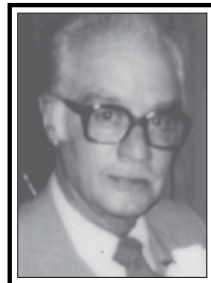


"My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?"

By Wayne Cox
(1913 - 2003)

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? "Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias." "And straightway (immediately) one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink." "The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him." "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost" (actually dismissed His Spirit)



(Matt. 27:45-50).

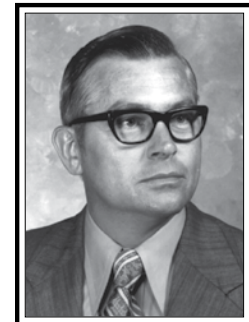
Verse 46 will suffice for the text. It is one of the most heartrending laments found in all the Book of God. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," meaning, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" You can search the
 ♦ (Continued on page 182)

Belief and the Believer

By Elvis Gregory
(1933 - 1981)

(A message preached at Pinehaven Baptist Church of Columbus, MS on September 16, 1973)

The reading tonight – John 3:16. None of us needs our Bible for this verse – very familiar. We are using it as a text for our study as we continue to think upon the subject of "whosoever believeth." Here the Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in



him should not perish, but have [eternal life or] everlasting life." Now notice, if you will, the promise in that text is to "whosoever believeth." Again we remind you that oftentimes

the word "whosoever" is so misused and misconstrued that it is even almost ironical and hilarious to hear some Freewillers and Arminians talk about the pronoun "whosoever." But remember it is a word that is active and "whosoever" standing alone means absolutely nothing unless it has a verb with it and the particular verb here is "believeth." And so the promise of our text (eternal life)

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A Meaningful Life

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:13-14).

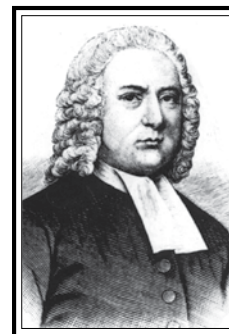


Your life is but a vapor; the life that you now live, will soon cease to exist. The thought that I want to address is this: "What have you (and what will you yet do) with the life that the Lord has given you?" In reality, what is a meaningful life? When we get to the end of our road here on earth; or, when someone that we

♦ (Continued on page 185)

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it" (Jer. 17:9)?

This is the source of the idolatry and creature- confidence of the Jews, sins which were the cause of their ruin; and though what is here said is particularly applicable to their hearts, yet is in general true of the heart of every man; which is deceitful, and deceiving; and puts a cheat



By John Gill
(1697 - 1771)

upon the man himself whose it is. It deceives him with respect to sin; it proposed it to him under the notion of pleasure; it promises him a great deal in it, but does not yield a real pleasure to him; it is all fancy and imagination; a
 ♦ (Continued on page 188)

PROCRASTINATION

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:24-25).

The great Apostle Paul converses with the immoral Felix and Drusilla in



our text. Paul, who was at that time a prisoner, witnessed to the Governor and his wife. It is said that Paul reasoned with Felix about righteousness, temperance and judgment to come.

He made a wise selection of topics. He conversed of righteousness in the presence of an unrighteous man. He spoke of
 ♦ (Continued on page 186)

Stewardship- The Larger Stewardship

By Nathaniel Hille
of Caldwell, Kansas

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (I Cor. 3:16-17).



On the subject of Christian stewardship, there has been a growing conviction that more attention must be given to the inner spiritual springs from which the streams of true stewardship living and practice flow. As one writer put it, "We must get back of the money question to the man himself or the woman herself, back of the collection to the character, back of what a man gives

♦ (Continued on page 187)

Let God's ways be in your heart, and your heart in God's ways.
 "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide." (Psalms 37:31).
 "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalms 40:8).

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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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“My God, My God

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Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you will not find a cry more pungent, more heart-rending than this cry.

You will notice in the Scripture which I read that from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. The sun went down at noon; not a star could be seen and the moon did not give any light. There had never been such a day, there never has been such a day since, and there never shall be a day like the day when the Prince of Life was slain. And just before the ninth hour the Lord Jesus cried out theses memorable words: **“My God, my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?”** This is the only time in the three and half years that Jesus preached, walking about the cities, on the roads of Judea and Samaria, that He ever complained about anything.

In Isaiah 53:7 we read two things said about the Master: one was that He was like a **“sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth,”** and the other in the first part of the verse it says that He was as a **“lamb being led to the slaughter.”** He didn't open His mouth. They buffeted Christ; they spat upon Him and they spoke all manner of evil against Him; they challenged Him to resort to His Divinity by coming down from the cross. But when the darkness finally descended upon this scene, when the curtain of God was slowly drawn and darkness descended upon the earth, Jesus complained.

Peter tells us in I Peter 2:23 that: **“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not . . .”** Jesus never did resort to getting revenge or retaliation. But now in this august scene of death, in this picture of the degradation of sin itself, when God finally looked away, Jesus complained: He cried out in His agony and suffering, **“My God, my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?”**

It was at this point that Jesus was entirely alone. It is altogether possible for men to be alone and yet be in the presence of ten thousand; their minds and hearts far removed from the crowds about them. Jesus was far removed from the crowds that trampled upon each other around His cross. They came in long streams up Golgotha's Hill to witness this august, sublime and yet awful scene. He was alone. This was the loneliest moment that Jesus ever spent in His thirty-three years upon the earth. This was the moment that He was treading the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God, and treading it alone.

Yet men get the idea, sometimes, that they can assist, that they can help God to save them when it was Jesus, and Jesus alone, who paid the debt. It was Jesus,

and Jesus alone, who went to Calvary's cross and died thereupon. It was Jesus, and Jesus alone, who tread the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God: none but He.

“But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this is the judgment: So Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:26-28) (emph. WC).

Christ hath appeared (not somebody else, not anything else), but Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. He went alone, I tell you, and every time that men get the idea that there is something that they can do, that there is some overt act that they can perform, it is an insult to God. Why do you think that Christ drank the last bitter dregs of the cup of everlasting sorrow in Gethsemane and upon the cross, if a man can help to do anything about it? He died, and He died alone.

You might ask me this morning: “Brother Pastor, why was it that Jesus cried out, **“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”**

I'll tell you why: fellowship with the Father had been broken. Jesus had now come to take the place of the sinner. He could not address God as “Father” but as “God”; for in that moment He had upon Himself the sins of all those whom God had given Him in the Covenant of Redemption. He was taking their place, dying under their sins; thus, the only way that He could address the Father God was as God, **“My God.”** Fellowship with God had been severed when Jesus died.

I have often said, and I honestly believe it to be true, that one of the reasons that darkness descended upon the whole earth, one of the reasons that the sun went down at noon, was because God looked away. No longer did He look upon the dying body of His Son. No longer did He look upon the blood that streamed from His side, His hands, feet, and from His wounded brow; He looked away and darkness came. Fellowship with God was broken. God cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance, so He looked away from Christ.

You might say, “But, Brother Cox, Jesus did not sin.”

True Jesus knew no sin (II Cor. 5:21; I John 3:5; Heb. 4:15). Christ did not sin, but in that moment when the Divine Son of God died upon Calvary's cross, a world of sin was upon Him: God cannot look upon sin so He looked away from His Son.

