an affinity

with all of those other saints of God. There is a unity and a brotherhood that exists between all of those that believe the gospel of Christ. What a powerful gospel it is! That it can bring unity to folks of different backgrounds, different beliefs, and entirely different societies.

Certainly, the Apostle Paul made it a point to stress the need for unity in the churches of Jesus Christ. We read in Ephesians 4:1-6, 13: **"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. . .Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."** I think that the words of the Apostle Paul are especially meant for the members of particular churches of Jesus Christ. Aren't we all saved by the same Saviour? Aren't we all recipients of the same Spirit? Haven't we all partaken of the same faith? Haven't we all been baptized with the same water baptism? Don't we all serve the same God? Therefore, we all ought to assemble together in the same **"unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."** And this can only be accomplished through a strict adherence to the preaching of the mighty and powerful gospel of Christ.

### CONCLUSION

So, in conclusion, let us be reminded of both how necessary and how powerful the gospel of Jesus Christ is. We need to be diligent in fulfilling our duty in preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ--for it is very powerful. Who knows which souls the Lord may still yet save? We cannot question His ability to save, nor can we question the power or effectiveness of the gospel unto salvation. Though we do not know who it is that will be saved, nor do we even know who it is that might be edified; still yet, we must go forth and proclaim the all-powerful gospel of Jesus Christ.

In closing, let us read Isaiah 55:6-13: **"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so**

**are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I**

**sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."**



## From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)



## The History of Premillennialism

### PART 2

In my last discussion I demonstrated that the apostolic churches were premillennial in their faith. It was not only the overwhelming view of the early Christians, but it was the standard of orthodoxy. The best way to summarize the last lesson is to quote from Daniel Whitby, the founder of postmillennialism: "The doctrine of the Millennium, or reign of the saints on earth for a thousand years, is now rejected by all Roman Catholics, and by the greatest part of Protestants, and yet it passed among the best Christians, for two hundred and fifty years, for a tradition apostolical, and is believed by many fathers of the second and third century, who speak of it as the tradition of our Lord and His apostles, and of all ancients who lived before them, who tell us the very words in which it was delivered, the Scriptures which were then so interpreted; and say that it was held by all Christians that were exactly orthodox. . . ."

"It was received not only in the Eastern parts of the church, by Papias (in Phrygia), Justin (in Palestine), but by Irenaeus (in Gual), Nepos (in Egypt), Apollinaris, Methodius (in the West and South), Cyprian, Victorinus (in Germany), by Tertullian (in Africa), Lactantius (in Italy), and Severus, and by the first Nicen Council" Cited by J. R. Graves in *The Seven Dispensations*, pp. 562-563).

This is a most noble presentation of historical facts, especially since it comes from a man who bitterly opposed premillennialism!

### THE MILLENNIAL CONTROVERSY

Each century of the history of the

Christian church had had its area of controversy. Had we lived in the third century, the big issue of the day would have been the millennial question. Premillennialism had little opposition before this time, except among heretics.

Mosheim (a postmillennialist), dealing with the controversies of the third century, tells us: "Long before this period, an opinion had prevailed, that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men, before the entire and final dissolution of this world. This opinion, which had hitherto met with no opposition, and was differently interpreted by different persons: nor did all promise themselves the same kind of enjoyments in that future and glorious kingdom. But, in this century, its credit began to decline, principally through the influence and authority of Origen, who opposed it with the greatest warmth, because it was incompatible with some of his favorite sentiments" (*Ecclesiastical History*, Vol I. p. 77).

The first opposition to the thousand year reign of Christ on the earth came from the Gnostics. This sect probably dates back to the apostolic age (I John 2:18; I Tim. 6:20, Col. 2:8), but it did not render itself conspicuous in number and reputation until a later time. They were strongly anti-chiliasm. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* says: "The earlier fathers, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, believed in chiliasm simply because it was a part of the tradition of the church and because Marcion and the Gnostics would have nothing to do with it (Vol. XVIII, p. 463).

A second group who denied premillennialism was the Alogi, who also denied the eternity of the Logos as a person of the Godhead. "So early as the year 170,

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a church party in Asia Minor---the so-called Alogi---rejected the whole body of apocalyptic writing and denounced the Book of Revelation as a book of fables. All the more powerful was the reaction. In the so-called Montanistic controversy (c. 160-220) one of the principle issues involved was the continuance of the chiliastic expectation in the churches. The Montanists of Asia Minor defended them in their integrity, with one slight modification; they announced that Pepuza, the city of Montanus, would be the site of the New Jerusalem and the millennial kingdom" (*idid*, Vol. XVIII, p. 462).

In the first century Clement, the pastor of the church at Rome, was a premillennialist. But sometime between the first and second century the church there had changed their views, probably due to the influence of Alogi and the Gnostics. The second century reveals Rome as a third voice against our view.

"The first decided opponent of whom we have a knowledge was Caius, the Roman presbyter, about the year 200" (*Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol VI, p. 265).

"Caius, a presbyter of Rome, in his tract against the Montanist Proclus, endeavored to stigmatize chiliasm as a heresy set afloat by the detested Gnostic Cerinthus, and it is not improbable, though not wholly certain, that he considered the Apocalypse as a book which had been interpolated by the latter for the express purpose of giving currency to this doctrine" (*Neander's Church History*, Vol. II, p. 398).

Augustine, bishop of Hippo, is the first theologian of solid influence who adopted amillennialism. Prior to him, amillennialism was found only among heretics of the allegorizing and spiritualizing school of theology at Alexandria, Egypt. Few men today would care to build upon the theology of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, or Dionysius. Augustine made amillennialism the prevailing doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. He opposed the literal interpretation of the book of Revelation. To him Revelation 20 spoke of the resurrection of dead souls from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. He did not deny the literalness of the thousand years. He believed the millennium started at the ascension of Christ and would last no longer than 1,000 years. He taught that the binding of Satan began when the gospel spread from Judea unto other regions.

Augustine taught that the church is the kingdom of Christ and the city of God. The millennial kingdom had commenced with the appearing of Christ and was, therefore, an accomplished fact.

The church must now prepare for a long period of temporal prosperity, and the State-Church of that time soon forgot the millennial glory of the future. The old millennial doctrine was completely banished from the official theology of the Catholic Church for all time.

Premillennialism disappeared in proportion as Roman Papal Catholicism advanced. The great chasm in the history of Chiliasm begin at this point and with the centuries following. Please remember that it was during this time of Rome's supremacy when almost every truth was hidden. The church at Rome contended that Christ already was reigning by His vicar, the Pope. However, the truth of premillennialism continued to be taught by small hidden churches in the world.

In the fourth century the Catholic Church rejected the Apocalypse on the ground that it contained the idea of a carnal millennium. In the Council of Laodicea, A. D. 360, the Apocalypse was tacitly excluded from the sacred canon by the same churches of Asia to which it was addressed. The Catholics viewed the Book of Revelation and chiliasm as inseparable. They could only get rid of the former, by rejecting the latter. It was not until the Catholic church learned to Platonize, or had taken lessons in the school of Origen, that they could condemn Chiliasm without disputing the inspiration of the Book of Revelation.

### PREMILLENNIALISM AND THE PROTESTANTS

The Protestant Reformers, while returning to much true doctrine, accepted the amillennialism of Augustine. Men like John Calvin and Martin Luther held to a weaker Augustinian amillennialism. They tried to make millennialism look ridiculous and they greatly misrepresented its teachings. They always tried to associate it with the Munzer mess in Germany.

Calvin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* wrote: ". . .not long after arose the millenarians, who limited the reign of Christ to a thousand years. The fiction is too puerile to require or deserve refutation" (Book III, Section XXV, par. 5).

The English Episcopalian confession of Edward VI, A.D. 1553, Article XLI, says: "Those who endeavor to recall the fable of the Millenarians, oppose the sacred Scriptures and precipitate themselves into Jewish insanities."

The Augsburg (Lutheran) Confession, A. D. 1530, Article XVII, says: "They condemn others also who now scatter Jewish opinions, that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world, the wicked being everywhere suppressed the saints alone, the pious, shall have a worldly kingdom and shall exterminate all godless."

It is true that some Protestants did teach premillennialism, but they were the

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DXUM, Davao City, Philippines.....	Sunday 4:00 - 4:30 p.m.....	819 Khz.....	10,000 AM
DXDS, Digos City, Philippines.....	Sunday 12:00 - 12:30 p.m.....	1161 Khz.....	1,000 AM

exception and not the general rule. Those who did so either learned their doctrine from the Bible or the Anabaptists.

### PREMILLENNIALISM AND THE BAPTISTS

The Montanists arose in Phrygia about A. D. 171. They were called Montanists from their leader Montanus, and Cata-phrygians because of where they first appeared, They were Baptist in principle and practice. They taught the premillennial coming of Christ. Thomas Armitage, the Baptist historian, speaks of them on this fashion: "In consequence, they were decided Pre-Millenarians. They believed in the literal reign of Christ upon earth, and longed for his coming, that he might hold his people separate by the final overthrow of sin and sinners, and then his saints would reign with him in his glory" (*History of the Baptists*, p. 176).

Clarence Larkin, writing of premillennialism during the Dark ages, commented: "But amid the gloom God was not without witnesses to the truth. The Paulicians, Albigeneses, Waldenses, and other sects, bore testimony to the Premillennial return of the Lord" (*The Dispensational Truth*, p. 4).

One of the oldest documents we have on the Waldenses is "The Noble Lesson," written in the year A.D. 1100. This lesson speaks of the Antichrist as some future person to appear in the world: "And to be well forewarned when Antichrist shall come," This can only be made to fit into the premillennial scheme of things.

John Wickliff in A.D. 1350 taught premillennialism. He is known as "The Morning Star of the Reformation" and as "Gospel Doctor." Taylor says of him: "He . . . looked for no intervening period of Millennial blessedness to occur prior to the second advent of Christ, but instead regarded the Redeemer's appearing as the object of the hope and constant expectation of the church of God" (*The Voice of the Church*, p. 133).

William Tyndale in A.D. 1530 taught our view. He wrote: "Christ and his apostles taught no other, but warned to look for Christ's coming again every hour; which coming again, because ye believe it will never be, therefore have ye feigned that other merchandise. On Matthew 6:10 he says: "Thy kingdom come--that is, the time when thy Son shall surrender

his kingdom unto thee, as it is in I Cor. 15:24. This kingdom is also mentioned, Romans 8:21-22, where it is declared that all creatures descry that day as the time of their rest and perpetual Sabbath" (*op. cit*, p. 141).

John Bunyan about 1660 in his "An Exposition of the First Ten Chapters of Genesis" wrote: "Those long-lived men therefore shew us the glory that the church shall have in the latter day, when Christ shall set up his kingdom on earth, according to that which is written, 'They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.'" (*The Works of John Bunyan*, Vol. II, p. 456).

Perhaps no greater defender of premillennialism ever lived in the 1600's than Benjamin Keach (A.D. 1640-1704). He published 43 different works and was pastor of the Baptist Church of Horsleydown, where Gill and Spuregon later would pastor. Sylvester Hassell, an amillennialist, tells us this about him: "He wrote a small book for children, call 'The Child's Instructor,' in which he affirmed that none but believers should be baptized, and he also taught the personal reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years" (*History of the Church of God*, p. 532).

"He was brought to trial Oct. 8, 1664, on the two charges of Anabaptism and Millennialism. As he stood there before Lord Chief-Justice Hyde, the representation of the State-Church, it was charged that he held 'that the saints shall reign with Christ a thousand years.' The judge pronounced this 'an old heresy which was cast out of the church a thousand years ago, and was likewise condemned by the Council of Constance five hundred years after, and hath lain dead ever since, till now this rascal hath revived it.' Nevertheless, the stalwart Baptist preacher firmly defended his view, bringing out clearly the doctrine of the first resurrection, followed by the Millennium and the reign of the saints, with Christ. . ." (A. J. Gordon in an article on "Millennialism" which appeared in *The Christian Herald and Signs of Our Times*, June 3, 1891, p. 343).

The jury found Elder Keach guilty in part. "And when asked to explain their verdict the foreman said, 'In the indictment he is charged with these

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## Premillennialism

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words, "When the thousand years shall be expired, then shall all the rest of the devils be raised," but in the book it is, "Then shall the rest of the dead be raised"" (*The Baptist Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 638). Brother Keach was thrown in jail and made to stand upon the pillory at Aylesburg.

Elder John Clarke, pastor of the First Baptist Church in America in 1638, held to premillennialism. One July 31, 1651. Bro. Clarke was brought before the Boston Court for his faith in Jesus Christ. He spoke many favorable words about the Lord Jesus Christ among which are these words: ". . .the Anointed King, who is gone unto his Father, for his glorious kingdom, and shall ere long return again; that this Jesus Christ is also Lord; none to or with him by way of commanding and ordering, with respect to the worship of God, the household of faith, which being purchased with his blood as Priest, instructed and nourished by his spirit as Prophet, do wait in his appointments as the Lord, in hope of that glorious kingdom which shall ere long appear." He added. . .to wait for his coming the second time, in the form of a Lord and King with his glorious kingdom according to promise. . . (*History of the Baptists in New England*, Vol. I, p. 182-183).

John Gill (A.D. 1697-1771) of London was in his day one of the most distinguished divines among the English Baptists. An amillennialist, Elder Sylvester Hassell, called him "the soundest, the most learned, and the most able Baptist theologian since the death of the apostle John" (*History of the Church of God*, p. 651). Gill was the author of a complete commentary on the Bible, a body of divinity, and numerous other books.

John Gill was a defender of premillennialism. In 1769 he wrote: "This kingdom of Christ will be bound by two resurrections, by the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the just, at which it will begin; and by the second resurrection, or the resurrection of the wicked, at which it will end. . .now in the interval between the resurrection of the one, and the resurrection of the other, will be the millennium, or thousand years' reign of Christ and His people. . . This glorious, visible kingdom of Christ, will be on earth, and not in Heaven" (*Body of Divinity*, p. 644). In A.D. 1672, Gov. Henry D'Anvers wrote a book entitled *Theopolis, or the City of God*, treating of the coming and personal reign of Christ in His millennial glory and triumphs. On pages 44 and 45 he writes: "Satan is bound a thousand years, that he should not deceive the nations, till the same thousand years be fulfilled: Then the saints lived and reigned a thousand years

with Christ, that same thousand years: But the rest of the dead lived not again, until these thousand years were finished; whilst the holy ones as their happiness made priests of God and of Christ reign with Christ a thousand years" (1672 edition).

Christmas Evans (1766-1838) taught our doctrine: "But he (Christ) is able, and is fully determined to reign triumphantly and universally, from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. The government shall be upon his own shoulder, and of his government and peace there shall be no end" (*Memoir and Sermons of the Rev. Christmas Evans*, p. 343, 1840 edition).

Among the premillennialists of the 1800s was the famous Charles Spurgeon (A.D. 1834-1892) in England. Spurgeon built the Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1862 and pastored it 30 years. He was editor of *The Sword and the Trowel* and a prolific writer. In his sermon on "The Second Coming" he said: ". . .we may be always expecting Christ to come, and that we may be watching for His coming at any hour and every hour. I think that the millennium will commence after His coming, and not before it. I cannot imagine the kingdom with the King absent. It seems to me to be an essential part of the millennial glory that the King shall then be revealed. . ." (*The Second Coming*, p. 104).

Robert Hall (1764-1831) held to the millennial doctrine. "Mr. Thorp, of England says that Millennialism 'formed part of the subject of the last evening's conversation enjoyed by him with that extraordinary man, only a few days before his decease, and upon each point the most perfect unanimity of opinion revealed,'---Mr. Hall to use the language of Dr. Duffield, 'regretting on his dying bed he had not preached the Millennial views he entertained'" (*The Voice of the Church*, p. 264, 1865 edition).