His cry is heart-rending because of a number of things, but primarily, it is heart-rending because no one came to comfort Him in the dying hour. Before, when Jesus was lonely, angels came to

minister to Him. In Matthew 4:1-11, when Jesus was tempted forty days and forty nights, and when at last He drove the Devil from His presence, angels came and ministered unto Him. Yonder in Gethsemane when He fell upon His face and prayed until the blood came from His face, until the pores of His skin opened and the blood came, we notice in Luke 22:43 an angel came down and comforted Him; but now when He is drinking the last bitter dregs, now when He is going the last mile, now when He is dying on Calvary's cross, no angel came to comfort Him; no angel came to strengthen the Divine Son of God. No man came to offer Him a drink of water; instead they gave Him vinegar to drink. The angry mob walking all around the cross, throwing every kind of slur, making every kind of accusation against Jesus, throwing this and that into His face, none would offer one word of comfort, hope or cheer. Heart-rending? Yes.

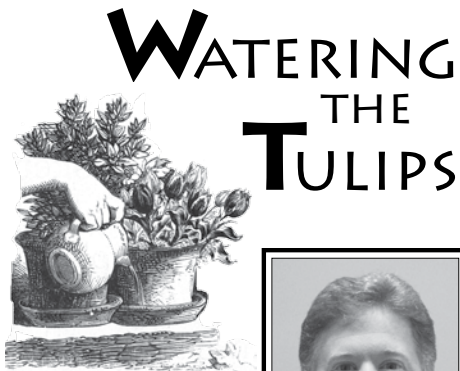
Bless your hearts, I say as tenderly and kindly as I know how this morning: if the crucifixion of Jesus for our sins doesn't mean very much to you there is something out of place with you and out of sorts in you. Like the old hymn that says: “You mean to tell me, Lord, Lord, all this suffering of Calvary for me, a frail, insignificant human being, that is alive today and dead tomorrow,” and the answer comes echoing back: “It was for ME He died. No wonder that Paul said in Galations 2:20, **“I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who LOVED ME, and GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME”** (emph. WC).

Bless your hearts, He died for me. I helped plait the crown of thorns that adorned His brow; I helped to drive the spikes into His quivering hands and feet; I wielded the spear that plunged into His quivering side: I killed the Prince of Life with my sins.

He died in vindication of the law. The breaking of the law had to be paid for, and Christ died in the vindication of the law. Ezekiel 18:4 and 20 says **“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”** Now Jesus died; He is the guiltless, but He was the One who died for the guilty. **“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”** Across the ages the thundering of Sinai comes to us: **“The soul that SINNETH it shall DIE”** (emph. WC). Jesus died in vindication of the law. He paid it all. “All to Him I owe; sin had left its crimson stain; He washed it white as snow,” so goes the old hymn. He paid it all.

When those Israelites stood in the shadow of Mount Sinai and heard the thundering and the roaring thereof, saw the brilliance and radiance of God reflected in the face of Moses, they never

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By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama



God Knows You

"But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23).

It has been said that God is the best record keeper that has ever been. Since He cannot forget, we must agree with that statement. The wicked may often seemingly go unpunished as they live their wicked lives. They may, in fact, prosper in worldly things. It may even seem at times that they are getting by with abominable lifestyles. However, they are not. Sin will find us out.

Certainly, Jonathan Edwards was wise to take as a text, **"To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste"** (Deut 32:35). No matter how things look, the foot of the wicked shall soon slip. Whether we think it happens at the appropriate time or not is irrelevant. God is in control of Providence – not us. When He is fed up, their foot shall slide.

The wicked will face the Lord at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-13). Their works will be judged. Though sin may appear at times to go unpunished here, it will not eternally. There will be no hidden sin at the Great White Throne. The unbeliever will stand before God and be condemned to the Lake of Fire eternally. Every moment of forever he will suffer the pure wrath of God for his sins against God.

Children of God, your sins are not hidden from God either. Certainly, we will never stand for our sins. However, our service to God will certainly be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10). The sin in our lives certainly keeps us from properly serving the Lord. So, our sins have a negative effect on our works. Also, God chastens His children during this life for sins. In fact, Hebrews 12:8 says, **"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."** So, God chastens His children for their sins.

Let us never forget, **"The eyes of the**

LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Pro. 15:3). You may be fooling your spouse, your siblings, your parents, your friends, your boss or even your fellow church members, but you are not hiding anything from God. He knows your every move. "Be sure your sin will find you out."

If you have never considered this from a saving standpoint, let me assure you that a day of reckoning is coming. Only those trusting Christ will be saved from sure condemnation. Trust Him today! We pray God gives you the ability!

To those that are saved, do not think this means you can live your life just any old way. You should flee the sins of the past and daily be conformed to the image of Christ. Look in the mirror of His Word today and follow His wonderful example!



"My God, My God

(Continued from page 182) ♦

forgot that august scene; thus coming to us thundering across the ages from Sinai is the voice of inexorable justice and judgment, saying, **"The soul that SINNETH it shall DIE"** (emph. WC). It must. But amazing grace stepped in and saved a wretch like me. Jesus paid our sin debt. Oh, bless His name this morning; He paid our sin debt.

You know, we used to sing an old hymn that says: "The old account was settled long ago. Brother, it was – at Calvary. Where? At Calvary. Jesus paid the debt; He paid for my sins; Jesus died in payment of my sins: He paid the sin debt and the debt was canceled. As Brother Freeman always says, "There was no devil left unconquered; no sin left undestroyed and no debt left unpaid when He died."

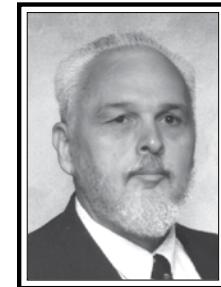
Brother, that is the truth: He paid it all; every last farthing was paid. That is what Paul meant in Ephesians 1:7, **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."** Jesus paid for our sins, and it is an insult to God for men to think that they can do something whereby they can make themselves acceptable in the sight of God, other than what Christ has already done.

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth, (that word believeth means the one who does nothing but believe) on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:5-8).



Why Does God Command Impossible Things?

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma



Old Testament Law which was good, but weak because the flesh could not keep it. To be perfect, to be holy, and to live according to the morality of God's Old Testament law are all worthy goals.