Even Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), an apostate Baptist and founder of the Campbellite Church, held to premillennialism. This is not today generally known as nearly all of his present followers are amillennialists. The modern-day Campbellites try to deliberately conceal this information to save the theological embarrassment. Writing in the *Millennial Harbinger* 1841, page 196, Alexander Campbell declared: "With me the term Millennium represents neither more nor less than what is described in the single passage where the thousand years are six times named in four periods. It is not the ultimate and eternal state of the church: it is but a thousand years. . .literally a thousand years. We have had six Millenniums of the triumphs of infidelity, impiety, atheism almost completed; we have the promise of one Millennium of the same endurance, in which the gospel and its friends shall have the ascendancy."

Again in the same publication, 1843, page 49, he said: "In a word, I yet believe in a millennium---a thousand years---a sabbath of bliss before the scenes of God and Magog are transacted---I believe David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the Apostle John."

Time would fail me to mention all of the Baptist who held to premillennialism. There was Adoniram Judson the pioneer American missionary to Burma. There was A. J. Gordon, founder of Boston Missionary Training School and hymn writer. There was George C. Needham, a great evangelist and Bible teacher. Then there was A. J. Frost, another evangelist and Bible teacher. There was J. R. Graves, editor of *The Tennessee Baptist* and a great writer and debater. There was S. H. Ford, editor of *The Christian Repository* and a famous Baptist historian. In England there was A. G. Brown, a great leader of the Baptists, and John Cox, a warm-hearted writer.

### PREMILLENNIAL CONFESSION OF FAITH

In 1644 seven Particular Baptist churches in London put forth what was called "The London Confession." Article Twenty reads: "This kingdom shall be then fully perfected when he shall the second time come in glory to reign among His saints, and to be admired of all them which do believe, when He shall put down all rule and authority under His feet, that the glory of the Father may be full and perfectly manifested in His Son, and the glory of the Father and the Son in all His members" (*Baptist Confession of Faith By Lumpkin*, p. 162). Part of Article Forty says: ". . .the bodies of the saints shall be raised by the power of Christ, in the day of the resurrection, to reign with Christ" (*ibid.* 167).

Several English Baptist churches in the country of Somerset and surrounding countries put forth the Somerset Confession in 1665. Article Thirty-Nine declared: "That it is our assured expectation, grounded upon promises, that the Lord Jesus Christ shall the second time appear without sin unto salvation, unto His people, to raise and change the vile bodies of all His saints, and so to reign with Him, and judge over all nations on the earth in power and glory."

In March 1660 the General Assembly of General Baptists met in London to construct the Standard Confession. It was signed by 40 men and presented to King Charles II on July 26, 1660. J. R. Graves says it was approved by more than 20,000 Baptists (See *The Seven Dispensations*, p. 405).

Article Twenty-Two says: "That the same Lord Jesus who shewed Himself alive after His passion, by many infallible proofs, Acts 1:3 which was taken up from the disciples, and carried up into heaven, Luke 24:51. Shall so come in like manner

as He was seen go into heaven, Acts 1:9-11. And when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory, Col. 3:4. For then shall He be King of kings and Lord of lords, Rev. 19:16 for the kingdom is His, and He is the Governor among the nations, Ps. 22:28, and King over all the earth, Zech. 14:9 and we shall reign with Him on the earth, Rev. 5:10, the kingdoms of this world, (which men so mightily strive after here to enjoy) shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and His Christ, Rev. 11:15. . ."

In *The Centennial History of the Steuben Baptist Association* by Thomas William Carter, published in 1917, it is said in the minutes of the year 1847: "Elder J. Ketchum wrote on 'The Thousand Year Reign' in the Circular Letter" (p. 18).

Isaac Watts (A.D. 1674-1748), a premillennialist, wrote:

*Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run,  
His kingdom spread from shore to shore  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.*

*From north to south the princes meet  
To pay their homage at His feet,  
While western empires own their Lord  
And savage tribes attend His Word.*

*To Him shall endless prayer be made  
And endless praises crown His head;  
His name like sweet perfume shall rise  
With every morning sacrifice*

*People and realms of every tongue  
Dwell on His love with sweetest song,  
And infant voices shall proclaim  
Their earthly blessings on His name.*



## God of the Universe

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the godless worldview of Sagan and the Biblical worldview, but Sagan was right to chide us when we speak of a God who is smaller than what science says He must be if He is indeed the Creator of the universe. Rather than shrinking from the advances of modern science, let us embrace any and every fact that enlarges our understanding of the universe for the greater the universe, we will see the greater is our God. John 1:3, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Thinking about some of these things is mind-boggling and we are overwhelmed by the subject but let us consider for a few moments just two points: The Vast Universe and The Unique Earth.

### GOD CREATED A VAST UNIVERSE.

**"Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels:**

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## God of the Universe

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**praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created**" (Ps. 148:1-5).

This has caused scientists and theologians alike to speculate on the possibility of other life forms in the universe. Modern telescopes have revealed a universe of a billion galaxies like ours. Prof. Harlow Shapely of Harvard University said, "One hundred million earths, peopled much like this one, may exist in space." The British astrophysicist Arthur C. Clark said, "It seems incredible that ours should be the only inhabitable planet among the millions of worlds that must exist among the stars."

That being said, we note that there is no scientific evidence to support the theory of life on other planets like our science fiction community portrays. Why? The scientific answer to that question is because conditions for life are very fixed, rigid and scientifically specific.

The planet must not be in what they call a wacky intersecting orbit. (There can be no chance of collisions with asteroids, comets other planets etc.) The planet must be the proper temperature. (If it is too hot we burn up; if it is too cold we freeze) The planet needs the required chemicals for life. (Carbon, nitrogen, and especially - 2 parts hydrogen 1 part oxygen) The planet needs an atmosphere with the constant, correct mix of these things. (Scientists say that by some curious coincidence, our earth has the precise combination of conditions essential for a planet to be habitable. They describe it as a freak phenomenon and an oddity in the cosmos. Bertrand Russell said, "Mankind is a curious accident in the backwater of the universe." Well, even though science gives no argument for life elsewhere, theology does.

There is Theological evidence for life other than human life in the universe. On Earth certainly there is plant life and animal life (Gen. 1:11, 24). But elsewhere there are intelligent beings also that are in another dimension, called angels and devils. These are invisible spirits, but the spiritual world is real indeed.

**"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it"** (Gen. 28:10-12).

**"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place"** (Ps. 68:17).

**"Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure"** (Ps. 103:20-21).

**"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares"** (Heb. 13:2).

**"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him"** (Rev. 12:9).

**"When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick"** (Matt. 8:16).

**"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils"** (I Cor. 10:20-21).

**"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils"** (I Tim. 4:1).

**"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble"** (Jam. 2:19).

### GOD CREATED A UNIQUE EARTH.

**"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"** (Gen 1:1). That settles the question on our origin. **"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine"** (Ex. 19:5). God has a special plan for a special people on this special planet in His universe.

**"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth"** (Ps. 46:10).

The Earth is the Theater of the universe. Angels and devils are watching the events that unfold on earth. **"Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into"** (I Pet. 1:12). **"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men"** (I Cor. 4:9).

This is where the drama of redemption

is played out in the universe. **"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"** (Heb. 1:1-3).

The Earth is also the Battleground of the universe. We are the center of the cosmic struggle between good and evil. **"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"** (Eph. 6:11-12).

This battle between good and evil is a spiritual warfare. **"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"** (II Cor. 10:3-5).

Then again the Earth is also the Schoolhouse of the universe. Spirit beings learn from our interaction with God. **"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God"** (Eph. 3:10).

All intelligent life shall someday properly worship God. **"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"** (Phil. 2:10-11). All the elect will praise Him forever in His glorious presence and all the Christ rejecters shall also acknowledge His divine greatness and go to eternal damnation to the praise of His eternal justice.

Conclusion: God created a vast universe. There is no doubt about that. In this vast universe our earth, which is only a spec in the space dust of the universe, is the spiritual hub of the cosmos and this is where His eternal plan of salvation is displayed.

**"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning,**

**the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight"** (Col. 1:16-22).

AMEN.



## Baptism and the

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J. M. Carroll says: "No other doctrine in Christendom has caused so much blood shed as infant baptism, and all the hurtful heresies in so-called Christianity today can be traced to one or the other of these ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper."

In a time of relative peace and freedom of conscience in this country, you see much more ecumenical unity among so called churches, and there will be a further drive to join together in the spirit of unity. May we never forget the price our Baptist forefathers have paid and the great cost of the Godhead for His church, and the great value of the ordinances He commissioned us to keep, even unto death. As we look at the ordinances, our focus will be on them as church ordinances, more than how they are observed. Though we will mention the purpose and how the ordinances are observed (wine, unleavened bread, immersion), it will not be our primary focus to prove the method of administration in this article. There is no excuse for a Bible believing Baptist to follow any other example than that of the New Testament, and it is clear what the Bible teaches; in the Lord's Supper wine and unleavened bread, were used, and baptism by immersion. They are church ordinances, not preacher ordinances, they are ordinances and not suggestions, they are the Lord's and not ours, and finally they are pictures and not sacraments.

First of all, the ordinances are church ordinances, not preacher ordinances. The ordinances were not given to individuals, but the church. Ephesians 4:4-7 **"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."** This passage was to the church at Ephesus, not to a group of preachers.

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## Baptism and the

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Where is the authority found? It is from the church. Men do not have the right to embark on their own and administer the ordinances. Man individually taking the power to give, or withhold the ordinances at will is the beginnings of deadly priestcraft. The error that Baptists have died standing against through the ages is creeping into churches today. The ministers of Christ do NOT have the sole authority over the ordinances, but it is the church that has the God given authority. **“The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me”** (Mark 11:30). If of men, then there are two baptisms, one authorized by God, and given to the churches by Christ to administer, and one of a man who works outside of the church’s authority. The commission to practice was given to the church and it is the church’s duty to go therefore and teach all nations, not just the preachers. If the authority was given only to men, then the validity of the ordinances are then based upon men, not churches. The faith of the man doesn’t qualify the ordinance. The apostles didn’t know who was the one to betray Christ and I believe that Judas would have also baptized believers, like the other apostles since there was nothing to set him apart to make it obvious that he was a deceiver. If Judas did baptize like the others, would that have made the baptism invalid? No, the authority is with the church, not the man. Does your scriptural baptism rely on the person who immersed you or the authority of the church that baptized? You can check the history and beliefs of a church, but only God can know another man’s heart. Those who believe in the erroneous teaching of self-constitution claim the prerequisites for a church are that saved baptized believers covenant together to self-constitute. That begs the question, what makes their baptism scriptural, is it only going under the water? In essence, that teaching requires a continual link chain of baptism. They must trace their baptism, PERSON to PERSON back to Jerusalem, otherwise, what is the difference in their baptism and that of any other Protestant church? But, if they contend they must be baptized by a true church, their baptism is not traced person to person, but from CHURCH to CHURCH, and it is absurd to contend that your baptism has come from church to church back to Jerusalem, but your church is organized directly from Christ without the very same linkage as your baptism. That is the beauty of truth, there are no inconsistencies. There are instances where churches are with out pastors to administer these ordinances. What is a church to do then? The true churches of Christ have that authority to continue the work, though those

instances are not desirable, and are not the norm, they are not invalid. Why? The authority was given to the church. Baptism is a church ordinance, and the authority to baptize is the churches alone, and if the church authorizes the baptism, the person who dunks the other doesn’t make the baptism valid or invalid, whether they are an ordained minister or not.

The instruction on carrying out ordinances was given to the churches of the New Testament. When we are instructed on how to carry out the ordinances, we see the churches were instructed, not pastors. The church at Corinth was instructed on the procedure of the Lord’s Supper. Timothy and Titus were not instructed in their authority of Baptism and Lord’s Supper, because they are not preacher ordinances. You would think that if Timothy and Titus, young ministers, had such great authority and responsibility in holding fast the ordinances, there would be some specific instruction for it in the pastoral epistles. Instruction was given to churches because the ordinances are for the churches to carry out. The pastors should administer the ordinances, as they have been ordained and set apart for the work of the ministry, but the ordinances are in the authority of the church, not the preacher.

These are ordinances, and not suggestions. **“Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you”** (I Cor. 11:2). They are to be kept. An ordinance is a precept, a law, or a tradition. They are not optional exercises, but a Biblical imperative that must be kept. Keep the ordinances, or hold them fast, keep them secure, hold to the truth of them. A church can keep the ordinances by properly administering the ordinances and by following the scriptural mandates. The church is to keep out leaven in type (the elements) and practice (the participants) in the Lord’s Supper. The church is authorized to exercise discipline among the membership, to keep the body pure, in keeping the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper. The church is to keep diligent care of the validity of baptism, and in no circumstance what so-ever accept alien baptism. It is the duty of every Baptist, to do all they can to keep the ordinances,

and so be faithful, even unto death. What an awesome responsibility. God only gave us two ordinances, these two pictures, we must never compromise or yield an inch, keeping the ordinances, as they were delivered unto us.

Not only are they to be kept, but they are to be kept particularly. Since they are ordinances and not suggestions, these precepts are to be kept the same way for the same purpose by the same people, administered to the same people as found in the New Testament. Professing believers are the only example of true baptism found in Scripture, so we are to particularly keep the ordinance of baptism by only baptizing professing believers. Immersion is the only method possible for baptism, since that is what the word means. The only example in Scripture for baptism is immersion. The Lord’s Supper is only given to church members in Scripture, administered only by the church, and only through the churches authority, so we must be particular in who can partake. We must be particular in the design of these ordinances. There is more meaning here than a simple religious ceremony, as there is a definite purpose to the ordinances. Any deviation from the picture, in any way, deviates from the purpose and the picture. God has only given us two pictures, let us be exacting in keeping the pictures as delivered. Since He has given them to us, there must be a reason and a purpose for the mode in which they are administered. Let us not add to nor take away from the picture. Fifty million Baptists died in the dark ages keeping the ordinances as they were delivered to their charge. Dreadfully persecuted by Rome, for not yielding to the hateful mass nor the damnable heresy of infant baptism, they were hated and hunted, killed and imprisoned for the sake of the truth. Then, after the so-called reformation, when they thought they had friends in those who said they believed in the doctrines of grace, they were persecuted by Protestants as well. Mosheim, a Lutheran historian said, “There were certain sects and doctors against whom the zeal, vigilance and severity of Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinist were united. The objects of their common aversion were the Anabaptists.” This hatred was over the ordinances, and mostly over baptism in particular. How can the Lord’s churches be slack in holding fast? This is not Baptist bigotry, but Baptist obedience!

Some exclude professing children for nothing more than age. These precious lambs should be thought of as lambs, taught and encouraged, not cast aside (Mat 18:6; 10-11). We are talking about professing believers, our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is dangerous for the child and the church to keep a brother or sister from baptism and church membership that earnestly

believes and desires it. The church is not to exclude the ignorant (the untaught, uninstructed) from baptism or the Lord’s Supper. But, there are examples of those who indeed should be excluded from the ordinances. John would not baptize the impenitent unbeliever. The church in Corinth was commanded to exclude from membership, and not to eat with the fornicating member, until he repented, but it is the church’s duty to teach the ignorant and not for the believer to obtain a certain level of spiritual growth to earn baptism or the Lord’s Supper. The candidate should know their Saviour, know what baptism is, and what they are saying by being baptized. The ordinances that are to be kept are to baptize believers not theologians. The Lord’s Supper is to be kept, not just as the church, but as each individual member must keep it with the church. I don’t mean that you can take the Lord’s Supper apart from the church, but you, as a member, have a personal responsibility to be there. It is a shame if you are absent from the supper and you could have been in attendance. There were some in Corinth that were providentially hindered, I Cor. 11:33, **“Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another,”** but if the church carries, that means they are waiting and expecting your eventual arrival. You should be trying to get there. How sad, and what a terrible spiritual condition you must be in, to willingly forsake the Lord’s Supper, having the opportunity to do what few can, picture the Lord’s death till He comes. Baptists, you have a responsibility to keep them, to get to the assembly and participate in the proper heart and spirit. They are to be kept as delivered. The mission of the church has not changed, the Head of the church has not changed, and the ordinances of the church have not changed and it is not optional for the Lord’s churches to perform these duties, likewise the manner in which we administer these ordinances are not optional.