The individual himself as well as society would be greatly improved if humankind achieved these goals. But the law, like other commandments, can be misused. Paul wrote: **"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully"** (I Tim. 1:8). To attempt to earn salvation by the works of the law is a misuse of the law – and a common one as most people think they must save themselves by good works. For a professing Christian to think to be righteous in God's eyes by keeping the law is another common misuse of the law. The child of God is righteous in God's eyes because he has been justified by the blood of the Lamb. That is why the Bible says, **"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"** (Rom. 10:4) and **"...Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"** (I Cor. 1:30). The problem with the law of God (and all His commandments) is not found in the law itself. The problem with the law and commandments of God is not with God. The problem with the law is stated in Romans 8:3, **"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh..."** The weakness of the law – all law – is the flesh. Man in his fallen state cannot keep God's commandments. The restrictions of law cause to develop in the natural man the desire to break the law and thus to be free of its constraint. The depraved intellect, emotions and volition rebel at God's commandments and are a result of Adam's sin. The totality of man's depravity is the cause of man's total inability to keep the commandments of God whether the Mosaic law or such commandments as the one given by the Lord Jesus quoted above – **"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."**

Another commandment of God that we ought to consider is this one recorded by Paul: **"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent"** (Acts 17:30). God does not invite all men everywhere to repent. He does not challenge all men everywhere to repent. He does not beg all men everywhere to repent. The fleshly

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Why Does God

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nature of the unregenerate are pleased when told that God invites them. They are similarly happy when told they are challenged by God (or the preacher) or begged to do certain things. Why? Because in “inviting,” “challenging” and “begging” preachers imply that man can do something toward his own salvation. In this way man’s pride is salved and left intact. Actually, preachers who do these things are wise, humanly speaking. Their use of manipulative psychological methods produces psychological human results. But psychological results are not spiritual ones! Men may use trickery to get men to make decisions, but God neither invites, challenges or begs lost men to repent. He commands all men everywhere to repent! Does this mean that all men everywhere have the ability to repent? It does not! Repentance, along with justifying faith, are caused by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in God’s elect. The old Baptists in the U.S. believed this as the once very popular New Hampshire Baptist Confession states in Articles 7 and 8. Because many Baptists of our generation are not acquainted with this old confession drawn up in A.D. 1833, we quote these two articles in full as follows: “7. Of Grace in Regeneration: We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life. 8. Of Repentance and Faith: We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.”

The old Baptist position is that only those regenerated by the Holy Spirit experience true contrition and repentance. This teaching is clearly borne out by the Scriptures. For instance in Acts 5:31, speaking of Christ, the Bible says: **“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”** And again in Acts 11:18 we read: **“When they heard these things, they held**

their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” It is clear, then, that repentance was given to Israel and was granted to the Gentiles – but not every Israelite repented and certainly not every Gentile has repented. Therefore we must conclude that God is selective in His giving repentance to the Jews and in granting repentance to the Gentiles. The importance of repentance is made clear by Paul. In his meeting at the seaport of Miletus with the elders of the congregation in Ephesus, Paul said in Acts 20:21 that everywhere he went his method was **“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”** So then, we must cast aside the hyper-dispensational teaching that repentance was for the Jews only and that Gentiles need only to “believe.” “God now commands all men everywhere to repent!” The Bible tells us clearly how repentance is worked in the elect: In II Corinthians 7:10 we read: **“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”** What did the old New Hampshire Confession quoted above say about this? That “Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy...” Surely it is clear to every Bible believer that the unregenerate do not have the ability to see properly, experience godly sorrow nor the true repentance it works. One further proof text is Hebrews 12:16, 17 where we learn of a man who could not repent though he sought it. The Bible says, **“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”** Human sorrow or what the Bible calls “the sorrow of the world” springs from human motives and desires. Nobody wants to be cast into the lake of fire. When encouraged by preachers to do so, men thus motivated will do all sorts of things in their attempt to escape suffering eternal punishment. But such actions as are prompted by human motives and desires in both the preacher and his auditors are unacceptable to God. Springing as they do from depraved human nature these things **“cannot please God”** (Rom. 8:8).

So why are such commandments given if God decreed from eternity past that no man would have the ability within himself to keep them? Why

did Jesus say to the rich young man **“... If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me”** (Matt. 19:21) since He already knew the man would not give up his beloved wealth? Such commandments are, as it were, like brick walls. Against such “walls” self-confident and self-righteous individuals bloody their heads. Confident of their supposed moral ability and glorying in their imagined free-wills, men set about attempting to please God by their own efforts. This of course is clearly stated to be an impossibility in Romans 8:8 where we read, **“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”** It seems that one of two things happen as men bloody their heads attempting and failing to keep God’s commandments. The lost sheep of God when regenerated is confronted with the command of God to repent and believe and comes to see that he cannot repent and believe. He comes to understand that he can only fall on his face before God, casting himself on God alone, possessing no confidence in his own ability even to properly sorrow and repent over his sins. Oh what a blessed state it is to be thus brought to “hunger and thirst after righteousness.” He is brought to feelingly know and understand that he is hopeless and helpless to do anything to bring about his own salvation. Whether he says it in these words or not, he sees that if God does not save him he shall forever be lost. Not only this, such a regenerated person comes to see that God would be perfectly just and righteous to send him to eternal punishment. He willingly takes his place as a sinner before God, knowing that he has no power or ability to do anything about his sinful condition. He comes to abhor sin and himself as a sinner. Such change of mind – such turning toward God – is repentance. Such an experience is just the beginning of a lifetime of contrition and repentance and faith. One songwriter put it thus: “When there’s no place to turn, yet you’re turning to Him, He who died is leading you home.”

A different group than God’s elect, finding perfection impossible, compare themselves with others and finding themselves equal or superior in some real or imagined measure of human goodness, think that they actually please God and thus are in actuality mere religious hypocrites. They do not measure up to God’s standard of perfection, but they pretend to a measure of perfection and thus salve their consciences and attain to respectability among other like-minded men. “Birds of a feather flock together.” Such were the Pharisees in the days of our Lord’s earthly ministry and we have no reason to think that the Pharisees are an extinct class of men. These are far different than those individuals

considered earlier. The former group having bloodied their heads as it were, on the commandments of God, come to see themselves as hopeless and helpless sinners who lack any ability in themselves to please God. These are God’s elect. It is God working in them by His Spirit that causes them to see their total inability to please God by their works. This granting of sight is a part of what happens when God the Holy Spirit regenerates a lost sinner. Thus we read, **“...by the law is the knowledge of sin”** (Rom. 3:20). It is not the mere mental assent to the law of an unregenerate individual that is spoken of here. It is the spiritually alive child of God who is made to see himself such a sinner as did the publican in the account related by the Lord Jesus. It must needs be so for the unregenerate is blind and dead in his spiritual condition, understanding nothing of God’s Word in a way that profits him spiritually.

In Luke chapter 18 the Lord Himself told of two men who went up to the temple to pray. One of them, a Pharisee (fundamentalist), went down to the front, it seems, for the other, a publican, stood afar off. Publicans were Jews who had sold out to the Roman government and often served as tax collectors. They were regarded as traitors by the Jewish religionists and thus hated and ostracized had no part in Jewish religious life. The self-righteous Pharisee proclaimed his religious works and worth to God and to all within hearing distance. He boldly took his place front and center. In contrast the publican dared not even raise his eyes heavenward, but smote his breast and literally what he said was, “God, at the mercy seat meet me the sinner.” He did not say that he was “a” sinner, but “the” sinner (Greek). He understood that he was in need of both the righteousness of the Savior (as typified by the gold lid on the mercy seat) and the blood sacrifice of God’s Lamb (as typified by the blood sprinkled on the gold lid of the mercy seat). And it was he, the one in whom God worked repentance, not the self-righteous Pharisee, who went down to his house justified. Jesus explained why, saying, **“...for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted”** (Luke 18:14). Let the self-righteous religionist continue to exalt himself for that is all he shall have. But the elect of God are taught of God to humble themselves and they shall, in God’s time, be exalted for eternity – all to the glory of Jesus Christ whose sheep they are. Oh, that men would see themselves as being impotent to obey God’s law! Oh that they would fall on their faces before God in true contrition and repentance for their sins. This is the only hope of individual sinners and of our nation.