True churches are the Lord’s churches, and they are His ordinances, so naturally, they are not ours. **“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”** It is not our privilege to change the ordinances to suite our fancy, but we are followers of Christ and His word, and we must use the Scriptures as our only rule of faith and practice. Considering the Lord’s Supper in I Corinthians 11:20-26 (specifically verse 23) we are to do as He says, and as He did. The best reason for obedience in the Lord’s Supper is that Christ instituted it. What better reason than that to exercise the strictest diligence in keeping the ordinances in the correct way. The Lord’s Supper started in an upper room, and will end when He comes. The administrators were set forth as the church, and the

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### YOUR READING YOUR FINAL ISSUE

## Baptism and the

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participants were set forth as the body or the loaf. The elements are laid out as unleavened bread and wine. Christ took care of every thing for us, told us what we needed to know, why to partake and how to administer, so why change it? We can't put society and the effects of the former prohibition of intoxicating drink in the USA to change Biblical authority. Don't let your prejudices against wine keep you from obeying Christ and following Him. There is no good reason, at all, for not using the same elements of the supper in the same way Christ instituted and partook of them. We hold to baptism by immersion because of the example we find in the New Testament, why not have the same standard for the Supper? It was asked, during the time when prohibition was being called for, if the Eighteenth Amendment (prohibition) was an amendment to the Constitution or the New Testament. There is no excuse for using grape juice. There is no Biblical evidence to support it, no Biblical mandate to change it, no logical reason to modify it, no history to suggest that it was used by any historic Baptist, so what gives us the right to change what the Almighty God used to picture His precious blood? We are not dealing with things of non importance, but the picture of the blood that was shed for me. The same diligence should be kept in baptism. We are commanded to go ye therefore, and do as He says and baptize as He was. Christ was immersed and that should settle the issue for every one, and there is no other argument that could supersede the fact that Christ was immersed. He commanded His church to immerse, and in every instance in New Testament of proper baptism, you will find believers baptism. Acts 8:36-37 **"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."** What kept him from baptism? Faith. Faith wasn't the result of baptism, but the prerequisite. It is an answer to a **"good conscience toward God."** There is no reason to change and no authority to change the mode.

The ordinances are pictures and not sacraments. A sacrament is a rite, or a means of visible grace, a formal religious ceremony conferring grace on those who receive it. It is from the word "consecrate," or "sacred." In other words, a sacrament would make or declare holy, the bread and wine and baptismal water. We do not, nor can we make inanimate objects holy. We can't make water holy,

and superstitious incantations do not change the bread, wine, or water into other properties. Consider the words of Alphonsus Liguori, a catholic priest in the 1700's concerning his power over their sacrament.

"With regard to the power of priests over the real body of Christ, it is of faith that when they pronounce the words of consecration, the incarnated God has obliged Himself to obey and come into their hands under the sacramental appearance of bread and wine. We are struck with wonder when we find that in obedience to the words of His priests (Hoc est corpus meum) this is my body-God himself descends on the altar, that He comes whenever they call Him, and as often as they call Him, and places himself in their hands, even though they should be His enemies. And after having come He remains, entirely at their disposal and they move Him as they please from one place to another. The many, if they wish, shut Him up in the tabernacle, or expose Him on the altar, or carry Him outside the church; then may, if they choose, eat his flesh, and give Him for the food of others. Besides, the power of the priest surpasses that of the blessed virgin because she cannot absolve a catholic even the smallest sin."

I, for one, do not want anything to do with that wicked mass. Inanimate objects do not make us holy. The bread, wine, and water do not justify sinners and a impenitent sinner after baptism is a wet sinner and a unsaved man taking the supper, is a unsaved man that has eaten bread and drank wine. Neither the bread, the wine, nor the water cover sin, water doesn't wash sin or cleanse sinners and neither the wine nor the bread will give life to the dead. Neither the bread, the wine, nor the water will forgive sin, but are pictures of Christ, and how sin was forgiven. It pictures that sinless body that was nailed to the cross and that precious, sinless blood that was shed for the remission of sin. It pictures the body of the Lord after His death, laid in the tomb, and after three days and three nights, victoriously rose from that borrowed tomb for our justification. These are pictures, and what wonderful pictures they are. Pictures of the body, the blood, the death, burial, and resurrection of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The bread, the wine, and the water do not sanctify, they do not redeem, nor glorify, nor justify, but they are pictures of what Jesus did for us. As we rise from the baptismal water, we are not then justified, but as He now lives, we walk in newness of life. Jesus said: **"This do in REMEMBRANCE of Me"** (Emphasis DN). Nothing more, nothing less. We need to hold fast, because this is how He told us to remember Him. We are not told to remember Him in Easter baskets, or remember in Christmas celebrations or any other pagan ritual that the world

establishes. **"This do in remembrance of me"** (Emphasis DN).

These ordinances were given to the Lord's church, and the church is responsible for holding fast, and keeping them, with out wavering, even unto death. This is serious business. These are Baptist distinctives, and we must endeavor to keep them that way. God help us, and God help His churches to be faithful, no matter the cost.



## Compromising King

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**the LORD, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass. And, behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters: also the Levites shall be officers before you. Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good"** (II Chron. 19 1-4, 9-11).

Jehoshaphat appears to have learned from his experience at Ramoth-gilead. Whether he learned from his narrow escape from death because of the subtle trickery of Ahab, by the rebuke of Jehu, or both is really unimportant. What we shall see by the end of chapter 20, and by comparison with 21:4-6, is that the lesson was not completely learned. But for now Jehoshaphat seems to have accepted the rebuke of the Lord, given through Jehu (II Chron. 19:1-2).

There are two interesting footnotes to the failed campaign at Ramoth-gilead. One is that it was Ahab's third war with Syria. In the first two wars Syria was the aggressor and God defeated Syria. In the second of those wars God had delivered the king of Syria into Ahab's hand to be destroyed, but Ahab spared him. He was told, then, by the prophet that **"therefore thy life shall go for his life"** (I Kings 20:42). We do not know if Jehoshaphat knew about that.

But some years previously Jehoshaphat's father, Asa, had gone to war against Israel (II Chron. 16) and had solicited the aid of the same king- Benhadad - whom Ahab was now soliciting Jehoshaphat's assistance to fight. *This* Jehoshaphat must have known.

How soon we forget who our enemies really are! How soon we forget the alliances we have made, whether good or bad! We need to learn this in reference to our ministry. There is good reason why we are not to make alliances with those whose doctrine and practice conflicts with ours. It will soon come back to haunt us.

I think it noteworthy that there was no revival recorded under Jehoshaphat's reign. Revival never comes to a compromising people! Jehoshaphat was

like most of our churches today. Even though he "had" made some very wrong alliances there were good things to be found about him. Verse 3 marks the difference why God did "not" say the same things about Jehu, king of Israel (not to be confused with Jehu the prophet who is rebuking Jehoshaphat here). Jehoshaphat prepared his heart to seek God. That was never said about Jehu, king of Israel, even though he "had" destroyed the worship of Baal. Jehoshaphat sought to bring the people back to the right worship of God. Jehu retained the false altars which Jeroboam had set up.

When revival comes we will see a people of God who stand out because of their holiness and their separation from the affairs of this world.

The remainder of the chapter deals with Jehoshaphat's ministry and reforms. **"And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again through the people from Beersheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto the LORD God of their fathers."**

Verses 5-7 deal with how he set up judges in the land and admonished them to judge righteously in the fear of the Lord. Of special importance, and an important warning to "our" government, is Jehoshaphat's warning in verse 10 and again in verse 11. **"Ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the LORD... Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good."**

But there is an unnoticed comment in verse 4, a comment which, along with many other similar records in Scripture from the reign of Jeroboam to the final fall of the northern kingdom, answers the often asked question about the "ten lost tribes". The reason Jeroboam I set up the calves at Dan and Bethel was to keep the people from going back to Jerusalem to worship. But the often quoted statement in reference to God's elect being **"out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"** may just as well apply here, "out of every tribe".

Throughout the years of the Northern Kingdom there were some of every tribe who still migrated back to Jerusalem to worship. Jehoshaphat has gone to Mount Ephraim, AKA Samaria, and brought them back to **"the LORD God of their fathers."**

Over most of the last 1700 years of church history, the professing church has been led astray, given the false idols of Catholicism and Protestantism to keep the people from returning to the God of "our" fathers. Even in the ranks of those who think themselves separated from those idols, there are the idols of legalistic tradition and denominationalism, "our" Bethel and Dan if you please.

Oh may we learn from the experience of Jehoshaphat and the rebuke of Jehu! Let us dwell in **"the house of God, which is the church of the living God,**

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## Compromising King

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the pillar and ground of the truth” and faithfully proclaim the whole truth of God, completely apart from the inherited traditions of Protestantism or other man-made doctrines. Let us therefore go forth, even if our truth may be unpopular with the religious world, and bring “our” people back to the God of their fathers.



## Ecclesiology 101

By Curtis Pugh  
of Bocsă, Romania



Having previously written “Eschatology 101” dealing with a basic approach to end-time events, I now offer “Ecclesiology 101.” I hope it will be a help to God’s sheep.

Perhaps, for readers outside the U.S.A., I should explain the significance of “101.” Stereotypically at least, first-year basic or elementary university courses have been numbered beginning with “101.” So the nature of this article will be to provide a basic approach to ecclesiology or the doctrine of the church.

It seems to me that there are four views among modern Baptists as to the way in which churches ought to be organized. These four views have forced Baptists into four different camps. These camps are both incompatible (incapable of harmonious coexistence) and irreconcilable (impossible to restore to harmony). I shall try to give a fair, concise and understandable assessment of the first three views along with some objections to them and to provide support of the fourth one. As I cannot find the first three views supported by the Word of God, I cannot furnish texts that support either of them.

The first position held by some who are denominated Baptists is what I call “The Direct Authority View.” Briefly stated this view is that any group of baptized people may gather together and determine to organize themselves into a church. It assumes that they have the authority to do so, directly given by Christ, and that He will recognize them as a true church based on their actions. Sometimes this is called the “self constitution view.”

We object to this view for several reasons, in the main because we have no New Testament example of true

churches originating in this fashion. On the other hand, we do have a group of Gentiles turning to the Lord in Antioch. The consequence of this was that the Jerusalem Church authorized one of their members to go to Antioch, evidently both to learn the truth of the matter and to act accordingly. His actions would have no doubt included baptizing and setting them in order, as this was the practice of the apostles (Acts 11:22; Titus 1:5). It is clearly stated that under his ministry “much people was added unto the Lord” (Acts 11:24). These people would need baptism and teaching as to the observing of all things Christ had commanded. It is also interesting and important to note that it was only after the ministry of Barnabas to this group in Antioch that they were ever called a “church” by the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:26).

Neither do we have any Word from Christ or any apostle giving baptized persons this imagined “direct authority.” Matthew 18:20, the “two or three gathered together in my name” passage, does NOT teach such a “self constitution view.” That passage deals with an already established church dealing with matters of discipline as the context clearly shows. Church organization was not at all in view when the Lord spoke these words! To try to stretch this passage as a proof text for self-constituting a church is ludicrous and violates all sensible rules of Bible interpretation.

We also object because such a method is disorderly in that persons who have been excluded from the fellowship of a true church may, without repentance and amendment of life – without making things right with their previous church – form themselves into a new church in flagrant disregard for their former church. Churches organized in this manner make a mockery of church discipline just as open communion does. And so, just as churches that hold to closed communion have no church fellowship with open communists, so those who hold to Biblical church organization are forbidden to have fellowship with those who hold this disorderly or heretical view. The Bible says, “**Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us**” (II Thess. 3:6) and “**A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject**” (Titus 3:10). So, whether you view those who hold this view as “disorderly” or as “heretics,” the faithful Baptist cannot rightly cooperate with or have fellowship with them or their churches. To do so is to be a traitor to the truth!

We think the direct authority view is dangerous because it gives to the individual member the right to dismiss himself from the membership of a church – whether to form a new one or to escape

rightful discipline or both. Where this plan is adopted, church discipline is rendered meaningless and pointless.

We object to this view also because it is contrary to the Great Commission. In that Commission our Lord stated His authority and gave commandment to His true churches to do those things in His absence which He had formerly been doing while upon earth. The self constitution view would allow any group to form themselves into a church and by their self-act qualify themselves to do the work that Christ designated to be carried on by a specific body – His church. If such a thing as “ecclesiastical Arminianism” exists, this would be it! Just as the Arminian thinks he is saved because of something he did on his own, so these “ecclesiastical Arminians” think they are legitimate Baptist Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ because of something they did: Because of something they did completely apart from a church that had a commission from Christ to continue the work He was doing.

And what had Christ been doing while He was on earth? He had been making disciples and baptizing them and gathering them into a church (John 4:1; I Cor. 12:28). What work did He leave for His church? Why the same work He had been doing, of course. Christ did not purpose that His work be carried on by individual believers or by a group of baptized individuals acting apart from a church body. So it seems unreasonable to think that continuing the work of forming churches can be accomplished by anyone other than a church body acting together to determine what is the will of God in these matters and to do it.

The second position held by some who are denominated Baptists is what I call “The Ordination Authority View.” This view says that any man ordained to the Gospel ministry has all the authority he needs. By virtue of that ordination he can administer both ordinances, ordain ministers, and organize new churches apart from either membership in or action by any true church. Sometimes this is called the “preacher authority” view. We reject this view because it was not practiced in the New Testament. It just is not to be found either in the teaching or practice of Christ and His apostles. No New Testament writer endorses it and so neither should we.

There are several very real dangers to this idea. Those who adopt this view have created a “class” of special men who, regardless of their doctrinal deviations or moral unfitness, are empowered to organize or refuse to organize new churches. These men would be similar in power to the “bishops” of the Catholic system. This view also promotes free-lance-ism among those called Baptists. This sort of free-lance ministry is similar in some ways to that mentioned in Acts 19:13 – i.e. “vagabond Jews” who went

from place to place under the authority of none but themselves.

This view, like the first one, also makes a mockery of and would destroy Biblical church discipline. Such a man, endowed at some previous remote ordination with such great personal authority, would be in submission to no church whatsoever. Such a man could be properly excluded from a church and it would have no bearing on his ministry whatsoever for he was “ordained” and to quote one who espouses this view, “When I was ordained I received all the authority I need.” We cannot find any scriptural basis for the “preacher authority” view!

A third view, “The Denominational Authority View” holds that a Baptist convention, association or gathering of denominationally accredited ministers has authority to organize new churches. This view is easily debunked because the New Testament knows nothing of such man-made organizations as conventions and associations and therefore New Testament Christians are bound not to recognize their man-made offspring as true churches.

The fourth view maintains that Christ, having all authority (Matt. 28:18), gave specific orders to His church regarding the work they were to do in His absence. I call this position “The Church Authority View.” These specific orders are called the Great Commission and are in fact a delegation of Christ’s authority. Thus both the privilege and obligation – the right and the duty – for all service to Christ was given by Him to His organized disciples, His church. Some have called this the “mother church view” because it requires that a previously existing church be involved in the bringing into existence of each new church. In practice, this view holds that established churches have the (1) delegated authority and the (2) high privilege and the (3) obligation to ordain (publicly set apart) men whom they believe are called of God to the ministry and to send them out to places near and far in the church’s effort to carry out the Great Commission. Thus churches are and must be directly involved in the establishment of new churches. Since New Testament churches ordinarily determine the will of the church by the orderly method of voting, it is reasonable to expect church actions to be decided, if not unanimously, at least by a majority of the members. Thus no mere group of baptized individuals can properly act in the place of a church.

This view continues the practice of our Lord who Himself ordained certain men and sent them out to further His work (See Luke 9:1, 2; 10:1; Mark 3:14; John 15:16; 17:18, etc.). We think that viewing the work of a true church as continuing the work Christ did while on earth is a most important perspective and one that each true child of God should

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What are the differences between a pastor, a preacher, and a missionary? – Mississippi

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A pastor is a man called of God to care for the sheep that are members of a local visible church. A preacher is one that as Strong's puts it is "a herald, i.e. of divine truth (especially of the gospel):— preacher." We often hear these terms used interchangeably and have often heard some say that not all preachers are pastors. I concur with these statements.

**"This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work"** (I Tim. 3:1). Truly this desire is not one of pride but of a working of the Spirit of God within the man. God chooses His pastors for His churches in His time. The man that desires this work finds himself questioning every reason why the desire is there and finds every reason why not to do it, until God wipes them all away one at a time.

**"(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"** (I Tim. 3:5). Taking care of the church of God is a great responsibility laid upon the man; it is also a great honor. A pastor feeds the lambs God has given him oversight of.

**"And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly"** (II Pet. 2:5). Notice that Noah was a preacher of righteousness and not a pastor, also the apostle Paul was a preacher and not a pastor of one of the Lord's churches. **"Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles"** (II Tim. 1:11).

I find nothing in the Scripture stating Paul was a missionary. The word missionary in the dictionary is defined as one sent to propagate religion. By that definition Paul was a missionary.

At this time I find not much difference between the three terms pastor, preacher, and missionary as all three have many things in common. Can one man be all three? Yes, one man can be all three. Can anybody become one of these? not unless God calls them to the specific office to fulfill.

MIKE DEWITT

1. In one sense a preacher is one specifically, formally, officially called of God to herald the message of the gospel, to proclaim the truth of the Word, and to publish the grace of God. This is the meaning that most people think of when they talk about someone who is a preacher.

However, an individual who is saved yet not formally or officially called to "preach" may herald the message of the gospel through witnessing. Before I was ever officially called to "preach" folks I witnessed to called me a preacher because I was actively witnessing to them. So in one sense every person who is saved by God's grace is to preach, publish, or herald the gospel through witnessing (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). A prime example of preaching or proclaiming the Word of the Gospel by those not formally or officially called of God to "preach" is found in Acts 8:4 which states: **"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."** According to Acts 8:1 the folks doing the preaching were not the called "apostles" but rather members of the Jerusalem church who had been scattered by severe persecution. I believe every one who is saved has the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the lost through witnessing. This is done person to person, door to door, on the street, through passing out printed material, etc. This is an activity we all should be fervently, earnestly, and passionately engaged in.

2. A pastor is a preacher who is formally called by God and appointed to shepherd, guide, tend, and feed the flock of God. It is a metaphorical term borrowed from the literal occupation of one who was charged with tending flocks of sheep. Other words used synonymously for the office of the pastor are elder and bishop. Classic passages used to describe the office of the pastor/elder/bishop are Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-12 and I Timothy 3:1-7. A careful reading of these passages clearly reveals that a pastor must be a saved man (not a woman) divinely called to preach the gospel and the whole counsel of God. A pastor is responsible for leading, teaching, feeding the church of the Lord Jesus Christ

the truth of the Word of God. There are moral and doctrinal qualifications that he must meet in order to fill the office. Whereas anyone may preach the gospel through witnessing, only men Divinely called of God to minister to the Lord's churches may fill the office of the pastor/elder/bishop. True God called pastors are always connected to, a member of, and under the authority of a genuine New Testament Baptist Church.

3. The term missionary is not found in our Authorized King James Bible. However, it is a term that accurately describes a man who is called of God to preach the gospel and teach the truth. A missionary may be classified as a home or foreign missionary, but their essential task is the same. Every God-called missionary must be authorized and sent by the Lord's church to evangelize the unsaved, baptize the converts, and instruct them in truth. In time the sending church officially organizes the baptized believers into an independent, autonomous Baptist Church. Often times, especially in the work of home missions, the missionary is called to be the pastor of the church when it is organized by the sponsoring church. In foreign missions the missionary often trains a man who has been converted and called to preach in the mission work. When the church is officially organized the missionary moves on to another field of labor and the newly formed church calls the national to be the pastor of the flock.

A good example of a missionary in Scripture is Paul, who was converted and baptized in Acts chapter 9. He was trained in Arabia by the Lord Himself (Gal. 1:15-18). He helped Barnabas (who was sent by the church at Jerusalem) to organize the church of Antioch. Later Paul and Barnabas were sent out and authorized to do mission work by the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-3). From Acts chapter 11 on, Paul is found doing the work of a missionary.

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**"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers"** (Eph. 4:11).

As I see it, the only major difference is in the place and manner of service. All must be called of God and ordained by a "local church," not a mission board, Bible college or Denomination. However, a fellowship or association recognition is advisable.

It is little known and almost never mentioned, but our word "missionary" is the Latin translation of "Apostle," "one sent". However, this is not to be taken to imply that the New Testament office of apostle, as it applied to Peter and Paul, is a valid office today.

A missionary is one who is a) called by God and b) sent by the local church. We see this all wrapped up in one ball of wax in Acts 13:2-3: **"As they (the local church at Antioch) ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."**

We should deal with the missionary first because without the missionary there would be no local churches from which to send more missionaries. These men carry an awesome load and responsibility. They may not just gather together a few new converts, call them a church and leave them under the pastoral leadership of an untaught and ungrounded man. That is why Paul's second missionary journey was to go back to the churches he and Barnabas had planted, and confirmed them. That is why Paul had to write so many letters to the various churches.

It is worthy of note that the churches didn't send just anyone! They sent the "cream of the crop." The men who were going to plant churches had to be well grounded and able men so that the infant churches would be able to stand. For instance, as far as we can discern, Paul was only in Thessalonica for three weeks, but when you read first and second Thessalonians it is clear that the Thessalonians were able to understand the major doctrines of the faith – doctrines which too many supposedly well taught Christians debate today.

Those who were **"scattered abroad"** (Acts 8:1) were not all missionaries in the proper sense of the word, but they "were" all witnesses. In a nut shell analysis we'd have to say that "some" may have been authorized and ordained, as was Philip, but that still, the scattered people were faithful witnesses and in their willingness to share the gospel they did gather converts into assemblies which were later confirmed by the apostles. Even Philip, a deacon of the church at Jerusalem, was in need of the apostle's verification and confirmation of his work.

The "pastor" is one, also called first by God, who serves as the main teacher and overseer of a given local church. He often needs, whether he will accept it or not, the teaching and assistance of the missionary until there is sufficient grounding, backed by a well grounded membership, so that the church can stand alone and even send its own missionaries. This is what Timothy and Titus were sent to do. **"For this cause left I thee in**

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Is it right to call a mission work a church? In so doing, is it not deceiving the people you are trying to witness to? What does the Bible have to say on this? – Kentucky

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A church is a mission work, but not a mission.

A missionary sent out to establish a mission for the purpose to start a church in a particular place is called a mission. A missionary that is under the authority of a church is not a pastor. A mission is not independent, thusly is dependant upon the support of the sponsoring authority. There can be an exception to the support, if the mission is able to support itself, yet necessarily will always be dependant upon authority of the sponsoring church, until the mission is able to operate morally and spiritually as a church. Once the mission has become a church then can it operate as an independent indigenous body for the purpose to proclaim the gospel in that area. The responsibility to proclaim the gospel in that area is the responsibility of that new church. See Acts Chapters 10-11 and study very closely what is said.

Yes, to call a mission a church is deception. To be a church and receive monies as a mission is in my opinion wrong.

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Every mission work is connected to and authorized by an existing New Testament Baptist Church. Therefore, every mission work is a church in prospect so to speak, so I have no problem whatsoever in having a sign or tracts for the mission that read church. It is up to the church that authorizes the mission work and sends out the missionary to determine what the name of the work will be. Each Baptist Church is an independent, autonomous body so it has every right to call its mission a mission, a church, or an assembly according to how they are led by the Spirit.

I was a home missionary out of Wilmington Baptist back in the mid 1980's. My wife and I were the first

members of the mission. When we started we had a sign printed up with the name Providence Baptist Church printed on it, as well as tracts with the same name. I never for one moment ever felt that I was deceiving people when I was out witnessing and inviting them to our mission services. In fact, I was too busy preaching the gospel and pointing people to Christ to even think about it. I never tried to teach the lost people I was witnessing to the difference between a mission and a church anyway. Once folks were saved I explained to them that Wilmington Baptist was our sending church and that we were operating under her authority until we were strong enough to be officially organized into an independent, autonomous Baptist church. No one felt deceived or misled in any way.

In apostolic times churches and missions often met in homes, caves, fields, etc. I doubt that they had a sign that read "Antioch Baptist Church or Mission" out in the front yard or at the mouth of the cave. It was rather known as the place where the baptized followers of Christ met for worship, instruction, and edification.

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In our day and age the term "church" has lost its meaning. Even those of us in sound Baptist ecclesiastical circles use the term far more frequently in reference to the building or simply a service, even when it may be a joint or associational meeting. Too many, even those who are quite close in their understanding of a local church, still use the name more in a denominational sense than in a local sense, thus reducing a given local church to merely a "local chapter" of the big denomination. For instance, I fear that those who still hold Baptists are a product of the Reformation, an off shoot of the Ana-Baptist movement (the "Baptist experiment of the seventeenth century" as one writer put it) do not have a good grasp on the Biblical local church but are using the name in a denominational sense.

There "is" a good deal of confusion surrounding how we use the term

church, aggravated by members of a given local church – other than an authorized missionary and those who have been properly baptized by him – who live in distant places. Granted, it is often nearly impossible to find a church of like faith and practice nearby in many parts of the country, but I suggest that there "are" proper churches in many states, where one of our members could find fellowship, rightly transfer their membership, and be able to participate in the Lord's Supper.

The Bible doesn't directly address this question, probably because there was no need of such a question until apostasy had so infiltrated the churches that the papal system developed. However, Acts 9:31 seems to imply that there were many established churches, probably made up of believers who had not been able to be in the church at Jerusalem but had been quickly confirmed by the Apostles. It is also conceivable that our Lord had gathered believers in places like Caesarea and Capernaum, believers who would be instantly ready to receive local church authority through the Apostles. Acts chapter 1 makes it clear that there was at least "one" functioning local church before Pentecost.

RAY BENNETT



## Forum #1

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**Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5).**

All of these are preachers, including itinerant evangelists. However it has been my experience that we need to be very careful about itinerant evangelists. Too many times the traveling evangelists of today seem to have a poor understanding of the doctrines of grace and little to "no" understanding of proper Biblical ecclesiology.

RAY BENNETT



## Ecclesiology 101

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adopt. So the church authority view is consistent with the Great Commission that was most certainly given to Christ's church. If the Commission was given to the eleven as individuals we have no commission today for they are all dead. If the Commission was given to the eleven as apostles we have no commission today for we have no apostles today. Only if we view the Commission as having been delivered to those apostles and those with them in church capacity do Christ's words have any real meaning and the possibility of fulfillment.

The church authority view is clearly the

proper one because it follows the pattern set forth in the New Testament. There we see that men were ordained (publicly set apart by a church) and then sent out to do the work of the ministry to which the Holy Spirit had called and equipped them (See Acts 1:21; 11:22; 13:1-4; 15:25; I Tim. 2:7, etc.). This view is consistent with the whole New Testament because all about whom we know that baptized with scriptural authority in that volume were (1) men, (2) baptized men, (3) ordained men, and (4) members in good standing with a previously existing church to which they were accountable. This view is consistent both with the Scriptural method of financing Gospel work and the accountability to the churches of the preachers involved in it. (Financial support and accountability go together.) Preachers sent out by New Testament churches were "brought on their way" by the churches (financially supported). (See Acts 15:3; Rom. 15:24; and II Cor. 1:6). Paul's example of accountability is this: after his mission trips he always, even after visiting the famous Jerusalem church, returned to his home or sending church, Antioch in Syria. There he gave an account of his work in various places, thus showing accountability to his "sending church." (See Acts 14:26, 27; 18:22). This is the practice even today of those missionaries who hold to the "mother church view." Those missionaries who hold to one of the three earlier discussed views may practice some measure of accountability for practical reasons, i.e. to keep the money flowing in, but those who hold to the church authority view do so primarily as a matter of Biblical principle.

We believe the church authority view is the orderly view because it does not foster a "class" of special men being set up as rulers over the churches. And we believe this is the scriptural view inasmuch as it does NOT foster free-lance-ism, i.e. that there is a class of ministers of Christ who are accountable to no one but themselves and God.

In conclusion let me point out the following: If either of the first three methods of organizing churches is right, the churches of the New Testament were organized in the wrong way for they were organized according to the fourth view. If one of the first three methods of organizing churches is right, those Baptist churches down through history organized after this pattern were organized in the wrong way and are/were not true churches. If the fourth view of church organization is right, then the first three are unscriptural and churches organized in either of those ways are not true churches of Christ.

The first view promotes oligarchy (authority of a few) and anarchy. Anarchy is defined as "a state of lawlessness" and "absence or denial of

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## Ecclesiology 101

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any authority" and "absence of order." A synonym given by Webster is "disorder." This first view says a group of baptized individuals can dismiss themselves from their church and, independent of anyone, organize themselves into a true Baptist church. The second view promotes hierarchy (religious leaders in positions of authority). It says that there exists a special clergy or class of ordained men who have the authority to organize true Baptist churches apart from any church action other than their original ordination to the ministry. The third is totally unscriptural because it depends on man-made denominational organizations for its authority. The fourth view promotes biblical democracy under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. It says that each true Baptist church is capable and responsible to be actively involved in carrying out the Great Commission at home and abroad. Further this view says that decisions to ordain men to the ministry, to send out missionaries, and to dismiss members for the purpose of organizing new churches rests in the church membership as a body and not in a clergy or in a group of members acting independently of the church as a whole. This is the Biblical and orderly way. **"Let all things be done decently and in order"** (I Cor. 14:40).



## The Great Separator

By Milburn Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)

**"And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats"** (Matt. 25:32).

My text deals with the judgment of the Gentile nations at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. This is the time when the Son of man comes in His glory to judge the nations (John 5:22, 27). The subjects are the living Gentile nations who survive the battle of Armageddon. These are to pass in review before Christ and **"he shall separate them one from another."**

This passage makes it clear that a day of judgment is coming which will separate the sheep from the goats. This separation will be so exact that the most inconsiderable sheep shall not be left among the goats, nor the most unlikely goat hidden in the company of the sheep. An all-wise God will **"discern between the righteous and the wicked,**

**between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not"** (Mal. 3:18). Verily the **"ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous"** (Ps. 1:5).

The Judge of all the earth with His all-seeing eye will survey the vast and mingled assembly of the nations, and with infallible certainty discern the character of every individual. The entire history of each one's life; his thoughts, words and deeds, will spread out to the view of the omniscient Judge, who divides instantly to which class a person belongs, and on which hand he is to be placed. By almighty power He will separate them one from another, according to the decision of His unerring discernment. Wealth, rank, talent, learning will have no place in the reckoning of the Judge. All will stand on the same ground before God and be separated either to the Millennial Kingdom or to Hell, according to the deeds done in the body.

On this day all human division and subdivisions are abolished. There is no mention of ranks and denominations. The great distinction of men will be saints or sinners, grace or no grace, faith or no faith, conversion or no conversion. All that are found in Christ will be placed among the sheep at His right hand. All that are found out of Christ will be placed among the goats on the left hand.

The nation of Israel will be subjected to this same judgment that the Gentiles are subject to at this same time. This can be seen from Ezekiel 20:33-44. Jehovah says in verse 38: **"And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me. . ."** The fact that some name the name of Israel shall be no shelter to them who are truly rebels against God.

### THE PARABLES TEACH THIS SEPARATION

In the parable of the wheat and tares they both grow together in the same field. At the harvest day the wheat is separated from the tares (Matt. 13:30). Our Lord interprets the parable as follows: **"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"** (Matt. 13:37-43). This same truth is taught in the parable of the net (Matt. 13:47-50).

### THE RAPTURE SEPARATION

There is going to be a great separation not only at the Judgment of the nations, but also at the Rapture, which occurs some seven years earlier. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes in the air He is coming to raise the dead believers and to translate the living believers. He will not raise dead unbelievers nor will He translate living unbelievers (I Thess. 4:13-18). This, too, will be a time of awful separation. Our Lord said that at His coming this would be so: **"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come"** (Matt. 24:40-42).