A Meaningful Life

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know passes away beyond this world; what constitutes a life that has had some meaning? What are the marks of a life that has some merit on this earth? To our shame, we probably do not think about some of these things until we get to the end of our own lives, or when someone that we know and love gets to the end of their life.

Of course, I want to mention first of all, that no life is a meaningful life, without our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. So, before we go any further, I want to emphasize the need that every man, woman, boy, and girl has for the salvation that comes only through and by our Blessed Savior. Before you consider anything at all about your own life, and whether or not that life has any lasting meaning, I want you to consider your own relationship with Jesus Christ. Have you confessed Him as your Savior? Have you seen your own despicable self, and the terrible condition that you are in, and the awful fate that awaits all of those that die in their sins? **"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else"** (Isa. 45:22). Well, I hope and pray that everyone under the sound of my voice will confess their sinful condition, and flee to Jesus Christ as your only refuge, and only salvation.

Now I want to address those that are saved and seeking to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. What I want us to do, is to think about some things that you and I should consider – some evidences that we can exhibit, some efforts that we can extend, that will maybe help us to live "a meaningful life."

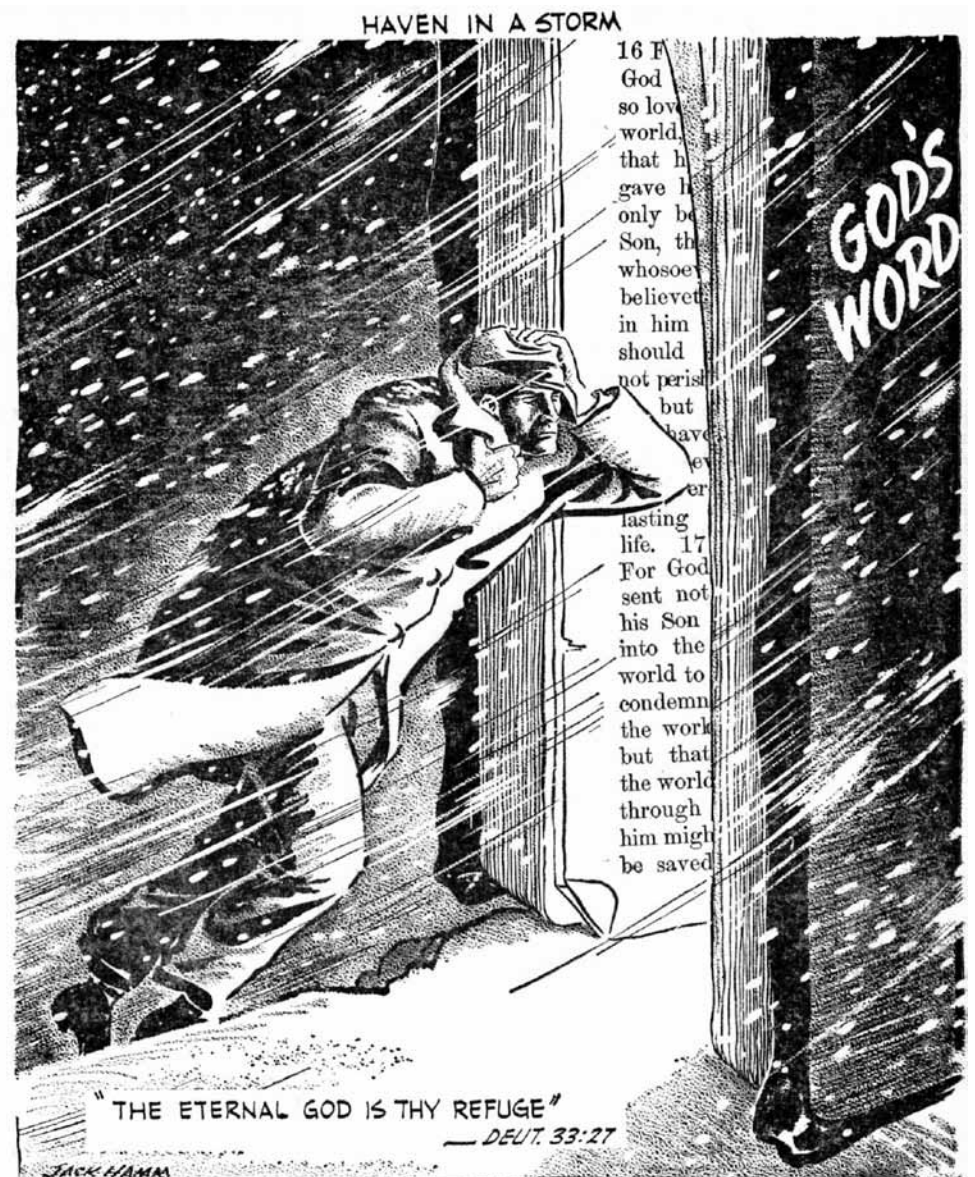
FAITHFUL TO GOD

First of all, I think that it would be good to start with the fact that we each should live a life that is faithful to our God. You know, when you get to the end of your life, and you decide, then, to be faithful to God, you may be just a little bit late. When you get to the end of your life, and you decide then that you want to demonstrate your love and your fidelity towards God, you maybe have waited a little too long. What about all of your life that has gone on before? What about all of the times in your life when you rejected the faithfulness of God, in favor of your own vain pursuits in this life? It seems to me, that even amongst those that claim to serve the Lord, there is very little faithfulness towards God that is visible today. One time David said, **"Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men"** (Ps. 12:1). At times, it seems that no one really has a desire to serve the Lord; and it seems that not many are willing to put their love of God above their love of the things of the

world (See Prov. 20:6). The Lord Jesus, Himself, posed this question: **"...Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth"** (Luke 18:8)? It seems that the number of those that are faithful unto the Lord God are diminishing with every generation.

In reality, if the life that we live is to be meaningful, then we must be faithful in our dealings with God and with others. Paul said, **"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"** (I Cor. 4:1-2). The place that the Lord has placed us, and the salvation that He has granted unto us, lays certain requirements upon us; and one of those requirements is that we would be **"found faithful."** It is not just an option, or a recommendation; rather, it is a requirement, that those that would be **"ministers"** or **"stewards"** in the service of the Lord, must be **"found"** to be **"faithful."** Remember, the Lord has done much for you: will you return His faithfulness unto Him? Will you be faithful to Him, as He has been faithful to you? Paul told the Thessalonians, **"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it"** (I Thess. 5:23-24). Look at how He has called and preserved you! Look at how He has redeemed your soul! Look at how He has given His all for you! Now what is your response? He has demonstrated His faithfulness unto you, what faithfulness will you demonstrate towards Him?