For a brief space of time the earth will be without a Christian. All believers will have disappeared like Enoch. They will not be upon earth because Christ has taken them to His Father's house in Heaven (John 14:1-3). Manufacturing plants will find their working force depleted. Transportation will be crippled and confusion will reign every where. Funerals and church services will be interrupted, planes will crash, and cars will go wildly into each other because of the great separation. Wives will be separated from husbands, parents from children, masters from servants, and preachers from hearers. There will be no time for parting words when the Lord appears. Believers will be caught up to glory and unbelievers left to suffer the horrors of the Great Tribulation.

### NOW THEY DWELL TOGETHER

In the present world the righteous and the wicked, the sanctified and unsanctified, friends of God and enemies of God dwell together. They dwell together in the same nations, cities, churches, factories, and families. They breathe the same air and enjoy the same sunshine. They are connected by the ties of kinship and friendship. They live together in the same household, eat at the same table, and sleep in the same bed. They are associated with each other in the various intimacies, pursuits and enjoyments of life. They pass one another on the streets and going down the highways. But there is coming a time when they will no longer mingle together in each other's society. They are soon to be separated for ever. This is the teaching of my text.

Certainly it is true that the righteous are commanded during this life on earth to separate to some degree from the unrighteous. **"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate. . ."** (II Cor. 6:17). We are commanded to separate from all that is unclean and to be free from unholy compromise. This does not mean to turn our backs on life and all contact with the unsaved. This is not possible, nor commanded, for if we did our lights could not shine in the world

and we could not witness to the world. We must, as far as it is possible, shun the depravities of unregenerate society and of unchristian worship.

To completely separate from the unsaved we would have to go out of the world. The apostle said: **"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornications: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters: for then must ye needs go out of the world"** (I Cor. 5:9-10). We cannot avoid them in the ordinary transactions of life. We would either have to take our life to avoid them, or to withdraw from society and become monks.

We cannot separate completely from the world because we are unable to know the righteous from the wicked. Christendom is a mixed multitude, a vast field of wheat and tares growing side by side. Even our best churches are not free of children of the Devil. Hypocrites and deceivers creep in. You cannot find a perfect church. Go where you will, you will always find some goats among the sheep. It will be so until the end of this present age.

### SEPARATION AT DEATH

There is a real separation between the righteous and the unrighteous at death. They part from each other as they enter the dark valley. They shall meet only once more and that at the judgment. In the historical incident of Luke 16:19-31 the rich man and Lazarus were separated by a great gulf fixed. The rich man was in torment and Lazarus was comforted in Paradise. They were separated as soon as they entered the invisible world. What was true of these two men is true of others who die also.

### THE NATURE OF THIS SEPARATION

First, it will be a separation in feeling and character. In the present state they have some feelings in common. Natural sympathies and social affection often unite them to each other by strong and tender ties. But when the final separation takes place these common bonds of union will be sundered. They will no longer have any ground on which they can ever meet and mingle in intercourse and affection. The saints will be perfectly holy and happy; sinners perfectly unholy and unhappy. There will be no bond of union between them, and no ground of sympathy and friendship.

Second, it will be a separation in place and residence. Here the righteous and the wicked walk the same road and live in the same housing project. Not so in eternity. There they are separated from each other. The righteous will be enjoying the blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God--the friendship and fellowship of God and the elect angels. They are in God's glorious presence in a world of infinite magnificence and

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## The Great Separator

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beauty. There they shall enter upon their everlasting enjoyment of thanksgiving and praise. From this wonderful Heaven will be excluded every sin and sinner. But far from this kingdom of light there is a kingdom of darkness and woe, of bitter wailing and ceaseless despair. There the wicked of every age and fallen angels will be together, separated from every holy being and from every ray of hope. How dreadful the thought!

Third, it will be a separation of interest and employment. In this present world the righteous and the wicked are often necessarily engaged in the same employment. They are connected with each other as husbands and wives, as parents and children, as brothers and sisters, as neighbors and friends. But at the final separation the relations of the present life, with its occupations and interests, will terminate. At that time the righteous and the wicked will have no more to do with each other for ever. The redeemed shall enter upon employments suited to their glorified natures. The reverse is true of the wicked. In torment and under punishment, they will begin the never-ending work of self-reflection and self-condemnation. As the circle of eternity moves slowly round, bringing no change or alleviations, poor sinners will ever be employed in the mournful work of self-torment.

Fourth, the separation between saints and sinners will be eternal. Hebrews 6:2 speaks of **"eternal judgment."** Some are to enjoy **"everlasting life"** while others are subjected to **"shame and everlasting contempt"** (Dan. 12:2). The separation at the great white throne is not temporary as it often is in this world. This is eternal separation, without any hope of reunion for eternity. It is parting to meet no more for ever. The state of things after the judgment is changeless and without end. The misery of the lost and the blessedness of the saved are alike without end. The eternity of God and the final state of the righteous and the wicked stand on the same foundation. As surely as God is eternal, so surely is the condition of the righteous endless day without night, and the flight of the wicked is endless night without day.

This scene is indescribable and inconceivable. How glorious in the case of the righteous. No more will we be blasted and buffeted by an evil world. Instead we will be eternally in the company of glorified saints, elect angels and God Himself. We shall be at eternal rest after a life of conflict and combat. We shall have a glorious and painless body like that of Christ after struggling with weakness and infirmity. Tongues can never tell, minds can never conceive, nor can pens tell the half of this wonderful time.

But how awful to contemplate eternal punishment---everlasting shame and contempt---a resurrection unto damnation. The everlasting pain and agony---the eternal accusation of conscience---the endless society of none but the wicked and ungodly---an eternity to remember opportunities neglected, Christ despised, a life misspent, and the gospel ignored. There they will be under an irresistible conviction of guilt and a final despair of mercy. This is enough to make man's knees knock, their hair stand upon their heads, and their blood run cold. And yet this picture is nothing compared to the real thing!

### CONCLUSION

1. The ground of this awful separation is moral character. It lies not in any distinction which pertains merely to the present life. It is not riches or poverty, it is not learning or ignorance, and it is not honor or obscurity that forms the ground of this separation. We will not be merely judged by what we said, but by what we did---not what we professed, but what we practiced. Even in the case of believers the truth of our faith will be tested by our lives. Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:17).

2. These truths should make us careful in the forming of earthly friendships. Christian friendship formed here will survive the change of death and will be eternal. Death may part such friendship for a little season here on the shores of time, but we shall meet again to part no more. The righteous are bound by ties which can never be sundered. Our friendship is based on indissoluble principles. It is fed from an exhaustless fountain. Time cannot change it, death cannot drown it, and judgment cannot sunder it. It will survive the destruction of all terrestrial things and flourish in immortal youth in eternity to come. How different in the case of mere natural affections! They may be tender for a few fleeting days of this earthly life, but they are sundered at the grave to meet no more in friendship and love.

3. This thought should cause us to labor more fervently and pray more earnestly for our lost friends and relatives. At this very hour they are separated from us. They show no evidence of love for Christ. They are making no preparation for the Heaven to which we are going. They have no hope in the blessed gospel by which we were saved. When we pray let us beseech Him to have mercy on those whom we tenderly love and to save them from being eternally separated from us on the great day!

4. Some of you are saying, "I don't want to be separated from my saved relatives and friends. I want to join them in faith and hope in the Savior so we shall never be parted." If you desire to be on Christ's right hand you must change your position; you must repent of sin; you must embrace Christ as Savior and

become His follower. If you remain where you are now, you will be separated from all good beings and all good. Impenitent children of Christian parents, impenitent parents of Christian children, impenitent husbands of saved wives, impenitent wives of saved husbands, how can you bear the thought of an eternal separation from your friends? How can you think of their walking on the banks of the river of life, happy and redeemed, while you wander, wretched and lost, on the plains of eternal despair? Repent! Repent! Repent! Flee the wrath to come!



## Christianity Mimicked

By Raymond Bennett  
of Ithaca, New York

**"When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods"** (Ex. 7:9-12).

**"And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said"** (Ex. 7:19-22).

**"And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs**

**upon the land of Egypt"** (Ex. 8:6-7).

**"And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast"** (Ex. 8:17-18).

**"Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be"** (Ex. 8:19-23).

Moses performed ten miracles before Pharaoh. Our text records the first five of them. There is one similarity that runs through the first four miracles tying them all together. But there are important differences in the first and fourth miracles to which the reader must pay particular attention.

In the very first miracle, **"Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods"** (Ex. 7:12). What we learn from this is two-fold. Like Simon's signs and wonders which we looked at last week, these magicians could perform wonders, but God's power was manifestly more powerful. This should have been a warning to both Pharaoh and the magicians that they were dealing with the God of Gods, the omnipotent God of Heaven and Earth. But it wasn't. Keep this in mind.

The first point we need to see, however, is that Satan, and his representatives on earth can and do mimic, duplicate and reproduce the evidences of Christianity and Christian power. Whenever God is working on earth, Satan and his angels are also working to mimic and counterfeit the workings of God. Satanic activity abounded as God was dealing with Pharaoh and preparing to take His people out of Egypt, (which stands in type for the world and bondage to sin), and take them to Canaan land, (representing heaven and glory). Satanic activity abounded as God was preparing the area

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## Christianity Mimicked

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we now call the Middle East for the first advent of the Messiah. According to the book of Revelation, and Christ's own words, satanic activity will abound more and more as we approach the second advent of the Messiah – this time as King and judge instead of Savior. **“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect”** (Matt. 24:24).

Even in times not directly associated with these events there have been attempts to counterfeit the miracles of God. Such an event was the Satanic attempt to counterfeit the promised virgin birth of the Messiah and to destroy the human race, recorded in Genesis 6, the cohabitation of the “sons of God with the daughters of men,” trying to counterfeit the virgin birth.

The **“sons of God”**, “*benni Elohim*,” having sexual intercourse with the daughters of men, not just the daughters of Cain, produced “*nephilim*,” erroneously translated **“giants”**. But it must be noticed that “*nephilim*,” literally fallen ones, were around both before and after the flood. Giants as men of huge stature were around until David's reign. The products of these unholy unions were those who were **“men of renown”**, or “had extra capacities, both mentally and physically, though they may not have been any larger than normal human beings.” (Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum) The Septuagint used the word “*gigantes*,” (from which we get the word giant), or Titan. Titans were the “god-men” of Greek mythology, produced by sexual intercourse between the mythological gods and humans.

They used that word because both the Hebrews and Greeks understood the concept of Genesis 6:4. The “sons of Seth and daughters of Cain” concept came in sometime about the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum further expands of this in his book, *Messianic Christology*, appendix 1, p. 118.

Many false doctrines and counterfeit signs and wonders today are working in the same manner of which Christ speaks here. Only God's elect will be able to withstand the false teaching, signs and wonders, and not be misled. It is essential that you know your Bible doctrine, for many preachers and commentators try to twist the Scripture to support the erroneous concepts that have been handed down from Rome and through the Reformers. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth, as promised in John 16:13. **“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he**

**shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”**

This ability to mimic and duplicate the evidences of Christianity plays two important parts in our lives. One is that many false believers can and do fool us into thinking they are really our brothers in Christ, luring us into both personal and ecclesiastical relationships we should never have entered into. We have often spoken of the “everybody is a Christian” syndrome, which is the readiness to count people as brothers in Christ despite gross errors in doctrine and practice. Then those people become “flies in the ointment,” effectually working against the Biblical agenda.

Perhaps the second one is more dangerous. The evangelistic message often produces either an altruistic or an “easy believism” response. That in turn produces what may be a sincere but still a false righteousness. Supposed converts are lured into false assurance because they have turned over the proverbial “new leaf,” hence they are blinded to the reality of their lost position and need of genuine repentance unto salvation. **“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first”** (Luke 11:24-26).

When Christ comes the next time, and He will come, He will be the victorious king, and He will pronounce judgment either on those who have produced the false doctrine and signs, or on those who have been deceived by the false doctrines and signs and become the disciples of the false teachers.

Having looked at the similarity in these first four miracles, we will now look at the two differences and see what lessons are there for us.

With the first miracle we called your attention to the evidence of God's superior power when Aaron's rod, turned serpent, swallowed up the magicians' rods which had also turned into serpents. I suggest two important lessons here.

First, whatever power or evidence of power Satan---or the false prophet/teachers of today---can conjure up, God's power is manifestly superior! God will humiliate and defeat the false shows of power, just like He did the magicians, and later Simon's. But He will allow the false, apostate teachers to carry on until they, like the magicians finally did in Exodus 8:19, recognize and confess the superior power/authority of God, or until the “fullness of iniquity” has been reached. **“But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full”**

(Gen. 15:16).

The second lesson should cause serious self examination. Just as surely as these magicians were able to mimic and reproduce the first three credentials which Moses produced, *you* may be able to mimic and reproduce the early stages of Christianity.

You may be very sincere in your attempt to live and show a Christian testimony! You may have even entered into Christian service---because you were sincere in your decision for Christ; you were sincere in wanting to change your life; you were sincere in your desire to serve God. It was the “right thing to do”. In the face of conviction, altruism and the desire to correct your life are powerful forces.

But you are finding it somewhere between extremely difficult and impossible to live a victorious life. That may be because the gospel message brought partial conviction, a conviction that moved you to reformation but not repentance. It takes the “new birth” (John 3:3 and 7) to produce the **“new creature”** of II Corinthians 5:17. You are working in your own power, relying on your own morality and functioning by your own reasoning.

Reformation without repentance and full submission and commitment to God and His Word will only produce a proud legalistic Pharisee, not a Christian filled with grace. Check your attitude dear reader. Are you “reformed” or “regenerated”?

Read again the poignant comment of Gaebelein: “He (Simon) kept close in the company of the evangelist, no doubt to watch him and see whether he could discover the secret of the power of Philip...Philip did not discern him.”

This brings us to the difference in the fourth miracle. In each of the first four miracles we read, **“And the magicians did so with their enchantments.”** But in the fourth miracle, the lice, there is the added note, **“but they could not”** (Ex. 8:18).

The magicians were able to fool Pharaoh for a while, and Simon was able to deceive Philip for a while. You may be able to fool your pastor, your friends, and even yourself--for a while. But the reality will come out! Do not be deceived by the false teachings, the false assurances and false evidence. **“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!...To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”** (Isa. 5:20 and 8:20).

Know this, dear reader! The false teachers will continue until their allotted time is finished, and you may choose to believe them and follow their pernicious ways. But there is a time of judgment coming and when that time comes you

will find yourself in the position of the magicians who still tried to mimic and duplicate the marks of Christianity – no longer able to stand before Pharaoh or Moses (Ex. 9:11).

It was only after the failure of the magicians had been made evident in the fourth miracle that God made a distinction between Egypt and Goshen, between the people of the world and the people of God. Then it becomes clear who really is God's man and who is only working in the power of the devil, or his own power. Paul said of those in Corinth who thought they didn't need or could improve on Paul's message, **“But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power”** (I Cor. 4:19).

Those who are counterfeits now, but who have seen the warnings we have mentioned, the superior power of God's miracles when Aaron's rod swallowed up the magicians' rods and their own inability to any longer match the miracles done by Moses, still have the opportunity---if God permits---to surrender, to yield to Jehovah Elohim, The Lord Jesus Christ. Dear reader, I can't urge you too much to commit your life to Jesus Christ for salvation. Repent now for the years of stubborn rejection and self willed and designed morality. God is gracious! Whosoever cometh to Him He will not turn away---no matter how bad the previous sin. **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”** (John 6:37). Church attending people, don't pride yourself thinking that this only applies to agnostic unbelievers. It applies to you, too!

Even though the magicians recognized the hand of God, **“Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God,”** v. 23) they did not yield and repent. There is no more record of their trying to duplicate Moses' miracles but they still stood before Pharaoh, much like Elymas stood before Sergius Paulus in Acts 13:6-8. **“And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.”**

It wasn't until after three more miracles had been performed, and the magicians had been infected with the plague of boils, that the magicians are no longer in the picture. Dear reader, those who are feeding you false doctrines, showing you false miracles, and seeking to keep you under their religious powers and controls

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## Christianity Mimicked

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will not go away easily. "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (Gal. 6:12). But one day they will be humiliated and exposed, although probably not in this life.

It is stretching the context some, but like those whom Paul rebukes in 1 Corinthians 1:12 and 3:4, those who persist in following those proven false teachers instead of accepting the clear teaching of the Bible, presented by the anointed "man of God," will also one day be humiliated and exposed. 1:12: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ....3:4: For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" Don't you be one of them!

Paul preached the whole truth, holding back nothing. "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house...For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:20 and 27). I seek to deliver these messages to you in the same dedication and manner. I can honestly say to you, as Paul said to the Corinthians, "Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man" (II Cor. 7:2).

We must mark those who cannot and do not match the "signs" of true believers or true prophets, for they are many. But we can also rejoice in those who do hear and believe. "He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses" (Ex. 9:20).



ever seen," he said. The utility says the money came from shareholder-funded political contribution accounts. Strobhar questioned that claim. "This money ultimately comes from the ratepayers," he said. "It's exceedingly insensitive to enter this controversial political subject, to take sides in this, and essentially take it out of the ratepayers' pockets."

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### LOUISIANA GOVERNOR SUPPORTS EQUAL PROTECTIONS FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

(EP News)--Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal will not renew an executive order put in place by his predecessor that provides special rights for employees based on sexual orientation and other characteristics. The order -- enacted by Gov. Kathleen Blanco in 2004 -- required state agencies and contractors to provide special protections based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, political affiliation and disabilities. Jindal said Aug. 20 that state and federal laws are sufficient, and he doesn't want to create more special categories. Last year, the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation to give special rights to homosexuals and bisexuals in the workplace; the Senate did not take it up.

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### "TRANSEXUAL" MAN SUES LIBRARY OF CONGRESS OVER JOB OFFER

(EP News)--David Schroer, a retired U.S. Army Special Forces officer, testified Aug. 19 in federal court against the Library of Congress, claiming he deserved a job even as he was undergoing surgery to look like a woman. Schroer, who goes by Diane, said his job offer was withdrawn when he told his would-be supervisor about his surgery. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit in 2005 on Schroer's behalf. He is seeking the job and damages, which are capped at \$300,000.

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### GOVERNMENT WORKS TO PROTECT DOCTORS' RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS

(EP News)--A proposed regulation from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services protects doctors who refuse to "perform or assist in the performance" of any program or procedure that is "contrary to (their) religious beliefs or moral convictions." That means organizations that receive federal funding cannot force pro-life doctors to perform abortions, or they risk losing their federal funds. Pro-abortion lawmakers and pro-abortion groups had worked to "sabotage" this regulation, according to Carrie Gordon Earll, senior bioethics analyst for Focus on the Family Action. "They are missing the point that there are rights involved here, including freedom of conscience for health care providers," she said. "We've got to be able to protect the health care provider because that protects the patients."

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### ARKANSAS TO VOTE ON IMPORTANCE OF MOM-AND-DAD HOMES

(EP News)--In November, Arkansas voters will decide whether foster kids and prospective adoptees deserve a home with a married mom and dad. The ballot measure, which garnered 85,389 valid signatures of registered voters, would prohibit unmarried couples from fostering or adopting children. Just 61,974 signatures were needed. "Arkansas needs to affirm the importance of married mothers and fathers," Jerry Cox, president of the Arkansas Family Council, told The Associated Press. "We need to publicly affirm the gold standard of rearing children whenever we can. The state standard should be as close to that gold standard of married-mom-and-dad homes as possible." An activist group plans to sue to keep the measure off the ballot.

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### CALIFORNIA JUDGE SIDES WITH PRO-LIFERS ON BALLOT LANGUAGE

(EP News)--When California voters receive their official ballot guides in the mail, they can read about "Sarah," a 15-year-old who died of blood poisoning in 1994 following an abortion. Sarah's story is the impetus behind Prop. 4, which would require abortionists to notify parents, guardians or family members 48 hours before performing abortions on minors. Planned Parenthood and others sought to have Sarah's story struck from the guide because they claim the measure would not have helped Sarah. Catherine Short, the attorney for Prop. 4 supporters, said the ballot proposal could have enhanced Sarah's chances of survival. "Had someone in her family known, Sarah's life could have been saved," Short told The Sacramento Bee

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### \$1.2M GRANT AIMS TO ADD GAY-AFFIRMING CHURCHES

(EP News)--The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and five partner organizations have received a \$1.2 million grant to increase the number of churches that affirm homosexuality, bisexuality and "transgenderism." The Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund -- which seeks to be a "unifying force for social change" -- donated the money to expand the "welcoming church movement," in which congregations are asked to accept all sexual orientations and gender identities. Kermit Rainman, social research analyst for Focus on the Family, said, "Gay activists and their allies have made no secret of their strategy to convince Bible-believing Christians and Jews that homosexual behavior is no longer sinful in God's eyes," he said. "This false doctrine is playing out in denomination after denomination, with increasing discord. Christians are not called to rewrite the Bible in order to love our gay friends and neighbors. True love does not sacrifice the truth."

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### MORE AMERICANS QUESTION RELIGION'S ROLE IN POLITICS

(EP News)--Some Americans are having a change of heart about mixing religion and politics. A new national survey finds

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THE

# BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

### NEW YORK CONSIDERS SPECIAL RIGHTS FOR 'TRANSGENDERED' STUDENTS

(EP News)--The Republican majority in the New York Senate has introduced a measure that would make the state among the first in the nation to grant special protections to "transgendered" students, including those who cross-dress. The Log Cabin Republicans, a gay-activist group, is taking credit for the so-called Safe Schools for All Students Act. Disguised as an anti-bullying effort, it would add special protections based on sexual orientation. North Carolina lawmakers rejected a similar bill in July.

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### DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE FUNDS CALIFORNIA PUSH FOR SAME-SEX 'MARRIAGE'

(EP News)--The Democratic National Committee (DNC) has given \$25,000 to fight California's marriage-protection amendment. The measure, which goes to the voters in November, would amend the state constitution to define marriage as the union between a man and a woman. According to the Los Angeles Times, the DNC and other activist groups have raised more than \$6 million to keep same-sex "marriage" legal in the state.

The DNC has been quick to follow the lead of Sen. Barack Obama, who opposes California's marriage amendment and has promised to repeal the federal Defense of Marriage Act, if elected president.

### LEGALIZED ABORTION DRIVES DOWN ADOPTION RATES

(EP News)--Adoption rates in the U.S. have plummeted since abortion became legal in 1973, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A recent CDC report shows that before 1973, nearly 9 percent of babies born to never-married women were placed for adoption. By 2002, that number had dropped to about 1 percent.

Chuck Johnson, vice president of the National Council for Adoption, said that creates a sad situation for the thousands of families waiting to adopt. "Americans' attitudes about adoption have remained positive," he told Family News in Focus. "(Unfortunately) with that has come a decrease in the number of women considering adoption."

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### PG&E PUSHES SAME-SEX 'MARRIAGE' IN CALIFORNIA

(EP News)--One of the largest natural gas and electric utilities in the nation has donated \$250,000 to defeat California's marriage-protection amendment. Prop. 8, which goes to voters in November, would restore the definition of marriage as between one man and one woman. Tom Strobhar, president of the corporate-research firm Pro Vita Advisors, called PG&E's intervention outrageous. "It's one of the most egregious abuses of shareholders and ratepayers that I'd

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a narrow majority of the public saying that churches and other houses of worship should keep out of political matters and not express their views on day-to-day social and political matters. For a decade, majorities of Americans had voiced support for religious institutions speaking out on such issues. The latest survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press reveals that most of the reconsideration of the desirability of religious involvement in politics has occurred among conservatives. Four years ago, just 30 percent of conservatives believed that churches and other houses of worship should stay out of politics. Today, 50 percent of conservatives express this view. The new survey finds that conservatives' views on this issue are much more in line with the views of moderates and liberals than was previously the case. Similarly, the sharp divisions between Republicans and Democrats that previously existed on this issue have disappeared.

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### MORE THAN 1,000 NEWSPAPERS ACCEPT GAY 'WEDDING' ANNOUNCEMENTS

(EP News)--The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) is heralding the fact that 1,049 newspapers across the nation now accept "wedding" announcements from same-sex couples. In the six years since GLAAD launched its Announcing Equality campaign targeting newspapers, the percentage of dailies that run same-sex "wedding" announcements rose from 5 percent to 72 percent. Same-sex "marriage" is recognized only in California and Massachusetts, yet all 50 states have newspapers that print such "wedding" announcements.

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### MORE U.S. WOMEN ARE CHILDLESS

(EP News)--One in five U.S. women in their early 40s has no children, according to the Census Bureau. That's double the level from 30 years ago and a record high. Women age 40-44 who do have children have fewer than ever -- an average of 1.9, according to the report. "A lot of women are not having any children," Jane Lawler Dye, a Census Bureau researcher who did the report, told The New York Times. "It used to be sort of expected that there was a phase of life where you had children, and a lot of women aren't doing that now."

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### STUDENTS INCREASINGLY EMBRACE IMMORALITY

(EP News)--Young adults are more likely than their elders to engage in behaviors considered morally inappropriate, according to a recent Barna Group survey of 1,003 adults. During a typical week, 38 percent of those younger than 25 engaged in sex outside of marriage, 33 percent viewed pornography and 25 percent got drunk. George Barna, who directed the survey on

morality, said many young adults "have had little exposure to traditional moral teaching and limited accountability for such behavior. The consistent deterioration of the Bible as the source of moral truth has led to a nation where people have become independent judges of right and wrong, basing their choices on feelings and circumstances. It is not likely that America will return to a more traditional moral code until the nation experiences significant pain from its moral choices."

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### ACLU ATTACKS GRADUATION PRAYERS

(EP News)--The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is asking a federal court to stop graduation prayers at a Florida high school. The ACLU claims Santa Rosa County schools promote prayer and religious teachings through "overt" and "subtle" coercion. "The ACLU continually mis-labels schools' respect and allowance for the religious beliefs of its students as 'coercion,' or its latest favorite term 'subtle coercion,' said Bruce Hausknecht, judicial analyst for Focus on the Family Action. "There's a lot of heat and light in the ACLU's lawsuit, but very little evidence of coercion by the school."

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### "BRIDE" AND "GROOM" BUMPED FROM CALIFORNIA MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES

(EP News)--In California, the bride and groom have been replaced by "Party A" and "Party B." A marriage license for a man and woman was denied last week after they wrote "groom" and "bride" next to "Party A" and "Party B." The State Office of Vital Records said the handwritten words were an "unacceptable alteration." In May, the Supreme Court of California legalized same-sex "marriage." In November, Californians will vote on Proposition 8, a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as the union between one man and one woman. "Unless Proposition 8 is passed, heterosexual couples will be forced to wed out of the state if they wish to be officially identified as bride and groom or husband and wife," said Brad Dacus, president of the Pacific Justice Institute. "This is a major slap in the face for traditional marriage."

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### ADF APPEALS NEW YORK RULING TO RECOGNIZE OUT-OF-STATE GAY 'MARRIAGES'

(EP News)--The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) is appealing a New York judge's decision to support Gov. David Paterson's directive to recognize out-of-state same-sex "marriages." Gay "marriage" is illegal under New York law. "New York's marriage laws should be respected over the laws of foreign jurisdictions," ADF Senior Legal Counsel Brian Raum said. "This is not about discrimination. This is about the future of marriage being decided by the Legislature and the people, not by executives. The governor is not above the law." On May 14, Paterson issued an executive directive ordering all state agencies to extend the benefits of marriage to same-

sex couples "married" elsewhere, including California, Massachusetts and Canada. Last week, a state court sided with Paterson.

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### MCDONALD'S SENDS EMPLOYEES TO HOMOSEXUALITY CONFERENCE

(EP News)--McDonald's sent 56 of its employees to San Diego earlier this year to attend a conference on promoting homosexuality within the company. The Pioneer Summit, created and organized by McDonald's, addressed topics such as how to protect employees' "gender identity and expression" and how to handle "transitions" among employees. McDonald's also recently paid \$20,000 to become a member of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. Its vice president of communications was appointed to the chamber's board of directors in April. "McDonald's built its business by catering to families -- with Happy Meals and children's play areas," said Jeff Johnston, gender issues analyst for Focus on the Family. "Now they are supporting a radical social agenda that seeks to deconstruct gender and promote homosexuality as a healthy expression of human sexuality." The fast-food giant poured \$15,000 into this week's Out & Equal Workplace Summit, and also supported this year's gay-pride parade in San Francisco.

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### JUDGE SAYS TEACHER CAN KEEP PATRIOTIC BANNERS THAT MENTION GOD

(EP News)--A federal judge ruled Sept. 5 that a California teacher can display patriotic banners in his classroom while a lawsuit filed by the Thomas More Law Center moves forward. Brad Johnson, a math teacher at Westview High School in San Diego, was asked to remove from his classroom red, white and blue banners that contain phrases such as "In God We Trust," "One Nation Under God" and "God Bless America." School officials said the banners, which Johnson has displayed for 25 years, promoted a Judeo-Christian viewpoint. However, other teachers were allowed to keep posters with Buddhist and Islamic messages, Tibetan prayer flags and other displays. Richard Thompson, president and chief counsel for the Thomas More Law Center, said: "Many public schools exhibit a knee-jerk hostility towards Christianity and seek to cleanse our nation's classrooms of our religious heritage while promoting atheism or other religions under the guise of cultural diversity."

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### MORE U.S. COMPANIES CATER TO 'TRANSGENDERED' EMPLOYEES

(EP News)--Across the country, particularly at larger companies, "transgender" workers are receiving special rights and benefits, The New York Times reported. Of Fortune 500 companies, 125 provide special protections based on employees' "gender identity." While "transgendered" workers account for about 0.01 percent of employees nationwide, employers are going out of their

way to accommodate them. Last year, the U.S. House of Representatives took up a bill that would have enshrined homosexuality and "transgenderism" in federal law. The legislation passed only after language to include "gender identity" was taken out. The Senate has not taken up the measure, but it is expected to resurface in Congress next year.

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### MOST CAN'T DEFINE "EVANGELICAL" - NOT EVEN EVANGELICALS

(EP News)--A new report released today from Ellison Research shows that even though evangelical Christians are a group that gets a lot of attention from journalists, marketers, and politicians, it's a group that most Americans struggle to define -- and many admit they don't have the slightest clue what an evangelical actually is. The findings are from a new Ellison Research report titled "America's Definition: What Is an Evangelical?" The study was independently designed, funded, and conducted by Ellison Research among a representative sample of over 1,000 American adults. Ellison Research is a full-service marketing research firm. The study asked Americans to define in their own words just what an "evangelical Christian" actually is. About 36 percent of all Americans say they have no idea at all what an evangelical Christian is. No other response to the question "What is an Evangelical?" received more than a 15 percent response. About 11 percent identified themselves as evangelical Christians.

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### SOUTHERN BAPTISTS INVEST IN COMPANIES THEY PREACH AGAINST

(EP News)--The Southern Baptists recently met in Indianapolis, and they made national headlines by passing a resolution condemning Planned Parenthood. The resolution notes that Planned Parenthood is the nation's largest abortion provider and "has launched a massive campaign to mobilize voters this year, planning to raise at least \$10 million." It says messengers "decry the immoral action of Planned Parenthood clinics across America." Further, the resolution says messengers "encourage the evaluation of candidates for elected office based on their affiliation with Planned Parenthood."

If you have pro-life convictions, this statement is a welcome one. Unfortunately, it's also a statement the Southern Baptists themselves have trouble living up to -- at least when it comes to their investments. GuideStone Financial Resources, the 90-year-old investment arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, manages \$10-billion in retirement funds for Baptist pastors and church employees. And GuideStone invests millions of dollars with companies that proudly and openly give money to Planned Parenthood or -- worse yet -- directly perform abortions.