I know that there are a lot of different things that people think about, when they try to think of ways to be "faithful to God." But, really, for the purposes of this study, I just want you to think about how that you ought to love your God, and be close to your God, and pledge your allegiance to Him – above all others – whether they be family, friends, or the society in which you live. The writer to the Hebrews put it this way: **"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"** (Heb. 10:22-25). It is imperative for those that would love and be faithful to their God, that they would **"draw near with a ... full assurance of faith."** It is good that each of us would recognize that Jesus Christ is our Savior, and that we will find all



that we need in Him. We should know and believe in our hearts (and it should be evident in our lives) that we love God above family, friends, and our own selves. It should be common knowledge to ourselves (and others) that we will obey and follow God – no matter the cost! It is important and necessary that we would each **"draw near"** unto Him – trusting and believing in Him and in His faithfulness towards us. And, as we **"draw near"** unto Him, and as we believe and trust in Him, and as we place Him and His Word and ways above all else on the face of this earth, then – and only then – we will live "a meaningful life" on the face of this earth.

USEFUL TO GOD

As we have just noticed, if we want to live "a meaningful life," then we must be faithful to God. Along with this, I believe that if any earthly soul will be faithful to God, then God will have a use in this life for that faithful man or woman. So, we can safely conclude that any person that would desire to live "a meaningful life," must live a life that is "useful to God." Again, if you get to the end of your days on this earth, and you decide, then, to be "useful to God," you have waited too long. If you get to the end of your earthly existence, and you decide then to do something meaningful in this world of men, you have procrastinated too long. What

about all of the times and opportunities that you have let pass you by? What about all of the times that you could have served and labored in the church of Jesus Christ, and you scorned those opportunities; and, instead, you went your own way, and consumed your lusts and desires on some earthly pleasures? What about all of the times that you ought to have been witnessing and testifying about the wonderful God and Saviour of your soul; and, instead, you hung your head in shame, and ignored the sin around you and the lost and dying souls that surrounded you, and you just went your way and pretended that you didn't notice the depression and the desperation and the despair all around you?

I want you to know that God has saved you to and for a purpose. He has redeemed your soul from amongst a lost mankind for the purpose of serving and loving Him in this life. **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"** (Eph. 2:10). Now I know that we could spend much more time on the other reasons that the Scriptures will provide for your (and my) salvation: such as the eternal love of God, the eternal word of God, the eternal purpose of God, the eternal faithfulness of God. However,

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A Meaningful Life

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I want to remind you that one of the Scriptural reasons that you can identify upon which your salvation is founded is that you were ordained to walk in **“good works.”** In order for you to walk in **“good works,”** you must be redeemed and brought to Jesus Christ. To me, this means that you were saved and ordained to live **“a meaningful life”** on this earth. Whatever else you might see and understand today, I want you to know that God intends for you to be useful unto Himself, and to be useful in the cause and kingdom of our dear Savior.

I know that it seems that many folks that claim to be saved, do not offer much in the way of works and good deeds in the kingdom of God. And, I know that we might spend some time wondering if the Lord has indeed saved those souls – or, are they only pretenders in the salvation of God? Well, I think that you and I should leave off the speculation about the salvation of others, and spend more time seeking to live our own lives in a way that is useful unto God! **“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”** (Phil. 2:12-13). **“Work out”** your own salvation! Do not be overly concerned with what the world or others might think about yourself or your brethren; rather, put some effort into the salvation that you are currently prospering in. And, make sure that whatever else others might accuse you of, they cannot accuse you of being unfaithful or useless to your God and Father in Heaven!

A BLESSING TO OTHERS

Finally today, let's think about our relationships with one another, and how those relationships, when combined with our faithfulness and usefulness to God, ought to result in **“A Meaningful Life.”**

When someone asked the Lord Jesus what was the greatest commandment in

the Law, Jesus replied this way: **“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”** (Matt. 22:37-40). In our first two points we have looked at how we ought to build our relationship with God, and believe and trust and obey Him in order to live **“a meaningful life.”** Well, in our third point I want us to think about how that our relationships with others are important in living **“a meaningful life.”** In the words of the Lord Jesus, we find that it is paramount that we each of us should **“..love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”** In our study we could say that this **“first and great commandment”** is fulfilled in our first two points. Now, in our third point, as we consider our need to serve and bless each other, we can see the second commandment being fulfilled: **“..thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”** If we set it as our goal – to love the Lord, and love each other – then I think that we will find that each of us will live a life that is meaningful. In fact, we might even say with the Lord, **“on these two commandments hang”** **“a meaningful life.”**

We already noticed what the writer to the Hebrews had to say to us: **“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”** (Heb. 10:24-25). In this passage we are encouraged to **“consider one another”** and how that we ought **“to provoke unto love and to good works,”** and how that we are supposed to be **“assembling... ourselves together.”** In essence, we are being reminded that the Lord intends for His people to work together, and on behalf of each other. We are not meant to stand alone – at least not when there are brothers and sisters in Christ that are available for us to fellowship with, and to worship with. You and I need to be the ones that are encouraging others. You and I need to be the ones that pray for, and seek to help our fellow saints that are around us. These things are a part of living **“a meaningful life.”**

I suppose that this is one of the most visible commendations that men might have in this life – that at the end of their days, when folks are gathered together to bid them farewell in this life, and when folks are gathered together to console the family that is left behind; that these folks are comprised of many saved folks, and many hearts are touched by the passing away of their dear loved one in Christ.

CONCLUSION

There is no one that has lived a life that

is as meaningful as that life that was lived by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. If you desire to live **“a meaningful life,”** then the best that you can do, is seek to live like Jesus Christ lived, while He walked the face of this earth. **“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”** (Phil. 2:3-5).



Procrastination

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temperance in the presence of a man who practiced little self-control. Paul spoke of a judgment to come at a judgment seat where justice had often been disregarded.

Governor Felix was a wicked, sex-mad, selfish, bloodthirsty, power-crazed infidel. His wife, if she may be called such, was an adulteress. She was really the wife of another man. Drusilla lived with Felix in whoredom. Surely these two wicked characters needed to hear the gospel.

Drusilla was a Jew. Perhaps her being educated in the Jewish religion caused her to be inquisitive of the faith in Christ. She may have caused Felix to send for Paul. Then again she may not have done this. Felix could have known something of the Christian religion. Remember that Cornelius, a Christian centurion, lived in Caesarea also.

Had we have been present at that trial almost two-thousand years ago, we would have witnessed a strange scene. The governor-judge trembled while the prisoner remained calm. Felix trembled and said, **“Go thy way for this time.”** He did like many others have done, postponed the matter of salvation till a more convenient season. The words of Felix have fallen from the lips of millions of trembling, struggling, judgment-bound souls across the centuries.

Felix heard the gospel preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, was awakened to his condition, knew his heart was not right with God, but he refused salvation. He came close; he was convicted of sin. He was not far from the kingdom; he caught a glimpse of the Light of Life, but turned aside. His soul was filled with horror and amazement; he struggled to get away, to get clear of these impressions. He tried to shake off the terror of his convictions. He did not object to Paul's preaching, for it was weighty and worth considering. He said, **“Go thy way for this time”**---break off here, business calls me away; but when I have a convenient season---when I have nothing else to do, I will call for you. The expression, **“Go thy way for this time,”** showed that Felix thought that there would be another time.