Consider, for example, J.P. Morgan Chase, which is famous -- or notorious -- for its support of Planned Parenthood. The

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financial institution gave at least \$175,000 to the abortion provider between 2003 and 2005. But that didn't prevent GuideStone from buying thousands of shares of J.P. Morgan Chase. According to GuideStone's most recent annual report, it owns 139,630 shares of J.P. Morgan Chase, worth more than \$6-million.

Art Ally founded The Timothy Plan, a company that invests money for Christian clients by screening out companies such as J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. He said, "It is inconceivable to me that a Southern Baptist pastor can stand up on Sunday and preach against abortion, and then on Monday buy companies that are supporting abortion." He said the resolution passed by the Southern Baptists was a good one but, he added, "I learned a long time ago that when you want to know the true character of a person, you look not at what they say, but what they do."

J.P. Morgan Chase is not the only offending company in GuideStone's portfolio. The Baptists own tens of thousands of shares of Nike and Northern Trust, two other well-known contributors to Planned Parenthood. Indeed, GuideStone has more than \$10-million invested in companies that contribute to Planned Parenthood. In addition, GuideStone also owns almost 20,000 shares of Tenet Healthcare, which performs abortions at its hospital properties.

Is it possible that GuideStone simply doesn't know that the companies they're investing in are supporting abortion – or are actually abortion providers? Hardly. The Timothy Plan first approached GuideStone, then called the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, in 1993. Sometime after that, GuideStone did change its investment policy to say it would not invest in companies that are "publicly perceived" to be engaged in activities that violate Christian principles. Ally scoffs at that change. "It's OK if you don't get caught? What kind of an investment policy is that?" he asked. Besides, Ally said, all of these companies are now "publicly perceived" as being Planned Parenthood contributors. Some of them even brag about their support in their annual reports and with press releases.

Rusty Leonard, CEO of Stewardship Partners, a separate account money manager who specializes in Biblically Responsible Investing (BRI) said, "The information GuideStone needs to make their investments reflect their stated beliefs is easily available." He added that he hoped GuideStone would "over time" harmonize their beliefs and their investment screens.

However, that time does not appear to be any time soon. Curt Sharp, a spokesman for GuideStone, said, "Our current policy is on our web-site and addresses these issues adequately." When asked if there was an inconsistency between that policy and the resolution passed by the Southern Baptists, he said, "I respectfully decline to comment

further."

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### INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS AUSTRALIAN REPORT SAYS BABIES HARM THE ECONOMY

(EP News)--Australia's fertility rate is at its highest in 25 years, but the nation's Productivity Commission warned in August that more babies may harm the economy. Nearly 300,000 babies were born last year, and the commission said new mothers leaving the workforce will weaken the economy, aggravate the aging-population problem and deplete the taxation base. Steven Mosher, president of the Population Research Institute, called the report a gross exaggeration. In fact, he said, people typically contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars more to the economy than they consume in a lifetime. "Babies are blessings, not burdens," he said. "People come into this world not just as stomachs, not just as consumers — they come with brains and hands, and they make contributions."

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### MEXICO SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS LAW LEGALIZING ABORTION

(EP News)--The Mexico Supreme Court voted Aug. 28 to uphold a Mexico City law legalizing abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. The court rejected arguments by life advocates that the nation's Constitution offers legal protection for preborn babies. Jorge Serrano Limon, director of pro-life group Pro-Vida, said the ruling may influence legislation outside the city, where abortion is allowed only in cases of rape, when the mother's life is in danger, or if the preborn baby has severe deformities. "Eight justices voted against life," he told the Los Angeles Times. "The fact is that a person has no protection before 12 weeks of life. It's going to spread across Mexico. "We'll keep fighting. It's just going to be more difficult." Mexico City legalized abortion in 2007, but 85 percent of gynecologists in the city's public hospitals have refused to perform abortions over issues of conscience.

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### CHRISTIANS FLEE TO FORESTS AS MOB VIOLENCE ESCALATES IN INDIAN STATE

(EP News)--Mob violence in India's Orissa state continues to escalate, with Texas-based Gospel for Asia (GFA) saying that as many as 20 of its related churches have been destroyed and hundreds of Christian families have been burned out of their homes. At least a dozen members of GFA-related churches have been murdered, but no one knows the overall death toll. "The Christians in Orissa have fled for their lives into the forests," GFA President K.P. Yohannan said, "and some have been in hiding for days without food or water. Several of our pastors are in the forest along with their church people, and one said that he could have escaped, but would rather die with his people than leave them." Yohannan called the situation "unprecedented in his 30 years of ministry in South Asia." Orissa, the state where Australian missionary Graham

Staines and his two sons were burned to death by anti-Christian militants in 1999, has a long history of opposition to the Gospel.

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### SPAIN CONSIDERS EXPANDING ABORTION

(EP News)--The Spanish government is taking steps to liberalize its abortion law. A group of lawyers, doctors and academics has been appointed to come up with recommendations on how to amend the law, allowing for more abortions. Spain's current law allows for abortion up to 12 weeks for sexual-assault victims, up to 22 weeks if the preborn baby has an abnormality and at any stage if the mother's physical or mental health is at risk. Life advocates say the "mental health" exemption is grossly abused. The new law is expected to go into effect at the end of 2009.



## Agrippa, The Almost Christian

By George C. Baldwin  
(1817 - 189?)

*"Child of sin and sorrow,  
Filled with dismay,  
Wait not for the morrow,  
Yield thee today;  
Heaven bids thee come  
While yet there's room;  
Child of sin and sorrow,  
Hear and obey.*

*"Child of sin and sorrow,  
Why will thou die?  
Come, while thou cast borrow  
Help from on high:  
Grieve not that love  
Which, from above,  
Child of sin and sorrow  
Would bring thee nigh."*

The gospel record associated with this man's history is so interesting that, preliminary to what I have to say of him, I will briefly sketch it. Impelled by the Spirit, Paul had hastened by sea and land from Philippi, in order to reach Jerusalem at the time of the Pentecost, and after a successful journey he arrived in the Holy City, was joyfully received by the brethren, and on the subsequent day, at their request, he rehearsed to the assembled elders what God had wrought by him among the Gentiles. After seven days had elapsed, during which he had given proof of his fidelity as a Jew to Jewish law, a violent storm of persecution broke out against him. It commenced thus: certain Asiatic Jews, filled with malignity because of his advocacy of Christianity, seeing him in the temple, excited the people against him, expelled him from it, cruelly beat and were about to kill him. The soldiers, however, came

to his rescue, and conducted him to the castle of Antonia, from the stairway of which Paul addressed the crowd in the Hebrew tongue. His speech was an able and ingenuous account of his life and conversion, but instead of soothing, it only the more irritated his enemies, who cried aloud, "

**Away with such a fellow. . . it is not fit that he should live"** (Acts 22:22).

To appease them, the officer had Paul bound and was about to scourge him, but having discovered that his prisoner was a Roman citizen, he immediately loosed him and sent him for trial to the Sanhedrin, which was then in session. Deeply interesting is the picture of Paul before that august but guilty tribunal, which had devised and secured the death of his Lord; before which, through his own personal agency, the martyr-deacon, Stephen, had been arraigned. Keenly gazing around upon the circle of dignitaries who thirsted for his blood, he calmly said, "**Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience. . . until this day**" (Acts 23:1). You may conceive of the malignity that raged in the bosoms of those whom he addressed, when I inform you that immediately upon the utterance of this opening sentence of his address, the High Priest interrupted the apostle, and commanded those "**that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.**" This outrageous indignity and palpable illegality, aroused every element of Paul's great manhood, and, although standing there alone and unarmed, he courageously exclaimed, "**God shall smite thee, thou whited wall, for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?"** (Acts 23:3). At this terrible rebuke, Ananias sank back in silent confusion, and the prisoner was allowed to proceed, but he had not spoken long before he discovered that part of his accusers were Pharisees, and part Sadducees, and by skillfully introducing the doctrine of the resurrection, concerning which these sects were at perpetual variance, he divided their counsels, and secured his own release; but fearing that now the mob, incensed by being baffled a second time, would tear him in pieces, he returned with the military escort to the castle. During that evening, forty Jews bound themselves by an oath "that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul." Poor wretches! If they had kept their oath, they must have starved to death, for they never laid their hands upon him.

News of this conspiracy was brought to the castle by Paul's nephew, and because of it the commanding officer, at nine o'clock that night, sent his prisoner, under the protection of four hundred and seventy soldiers, to Antipatris, which was thirty-five miles distant, and the next day, guarded by seventy horsemen, he

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## Agrippa, The Almost

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was taken to Caesarea, twenty-five miles further, where Felix, the governor of Judea, resided. Five days afterwards the High Priest and his associates came down from Jerusalem, bringing with them a famous lawyer, Tertullus, to conduct the prosecution against the prisoner before Felix. Upon the trial, however, Paul proved himself superior to the Jerusalem lawyer, not only in intellectual power, but in knowledge of the law, and vanquished him upon the charges of sedition, heresy, and profanation which had been falsely brought against him. And more than even this, he secured the favor of the judge, who was a bad man but an intelligent functionary, who afterward heard him preach, and was so affected that he **"trembled"** before the proclamation of **"righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come"** (Acts 24:25). From motives of governmental policy, however, Paul was retained as a prisoner during two years, when Festus having been appointed governor in the place of Felix, his enemies brought the old charges against him before the new governor, and although they failed to prove them, still seeing no prospect of release, Paul appealed to Caesar, and Festus said, **"Unto Caesar shalt thou go"** (Acts 25:12).

At this point, Agrippa appears on the historic scene in the following connection: Festus has promised to send Paul as a prisoner to Rome for trial; but if he does so, he must also send official documents, containing an indictment and an outline of the convicting proof. He is unable to do either; and yet the appeal having been made by the prisoner, and having been granted by the court, he can not now release him, and is greatly troubled at his own singular position. What shall he do? See what occurs. Just at this trying emergency, Agrippa, king of Chaleis, and his beautiful sister Bernice, come with great pomp to Caesarea, in order to visit Festus, and congratulate him upon the dignity, to which he had been elevated by Nero.

Let me tell you just here, all I have been able to learn about this king. He was the son of Herod Agrippa, and therefore a great-grandson of Herod the Great. When his royal father died, he was at Rome with the emperor Claudius, but on account of his youth no office was given to him. On the subsequent death of his father's brother, Agrippa the Great, however, he was elevated to the kingship of Chaleis, and upon the death of Claudius, Nero added largely to his domains. Although a Jew by birth, still, having been brought up at Rome, he became strongly attached to the Romans, and his government was marked by a clemency and justice rare in those times.

It was during the height of his power, and regal fame that he came to visit Festus, and where, in the purpose of an overruling God, he was to meet a greater than Festus---to hear truths affecting his immortal destiny which he had never heard before---to witness a scene combining more moral sublimity than his royal eyes had ever beheld before---to experience emotions such as he had never felt before, and to get nearer to Heaven than, alas! we fear he ever did afterward. During this visit, Festus informed Agrippa of the predicament in which he was placed; told him, with apparent carelessness, "of a certain man left in bonds by his predecessor," against whom the chief priests had desired him to pronounce sentence; but that, after examination, he had found that there was no political charge brought against him; nothing, indeed, "but certain questions of their own superstition, and of one, Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul said was alive." He further told him that the prisoner had appealed to Rome, and that he had granted the appeal; but that he could specify no charges of a character that the government would take cognizance of. On hearing this, the curiosity of Agrippa was aroused. He had often heard about the new religion, of the strange story of the crucifixion, and the affirmed resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. He had heard, too, of the man of Tarsus, the proud Pharisee, the cultured scholar, the persecutor of the disciples of Christ, who had himself strangely become a Christian, and been preaching Christianity with wonderful success all through the land; and now, by a singular coincidence, he found himself at Caesarea just in time to see and hear this famous preacher. It was arranged, that on the morrow the prisoner should be summoned before the assembled court.

That morrow has dawned, and the appointed hour has come. The splendid audience-chamber is in grand order for the royal reception. The governor appears in his robes of office; Agrippa, clad with kingly regalia, and Bernice, dazzling in her queenly beauty and rich attire, follow him and take the elevated seats, overhung with Tyrian purple and bespangled with Roman emblems of power and grandeur, which have been prepared for them. Immediately the high officers of the Roman army, the civil magistrates, and others of high repute enter and take the places assigned them, and the order is given for the appearance of the prisoner.

Remember now, that although Festus is a Roman, Agrippa is a Jew---a great grandson of the glorious Mariamne---and therefore he is acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures, the promise of a Messiah; he knows that Jesus of Nazareth professed to be that Messiah; he knows the history of the prisoner

who is coming in, what a strict Pharisee he had been, how high he had stood at Jerusalem as a scholar and defender of Judaism, what zeal he had manifested in the persecution of the followers of Christ, and that by having become a Christian himself he had sacrificed every thing, thus giving the most conclusive proof of his sincerity. Imagine now the intensity of Agrippa's curiosity, to see and hear this extraordinary man! There is a momentary confusion among the crowd at the door, as soldiers lead in the chained prisoner, and place him before the court. All eyes are fixed upon him. He is pale but calm, and there is about him the air of a cultured gentleman, blended with martyr meekness and heroic firmness never before witnessed in a prisoner at that bar. The crowded chamber is silent as the house of death. Festus opens the proceedings by an address to the king and the assembly, in which he informs them, that the Jews declare that this man ought not to live, but having found, in the preceding examination, nothing worthy of death, and the prisoner having appealed to Caesar, he was embarrassed because he could specify no crimes; that he had therefore brought him before them, and especially King Agrippa, in order that by a new examination some definite charges might be made out. Agrippa then, looking kindly upon the prisoner, says, **"Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself"** (Acts 26:1). This is all the persecuted apostle desires. And immediately stretching forth his manacled hand, he proceeds with his defense, which the best judge pronounce superior in its general eloquence and convincing truthfulness, to any thing of the kind found in the records of the world's jurisprudence. Not having space to quote it, I give you this brief analysis of it. First, he describes the manner of his life before his conversion, details his character as a Pharisee, the bitterness of his opposition to Christianity, and how he "verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Next, he relates the manner of his conversion, and how Christ called him to preach the gospel which he had despised, with reference to which he exclaims, **"Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision"** (Acts 26:19) and then, having given an account of his life since he became a Christian and a minister, as he proceeds to demonstrate that ancient prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, Festus interrupts him with the exclamation, **"Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad!"** (Acts 26:26).

Undisturbed by this insulting accusation, with the politeness of a gentleman, the firmness of a man and the dignity of a Christian, the prisoner replies, **"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but I speak the words of truth**

**and soberness; for the king knoweth of these things, before whom I speak.**" (Acts 26:25-26). Then, turning again toward Agrippa, in whom Paul has seen the marks of sympathy from the moment he entered the presence-chamber, and with the vast energies of his mighty soul wrought up to the highest pitch of lofty and concentrated excitement, and lifting again that chained right hand, while he fixes his piercing but now tear-moistened gaze upon him, he exclaims, **"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?"** (Acts 26:27). He waits not for an answer, for, with exultant joy, he sees conviction on that royal countenance, and, in a voice of mellowed triumph, shouts, **"I know that thou believest!"** Do you perceive Paul's victorious point? Agrippa does believe the prophets, he must therefore see the fulfillment of their prophecies in Christ; therefore, Christianity is true, and if true, then the king ought to become a Christian as well as himself. O, I know how that great heart yearns for his conversion, how its every fiber thrills with delight at the hope of saving another soul! And surely he is not entirely mistaken. Conviction has seized the king's mind, for he says, in obviously earnest tones, **"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"** (Acts 26:28). Alas! alas! only **"almost."** The prisoner is deeply moved, and subdued in manner and voice. He replies, **"I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds"** (Acts 26:29).

The scene is closed. He has returned to his prison. The court consults and decides that he has done nothing worthy of death or bonds; and Agrippa adds---and these are the last of his recorded words---**"This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar"** (Acts 26:32). History is nearly silent concerning him after this, recording only the fact of his remaining identified with the Romans, aiding them at the destruction of Jerusalem, the city of his own fathers; and then, accompanied by his sister, with whom he was charged with having been guilty of habitual incest, he returned to Rome, where he died at the age of seventy.

For one moment look "at the three different types of men" brought together in that regal audience-chamber.

In Governor Festus, you see a polished man of the world, "perfectly unconcerned, entirely indifferent" in relation to Christianity. He looks upon it with sincere contempt, as "one of the Jewish superstitions," unworthy of his attention, much less of his regard. Hear with what complete indifference, what chilling coolness, he speaks of the Lord Christ, as "one Jesus, who was dead, but Paul said was alive." This man never trembled before the proclaimed truth,

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# Agrippa, The Almost

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as did his predecessor, Felix. Nay, to his intense worldliness, such an effect would be only the development of the most pitiable weakness; and his prodigious self-conceit, the blindness of his moral perceptions, and the desperateness of his depravity, were exhibited when, in violation of every law of even worldly and judicial propriety, he interrupted the defense of his prisoner with the insulting declaration, **"Thou art beside thyself!"** (Acts 26:24).

Of how large a class is he a type! Ah! how many there are who, Festus-like, treat the gospel as a system with regard to which they have no interest; which is just nothing to them, and which is treated by them with generally respectful, but icy indifference and neglect.

In this prisoner, this really educated man, this deep thinker, this mighty orator, this Christian, you behold one occupying a "directly opposite moral position." He sees in Christianity both the wisdom, and power of God. He sees in it the divinely provided supply of the great spiritual wants of every human soul; he feels its claims, its duties, its objects, to be of such overwhelming importance that because of them he has cheerfully surrendered every thing the world calls desirable---position, scholarly ease, ambitious prospects; for them he is ready and willing at any moment, if need be, to suffer martyrdom.

Festus, the world-absorbed man, thinks Paul, the Christianity-absorbed man, mad; Paul knows that Festus is spiritually insane. These two men, therefore, represent the extremes of worldliness and godliness.

But, between "these two extremes stands Agrippa," the representative man, with whom we have more especially to do; who represents that large class of whom it may be said, that they are not, like Festus, entirely unconcerned and reckless about the gospel; nor yet, like Paul, altogether and decidedly in favor of and committed to it. In him, therefore, you see the representative of those whose convictions have been aroused, whose emotions have been excited, but who are neither entirely persuaded not to be nor to be Christians; who, when good influences gather strongly around them, are sometimes almost persuaded to become Christians---almost persuaded to yield to a pleading Saviour, and a striving Spirit, but are never, altogether.

To Agrippa, as the representative of this class, I shall now direct your attention. It is this representative relation, which throws its chief interest around his name. To us the fact that he was a king, high in power, and exalted among his fellow-men; the fact that he was lineally connected with the great

Herod and Mariamne, is comparatively of no importance. But the simple fact, that for once he occupied the same moral position in relation to the gospel that many, very many, now occupy---this is what makes him and his career worthy of our special attention and study; and with this record of him now open before us, I submit to you the following remarks suggested by it:

1. *In regard to the matter of a man's becoming a Christian, it may be considered, as it is presented in the Bible, in its relation to God and to the man himself.*

According to the former, the efficiency is all of God according to the latter, the duty is all ours. And an atonement having been provided, the convicting Spirit having been given, we are called upon to do our duty, with the assurance, that what we can not do shall be accomplished by the grace of God for us. Hence the gospel calls upon every man to repent of his sins, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with the assurance, based upon the promise of God, that he shall be pardoned, justified, and saved. It is, as thus explained, with regard to the matter of your becoming a Christian, as related to your own duty, that I now desire to address you.

2. *The method, God has adopted to induce men to become Christians, is persuasion.*

No man ever was, or ever will be, forced to become a follower of Christ. Force, the opposite of persuasion, has to do with matter, not with mind, which was created free, to be influenced, directed, and controlled by motives addressed to the understanding, comprehended by the reason, felt by the heart; and the process of bringing these motives to bear upon the soul, the Bible calls persuasion. Thus in our Lord's account of the rich man and Lazarus, when describing the former as in torment, begging that some one might be sent to warn his five living brethren, Abraham is represented as saying, **"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead"** (Luke 16:31). His enemies charged that "Paul had persuaded and turned away much people." In the synagogue at Corinth, during three months, he continued "to persuade them in the things concerning the kingdom of God!" and to the Corinthian church he wrote, in explanation of his burning zeal for the conversion of men, "knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

Agrippa felt this persuasive power, for while clad in the robes of royalty, sitting as a judge, surrounded by a court, he said to the prisoner, **"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"** (Acts 26:28).

No man ever did, or ever will become a Christian only as he is persuaded to be one, as he perceives and feels the power of that vast array of motives drawn from Heaven with all its glories; from earth with its Calvary cross; from his own spiritual wants, and from the fearful retribution awaiting the impenitent. Friends, if you

for some audible voice from Heaven to address you, for some miraculous power to overwhelm you, then you're waiting in vain, and you may wait until the dismal terrors of eternal death shall gather about you, from amid whose thickening gloom shall be heard the fearful words, **"I have called, and ye refused; ye have set at naught my counsel and would none of my reproof; therefore I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh"** (Prov. 1:25-26).

3. *It is a fact, that but few ever come under the influence of the gospel, who, at some period of their life, are not, just as Agrippa was, almost persuaded.*

The circumstances, under which different persons are brought to feel the power of the persuasive influence of Christianity, are different. Some have felt them in similar circumstances with this man. They have heard those, in whom they could not but have the most implicit confidence, relate their Christian experience; the simple story of how they were brought out of nature's darkness into the light of the gospel, and in this way the most powerful evidence of the truth of religion has come to them. It was this that chiefly moved King Agrippa. This, his experience, was Paul's great, incontrovertible argument, and therefore he rehearsed it to the crowd from the staircase in the castle of Antonia; he related it again before the august Sanhedrin, and he repeated it in melting utterances before the Cesarean court, for well he knew there was no answering that. So have I seen men weep as they listened to a convert's account of his conversion, the wonderfulness of the change he had experienced, the sweetness of his first love, the glory of his new-born hopes, and I knew that in their secret heart they said, "O, that we could feel as he does!" and I was sure, that they were almost persuaded to become Christians.

Others have felt thus under some powerful sermon, by which their judgments were convinced, their consciences aroused, the spell of the world temporarily broken; and thoughts of duty to the loving Father, the amazing grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the nearness of death, and the fearfulness of a judgment to come, have so moved them that they were, then and there, almost persuaded.

Others still have felt this during seasons of affliction, when the long-suffering God, seeing that mercies failed to move them, has sent dispensations of judgment. Perhaps a dear babe, lovelier in their eyes than an angel, has been taken from them and laid in the cold grave; or a tender wife, devoted husband, cherished father, or fond mother, has been called away, and in the hour of blinding sorrow, when they felt the emptiness of earthly things, the utter powerlessness of the world to heal their lacerated hearts, the

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## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 8-1-2008 to 8-31-2008

Beginning Balance ..... \$8,093.10

### RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS ..... 329.18  
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL.....60.00  
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN ..... 150.00  
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX ..... 100.00  
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID ..... 100.00  
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV ..... 300.00  
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY... 150.00  
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL.....25.00  
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME ..... 200.00  
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR.....25.00  
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....20.00  
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY ..... 100.00  
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC .....50.00  
Grace M. B. C., Marion, OH.....50.00  
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK.....35.00  
James Swindell, Russell, KY ..... 15.00  
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL .....75.00  
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA..... 100.00  
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC .....50.00  
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM..... 100.00  
Michael Willett, Edgewater, FL.....80.00  
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM ..... 500.00  
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH. 100.00  
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....50.00  
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA.....40.00  
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL ..... 100.00  
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA .....25.00  
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS ..... 25.00  
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS .....50.00  
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL..... 100.00  
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC. 100.00  
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....25.00  
Walnut Creek B. C., Grove City, OH .....50.00  
Subscriptions .....65.00  
Anon..... 210.00  
Dividing Checks ..... 150.00  
Sub Total ..... \$3,719.18  
TOTAL.....\$11,812.28

### EXPENDITURES:

Printing..... 559.80  
Postage ..... 763.06  
Wages .....2,192.00  
FICA ..... 162.19  
Dividing Checks ..... 150.00  
Supplies .....81.32  
Total Expenditures .....3,908.37  
ENDING BALANCE ..... \$7,903.91

## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 8-1-2008 to 8-31-2008

Beginning Balance .....\$10,618.42

### RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS ..... 225.00  
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN .....50.00  
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY... 100.00  
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY ..... 100.00  
Calvary Ind. B. C., Everson, WA ..... 400.00  
..... 875.00  
TOTAL..... 11,493.42  
**EXPENDITURES:**  
Radio Time ..... 410.00  
Tape Production (6 months)..... 260.00  
TOTAL EXPENDITURES ..... 670.00  
.....\$10,823.42  
Interest ..... +1.39  
Less Corbin, KY des. ....-330.92  
ENDING BALANCE .....\$10,493.89

## CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance .....\$490.92

### RECEIPTS:

..... 490.92  
**EXPENDITURES:**  
WCTT ..... 160.00  
ENDING BALANCE .....\$330.92

## Agrippa, The Almost

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transient nature of all beneath the skies, then, O then, they have been almost persuaded.

And still others have felt thus, when afflicted in their own persons. While lying on beds of sickness, pain and languishing, they have had time to think upon their sins, the folly of a worldly life; when they have felt the need of the comforts and supports, of something better than the world could give; the consciousness of their entire unpreparedness to die and go into the presence of immaculate holiness; then, as they approached so near that they could hear the roar of the Jordan's black billows, they have cried, "O! if God will only let me get well, I will become a Christian." They recovered, but they did not become disciples of Jesus. Ah! they were only "almost," not "altogether" persuaded.

Many others have been deeply affected, during seasons of revival. The Spirit strove, Christians pleaded with, and anxious friends wept over them. Perhaps they tried to pray for themselves, and went so far as to ask Christians to pray for them. But the revival passed, the harvest passed, the summer ended, and alas! they were not saved, simply because they were not fully, but almost persuaded. And others still have felt thus, as they have stood by the deathbed of a wicked man. They saw him toss from side to side in agony, his once strong frame emaciated to weakness, the cold sweat of death beading his brow, his eyeballs rolling in terror, despair gleaming from his blanched face. They heard his wild shrieks, as he vainly endeavored to escape from the icy grasp of the king of terrors. At last they saw death triumphant. All was still; but how dark, gloomy and boding was that stillness! They could not but cry, "Heaven save us from such a death!" But they saw another scene, a Christian's death. There all was peace and unearthly tranquility. Smiles wreathed the dying face, an opening Heaven shed its glory in that chamber. They could almost hear the rustling of the wings of angels, and as they heard the dying saint calmly say, "Farewell earth, farewell loved kindred, meet me in Heaven; welcome, welcome, home of my soul.

"Lord, lend your wings; I mount, I fly,  
O grave where is thy victory,  
O death where is thy sting?"

Then they were almost persuaded.

4. Let us now inquire, after some of the reasons on account of which, such persons are kept from full persuasion.

It is not the lack of evidence of their duty, nor the existence of any impossibility in the way of their performing it. They have memories, and can recall their sins;

consciences, and can feel their guilt and obligation; wills, and they can decide to make an honest, thorough effort to become Christians. There is a mercy-seat, and they can go to it. They have both time and opportunity to seek the Lord, and they are urged so to do by motives high as Heaven, deep as Hell, and broad as their eternal interests, and yet they are not fully persuaded. Why not?

Some are not, because of "attachment to a particular sin which they will not abandon." This is supposed to have been the case with Agrippa. It certainly is with many. They are attached, it may be, to some single sin, which they well know they must immediately abandon if they become Christians, and they will not do it. Friend, is this the case with you? Then let me assure you, that that which keeps you from Christ now, will shut you out of Heaven hereafter. That one sin, thus clung to, will be your eternal ruin.

Others remain thus, because of a deep-settled impression, that "to become Christians they must become unhappy." To them religion seems a melancholy thing. Strange delusion! For either they ought to become Christians, or they ought not. If they ought not, that ends the matter; but if they ought, then they should know that such is the arrangement of moral government that only in the course which a moral being ought to take, can his highest enjoyment be found. You think that to be a Christian is to surrender happiness. Tell me, are worldlings devotees of fashion and pleasure, aspirants for temporary fame, with no hope in the mercy of God, no endeavors to meet the solemn responsibilities of existence, no preparation for eternity, no Saviour--happy? Is there not within them an aching void? Tell me, Christian, does your religion forbid a single lawful pleasure---the outburst and legitimate gratification of any original faculty of your nature? Tell me, were you ever profoundly happy until Jesus spake your sins forgiven? Tell me, Paul, amidst all thy trials for Christ's sake, wast thou miserable? Nay! I hear his response, "Always rejoicing." "Our present light afflictions which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Others shrink from the "duties which religion imposes." They imagine that they could never perform them. To them, Christ's yoke seems not easy but galling; His burdens not light but heavy. They forget that the promise is, "**My grace is sufficient for thee**" (II Cor. 12:9).

And still others are not fully persuaded now, because they vainly anticipate a more favorable opportunity in the future---a delusion which has ruined untold thousands.

5. *The position which Agrippa occupied, and which all those of whom he is the representative occupy, is one of both peculiar interest and danger.*

Assuredly it is one of peculiar interest. Heaven feels it to be such. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, every angel, and all the redeemed thus regard it. Earth feels it to be such. Every Christian, and even worldly companions, as well as the powers of darkness, thus regard it. The individual himself is conscious of it. Let it be known in a congregation, that there is one person there in this condition, and the attention of all will be attracted to him, and, while joy thrills every renewed soul, it is accompanied by a tremulous anxiety, for every intelligent Christian knows that a man may be almost and yet never fully persuaded. Agrippa was, and yet he lived and died an impenitent sinner; and this has been the history of thousands on thousands since. They came up to the very door of salvation but never entered.

Moreover, it is a position of "imminent danger," for if a man does not yield then, the probability is that he never will. In the case we have considered, I am deeply impressed that, when Paul had made his mighty appeal to Agrippa, and fondly hoped to see him bow to acknowledged truth, but instead of this heard him merely respond, "**Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian**" (Acts 26:28), the apostle's heart sank within him under the conviction that the king was a lost man, in view of the fact that if he was not fully persuaded then he never would be; and I detect a tone of profound sadness in his reply. Loosing his hold upon the individual soul he exclaimed, "I would to God that not only thou, but all those that hear me this day,

were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." And when you remember that guilt is in the ratio of light, how fearful does the accumulation of it in such a case appear! Better, far better had it been for Agrippa never to have heard the gospel, than to have heard it, come to the luminous point where pardon and salvation were within his reach, and then made the fearful pause! O friend, is this your case? Are you even trembling, for I know that you stand on the crisis-point of your destiny. I know that you may resist the good influences which are urging you to the cross, lose your serious impressions, and be for ever lost. Full well I know that eternal things are suspended upon the decision to which you will soon arrive.

Suffer me to beseech you, by the weight of years of accumulated sin, by the mightiness and justice of God's claims, by the tears, blood, wounds, and agony of Christ, by the freeness and fullness of His atonement, by the strivings of the Spirit which may soon leave you for ever, by all the endless interests of your immortal soul, by the joys of the redeemed and the groans of the lost; yea, as the ambassador of Christ, as though God did beseech you by me, I pray you, in Christ's stead, "**Be ye reconciled to God**" (II Cor. 5:20); be not only almost, but altogether persuaded in your inmost soul to say,

"I'll go to Jesus, though my sins  
Have like a mountain rose;  
I know His courts, I'll enter in,  
Whatever may oppose.

"Prostrate I'll lie before His throne,  
And there my guilt confess,  
I'll tell Him I'm a wretch undone  
Without His pardoning grace.

"Perhaps He will admit my plea,  
Perhaps will hear my prayer;  
But if I perish, I will go,  
And perish only there."



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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Buffalo Valley Baptist Church will host her 11th annual Bible Conference, October 17-19.

Services will begin 7:00 pm Friday night and 9:30 am Saturday and Sunday.

For more information or directions to the church please call Pastor John Pruitt at 304-587-2451

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