THE FOLLY OF PROCRASTINATION

Salvation is the most important thing in the world. It is more important than earthly achievements or doctrinal soundness. One can be as rich as a king and still go to Hell. The bitterness of the second death cannot be sweetened by the thought that the wretch was once a millionaire. Christ said, **“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”** (Mark 8:36). A golden coffin is a poor compensation for a damned soul. One can belong to the right church and still go to Hell. One can be orthodox, but that will not save him. Religion has never saved one, and it never will. It is not religion that men need; it is regeneration.

Men are so foolish. They take salvation so lightly, yet salvation should be the chief concern of every man. The Father thinks highly of salvation. He gave His Son to redeem rebellious sinners. Jesus Christ thinks salvation is important, for He bled and died to accomplish it. Then, why sinner, do you trifle with that which cost Him his life? The Holy Spirit believes salvation is important. He works continually to bring sinners to repentance. God's church thinks salvation is important. Earnest men and women pray day and night for the salvation of others. Then why, sinner, take this matter so lightly?

Now what subject is so important as salvation? But the language of procrastination is, that salvation, though important, is not now important; that preparation for eternity need not be made at present; and that it will do to care for the soul at some future time. This indicates folly. Men do not act in this manner even in worldly matters. When they buy farms, they do not say, **“Those of whom we have bought have many years to live, and there is time enough to secure deeds and titles.”** They are not willing to risk even a little property on the continuance of their neighbors' lives, but they will risk their eternal interests on the continuance of their own lives. Is this not folly? The swine that trample pearls under their feet do not act so foolishly.

THE DELUSIVENES OF PROCRASTINATION

Sinners today, like Felix of old, deceive themselves in supposing that they will become Christians at some future time. Satan likes this. He uses it as an opiate for the conscience. Those who put off salvation imagine that there will be another chance like Felix. They think that the difficulties will then be gone. But how do they know? Can they pry into the future and determine what is to be? To delay salvation is self-deception!

THE GUILT OF PROCRASTINATION

Those who procrastinate promise to

♦ (Continued on page 187)



GOING, GOING, GONE!

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The Rantings and Ravings of Brother Ritechus N. Dignation



Snobby Churches

Nothing gets my dander up quicker than a bunch of stuck up snobby Christians. Here is a true story that just happened over at the First Church of the Frozen Chosen. This man and woman went to church last Sunday and though no one asked them to leave, they were treated like a piano at a Church of Christ Convention. I mean folks shunned them and looked down their long sanctimonious noses at the two like they were lepers. It's true, they didn't have on nice clothes, his face was dirty, and her sweater was old and torn. They were dressed like bums. That's because they were bums.....straight off the street, known as Rhino and Sunshine.

I will give this church the benefit of the doubt. Apparently, they use the ASV at that church, the Arrogant Snobby Version that quotes Jesus as saying, "For God so loved the upper class that he gave his only son, that whosoever of the upper class believeth on him, might be saved from the lower class." I'm sure that's what it says, otherwise, those folks wouldn't have treated human beings that way. Obviously, Jesus did not die for bums, druggies, harlots and convicts, or they wouldn't have shunned them. Since God doesn't love those kind of people, it's okay to treat them like dirt. After all, it would be a waste of time and energy to witness to them, plus you might catch some disease. No use to witness to them, or even offer to help in any way.

Maybe I'm expecting too much from the wrong people. Maybe the ones at the First Church of the Frozen Chosen just can't show what they don't have to show: the love of God. Maybe, just maybe, they don't have the love of God in them. How can you give away what you don't even have yourself? Just maybe the ones in the church are the ones who need witnessing to. One thing's for sure: ever'body who's talkin' about Heaven ain't goin' there. Remember, Jesus said, "**Many are called, but few are chosen**" and in the case of First Church, many are cold and a few are frozen.

Now here's the rest of that story. You know those bums who walked in? They were not really bums, but genuine Christians who dress and act like bums and visit churches to take the spiritual temperature of the congregation. Only the pastor knew the truth and on into the service, the preacher asked Rhino to

get up and speak. As he took the pulpit, it got quite as a tomb. Rhino told how outside the church, people avoided them and only ONE person invited them in, and that most churches they go to, NO ONE ever invites them inside. When the folks realized they had been had, a few of the saved church members got right with God, but the devil and the rest of 'em just got mad. Brother John says, "**But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?**" (I John 3:17). I say if anyone gets mad, don't get mad at Rhino and Sunshine, take it up with God. He's the one who said it.



Procrastination

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give God what does not belong to them. Time is so valuable that God gives it to us by the moments. You cannot say that any moment except the present is yours. You are dishonest in promising to give to God what does not belong to you. Suppose I should promise to give away your property. You would say I had no right to do this. But I would have the same right that you have to give future time to God--that is, none at all. When you make such a promise, you sin against God by agreeing to give to Him that which is not your own.

Tomorrow has been called the Devil's day. All we have is the present. Yesterday is gone; it cannot be brought back. There is no future time with God. He says, "**Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation**" (II Cor. 6:2). Again He says, "**Come; for all things are now ready.**" Ecclesiastes 12:1 says, "**Remember now thy Creator.**" The time is at hand. Tomorrow may be too late.

God forbids procrastination. He does this in commanding sinners to repent. You admit that you are under obligation to repent by planning to do it at some future time. If you are under obligation to obey God, you are guilty when you disobey Him. Every moment you put off your repentance to God you sin against Him.

THE DANGER OF PROCRASTINATION

There is danger because of the power of sinful habits. The more one sins, the more he is inclined to sin. Those who put off salvation often become the victims of a hardened heart. People are usually saved in their youth; few are saved in the fifties or sixties. The gospel turns people's hearts to God, or it hardens people against God. The gospel is a savor of death unto death or life unto life. Procrastination deadens the conscience. It puts out the light in the warning lantern at the crossroad. It dulls

ears until they cannot hear God's call. It blinds eyes to the certain results of sin.

You who turn down the gospel today, do you know that your heart is colder toward God? Do you know that you will be less likely to go to church tomorrow than you are today. Do you know that soon you will not be moved at all by the teaching of the Bible, nor stirred by the pleadings of a godly mother?

Dear lost friend, you have a sinful nature. You were conceived in sin, you live in sin, and you will die in sin unless you repent. The Christ that I know can save your soul from sin and even save your life. He not only saves from sin, but from sinning. May God give you a new nature. May God take away that stony heart and replace it with a new heart. Then you will delight in the law of God and detest sin and unrighteousness.

There is danger because death is at hand. Death is a universal melancholy fact. It never ceases to work; it takes no holidays. All men must die. The king must lay aside his scepter and lie down beneath the sod like the beggar. The doctor must write his last prescription and face the Great Physician. The truck driver must leave his truck and give his body to the embalmer's knife. The carpenter must put down his tools and change his coveralls for a shroud. The mother and father must say farewell to their children and face the grave. The adulterer and adulteress, like Felix and Drusilla, must leave their sinful lusts. The gambler must leave his cards and dice to face Almighty God. The drunkard must leave his drinking and go to taste the wine of the wrath of God. The worldly man must leave his dancing and playing to enter the fires of Hell. Yes, all must die and death ends the day of mercy. There is no salvation for the dead. When death comes, the sinner's character becomes hopelessly unchangeable. Man's destiny is determined on this side of eternity. There is no second chance!

CONCLUSION

Satan wins his greatest victory over man when he gets him to procrastinate salvation. Sinner, God's time is now. Proverbs 27:1 warns us, "**Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.**" Then Hebrews 3:16 says, "**To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.**"

Some plan to become a Christian before they die. This is what Felix thought he could do, but as far as I know he never had a more convenient season. He burns today in Hell with the millions who have put off salvation until a later time.

Whatever you do, do not procrastinate. Receive Christ, and receive Him now. If Satan can persuade you to put it off, you may be lost forever. This is one of his most subtle tricks. After conviction of sin has taken hold, after the way of salvation is made clear, then the Devil whispers,

"Not now. You can do just as well tomorrow." But tomorrow the influence is gone and the sinner continues in his ways. God's time is now. Come, then, and receive Him as your Savior. "**Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near**" (Isa. 55:6). There is a time coming when He will not be found; therefore, seek Him now. Do not put off until tomorrow what you can do today!

(This is a sermon delivered by the author on May 24, 1964 on Radio Station KLPW in Union, Missouri.)



Stewardship

(Continued from page 181) ♦

to what he or she is!"¹

While a proper study of stewardship must contain the pocketbook—the tithing and offering, it must also contain many more things! In my library I have a section of books dealing with stewardship. Out of 15 books and pamphlets, only 3 deal with more than tithing and offering.

Let me reiterate, stewardship DOES speak of tithing and offering, but that is only one aspect, one part of our stewardship. In one booklet the writer calls tithing and offering—"The acid test of stewardship." That is true! I will agree with that. What a person gives to the Lord will tell you a lot about what they think of the Lord and their stewardship. However, tithing and offering is but a fraction of our Christian stewardship.² In respect to stewardship, tithing and offering is only one aspect of what our Master says about our financial matters! God not only tells us in His Word about tithes and offerings, but also about getting finances, giving finances, storing finances and using finances. And so we must get 'back of' or behind the "money question" and take note of that we are stewards—this is what we are! Now, we'll deal with the financial aspect of stewardship, because a study of stewardship without the finances is an incomplete study. Let us not limit ourselves to a fraction of Christian stewardship and miss out on the great majority of our stewardship and blessings contained therein. But there is another place in which we are going to look at first:

THE LARGER STEWARDSHIP

According to T.B. Hille, the larger stewardship involves:

- 1) One's heart and soul
- 2) One's life
- 3) One's very being

The larger stewardship encompasses all I am, and all I have that has been given to me by God to manage. We must own the fact that we are stewards of God; that I am an individual steward. This larger stewardship has to do with

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Stewardship

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the life, the inner life, of the believer and with all the outer expressions of that life (Phil.2:12).

Notice those wonderful verses Christ quoted: **“Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might”** (Deut.6:4-5). Christ spoke unto the Jews in His day quoting these verses in Matthew 22:34-40. This is the larger stewardship! Loving the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul and mind, and loving your neighbor more than yourself...that is the larger stewardship.

The larger stewardship has to do with spiritual values and principles laid forth in Scripture.³ The larger stewardship encompasses all that one is and one does and is more than the mere “bill-fold.”

THE NECESSITY OF THE LARGER STEWARDSHIP

We are in a period in which the Bible depicts a coldness of the Lord’s churches in general (Rev. 3:14-19). Take note of the church at Laodicea. They were neither **“cold nor hot.”** “These Laodiceans were neutrals, devoid of passion, destitute of any enthusiasm, loafing along in moral indifference. In times of great crisis they were anyway, either way, altogether tepid regarding the issues. And in times of great laxity they maintained the same tepidity, utterly unconcerned with the degeneracy.”⁴ A state of spiritual apathy had set in upon them.

The most that some churches will ever get from some church members is their names on the roll and that is of little help. Such members do not really belong to the church. People belong to the person or thing to which they are most devoted. We might ALL ask ourselves: “Am I devoted to the Lord and His Church”? I trust the Lord shall help us in our answer. For some, the Lord will never get any service from them in His church. Their personal participation in the services and work of the church is nil. They are more like a dead limb, than part of the living body. Few are functioning as a living stone in the living body of the Lord Jesus Christ but rather like bumps on a log.

THE LARGER STEWARDSHIP IS NOT EASY

The opposite of “easy” is “difficult.” This larger stewardship calls for the utmost of self and service; it is all inclusive.⁵ No corner of our lives may be reserved for ourselves, for **“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God...for the temple of God is holy** (set apart for God’s use), **which temple ye are”** (I Cor. 3:16-17). The larger stewardship deals with every aspect of every relationship of our lives. **“THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN BE OR DO WHICH STEWARDSHIP**

LIVING DOES NOT APPLY.”

And while the larger stewardship is not easy, rest assured that it is not grievous, for God’s Word declares: **“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”** (I John 5:3). The larger stewardship is no more than our “reasonable service;” no more than **“come[ing] after me** [Christ], **let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”** (Rom.12:1-2; Luke 9:23).

Charles Cook wrote: “It is harder to live than it is to give. He who gives liberally may at the same time live unrighteously. Spiritual acts are more difficult than physical. It is easier to kneel than it is to pray. It is easier to send a check to the treasurer of the church, and pay one’s tithe, than it is to take oneself and family to God’s House and there sincerely worship God and have fellowship with His people. It is easier to unite with the church than it is to follow Christ as Lord. It is easier to give than to love. It is easier to profess than it is to possess and practice.”⁶

We find that such a statement agrees with the words of our own Master, Jesus Christ (Read Luke 14:26-33). The Lord Jesus did not make it easy for any one to become His follower and disciple. He insisted upon: 1) separation, 2) surrender, 3) sacrifice. It will take the grace of God to do these things. At times it may seem that you will need all the grace of God to follow Christ in these matters. We must, in order to be proper stewards of God and disciples of Christ: 1) Separate ourselves from the world in thinking, believing, and doing; 2) Surrender ourselves to the will of our Master; 3) Sacrifice ourselves upon the altar, even as Amasiah the son of Zichri, who offered himself willingly unto the Lord (II Chron. 17:16).

This larger stewardship will cause us to be as fools to the world, but wise men and women in the eyes of God; a stench to worldly Christians, but a sweet smelling savor in the nostrils of our Lord. The difficult things will become the unspeakably better things.⁷ As a child of God, and a member of the Lord’s Church, you will not draw closer, or become stronger, by tolerating indifference, worldliness, and ungodliness, but by being a faithful steward you and we will grow stronger, and better fitted for God’s

use and to His honor and glory.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The larger stewardship is not a fraction of my life, but the whole of it. It involves me, personally. I must, in every detail, of my life do as my Master pleases, not in order to be saved, or stay saved, but because it is well-pleasing unto my Lord and Savior.

If we refuse the larger stewardship, we ought to cease to sing spiritual songs and hymns like *“I Surrender All”* and *“To God Be The Glory,”* for we are not truly interested in surrendering all or giving God the glory due unto His name. We might tear out verse upon verse of our Bibles and say, “these are unfit for me.”

But if we receive and submit to God’s Word with respect to the larger stewardship, we shall walk close with Jesus. What joy that shall be. AMEN!

NOTES

1. *The Larger Stewardship*; Cook, Charles A.; T. B. Hille’s Notes in book; Foreword.
2. Ibid; Pg.3
3. Ibid; Pg.2
4. Ibid; Pg.4
5. Ibid; Pg.4
6. Ibid; Pg.7
7. Ibid; pg.7



The Deceitful

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mere illusion and a dream; and what it gives is very short-lived; it is but for a season, and ends in bitterness and death.

Or it proposes it under the notion of profit; it promises him riches, by such and such sinful ways it suggests; but, when he has got them, he is the loser by them; these deceitful riches choke the word, cause him to err from the faith, pierce him through with many sorrows, and endanger the loss of his soul.

It promises honor and preferment in the world, but promotes him to shame; it promises him liberty, but brings him into bondage; it promises him impunity, peace, and security, when sudden destruc-tion comes.

It deceives him in point of knowledge; it persuades him that he is a very knowing person, when he is blind and ignorant, and knows nothing as he ought to know; and only deceives himself; for there is no true knowledge but of God in Christ, and of a crucified Christ, and

salvation by Him. (See I Cor. 3:18; 8:1-2; Gal. 6:3.)

It deceives in the business of religion; it makes a man believe that he is a very holy and righteous man, and in a fair way for Heaven, when he is far from that, and the character it gives him; in order to this, it suggests to him that concupiscence or lust, or the inward workings of the mind, are not sin; and it is only on this principle that it can be accounted for, that Saul, before conversion, or any other man, should be led into such a mistake, as to conclude that, touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless.

It represents either sins as more peccadilloes, as little sins, and not to be regarded; and even puts the name of virtue on vices; profuseness and prodigality it calls liberality, and doing public good; and covetousness has the name of frugality and good economy.

It directs men to compare themselves and their outward conversation with others, that are very profane and dissolute; and from thence to form a good character of themselves, as better than others; and as it buoys up with the purity of human nature, so with power of man’s free will to do that which is good, and particularly to repent as pleasure; and it puts the profane sinner upon trusting to the absolute mercy of God, and hides from him His justice and holiness; and it puts others upon depending upon the outward acts of religion, or upon speculative notions, to the neglect of real godliness (see James 1:22, 26.)

The man of deceitful heart, the hypocrite, tries to deceive God himself, but he cannot: he oftentimes deceives men, and always himself; so do the profane sinner, the self-righteous man, and the false teacher; who attempts to deceive the very elect, but cannot; yea, a good man may be deceived by his own heart, of which Peter is a sad instance. (Matt. 26:33, 35, 70, 72, 74.)

The heart is deceitful to a very great degree, it is superlatively so; above all, above all creatures; the serpent and the fox are noted for their subtlety, and wicked men are compared to them for it; but these comparisons fall short of expressing the wicked subtlety and deceit in men’s hearts; yea, it is more deceitful to a man than the Devil, the great deceiver himself; because it is nearer to a man, and can come at him, and work upon him, when Satan cannot; or about, or concerning all things; it is so in every thing in which it is concerned, natural, civil, or religious, and especially the latter.

The Septuagint version renders it deep; it is an abyss, a bottomless one; there is no fathoming of it; the depths of are sin in it. (See Ps. 64:6.) And, seeing it is so deceitful, it should not be trusted in; a man should neither trust in his own heart, nor in another’s (Pro. 28:26; 25:19.)

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Tune in to the

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The Deceitful

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And desperately wicked; everything in it is wicked; the thoughts of it are evil; the imaginations of the thoughts are so; even every imagination, and that only, and always (Gen. 6:5). The affections are inordinate; the mind and conscience are defiled; the understanding darkened, so dark as to call evil good, and good evil; and the will obstinate and perverse. All manner of sin and wickedness is in it; it is the cage of every unclean bird, and the hold of every foul spirit; all sin is forged and framed in it; and all manner of evil comes out of it (Rev. 18:1; Matt. 15:19). Yea, it is wickedness itself (Ps. 5:9).

It is so even to desperation; it is incurably wicked, as it may be rendered; it is so without the grace of God, and blood of Christ: who can know it? Angels do not, Satan cannot; only the spirit of man can know the things of a man within him; though the natural man does not know the plague of his own heart; the Pharisee and perfectionist do not, or they would not say they were without sin; such rant arises from the ignorance of their own hearts; only a spiritual man knows his own heart, the plague of it, the deceitfulness and wickedness in it; and he does not know it all; God only knows it fully. (See I Cor. 2:11; I Kings 8:38; Ps. 19:12).



Belief and the

(Continued from page 181) ♦

with reference to justification belongs to the believer – **“whosoever believeth.”**

In our past two studies we have noticed the promises of God’s Word to the believer; finding out that the Bible indeed teaches that justification before God is completely and wholly a work of faith. It is a work of faith in that it is contingent upon the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, our Representative, who worked out a righteousness for us on the cross of Calvary. And now by a God given faith, we are justified before God – acquitted before His law by faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work.

There are those today who would add to the Word of God with reference to salvation in the sense of justification and say we have to do thus and though and this and that. But beloved, sinners are justified before God quickly, completely, and wholly by faith. For faith is a work and a gift of God to the individual sinner enabling him to see, to know and to believe on and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ who loved him and who died in his room and in his stead. For **“whosoever believeth”** ...again there are so many who use this phrase in John 3:16 and Revelation 22:17 that make it say that

whosoever believeth or will not believe will have eternal life – “whosoever” means everyone without exception. Oh no beloved! Every text like John 3:16... like Revelation 22:17 is very limited – limited in fact to the believer. The Bible promises nothing to the unbeliever in the sense of blessings and salvation.

So beloved we have found 14 things in the Bible thus far that belong only to the believer – such as in salvation, justification of faith and on and on we could go. Tonight let’s notice some further things that are ours by faith (those who have been brought to faith in Jesus Christ) – further blessings that they have which are by faith.

May I begin tonight by saying those who are saved are believers and they are those who believe with the heart. We found out that a fruit of the believer is justification or salvation. Now those who do in fact believe – believe with a heart to believe and of course this is in contrast to mental assent and mere mental belief in a historical Christ or in the historicity of the Bible. So beloved, those who are saved believe with the heart.

You recall the account in Acts chapter 8 with the Lord who spoke to Phillip to go down into Gaza. And you remember that how he joined himself to a chariot wherein an Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah 53. And he took the same Scriptures and preached unto him Jesus Christ. And as they went on their way they came to a creek of water and the Ethiopian said to Philip, now **“here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”** And Phillip said in verse 37, **“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.”** And this man said, **“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”** And as a result of that, he was baptized by Philip.

Now beloved, we find that in that Scripture from Isaiah 53, Philip had preached Christ unto the Ethiopian. And not only did he preach Christ, he preached also how those who were saved by Christ were to profess Christ in baptism. And thus, he followed through after the preaching of Phillip. But notice again, beloved, that a prerequisite to him being baptized in water was that he believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And that he not only believe mentally, but that **“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.”**

So beloved I do not want to minimize the mind with reference and knowledge of Christ. But that it is a fact as we all well know that we can with a mind – with mental assent – believe in the historic Christ. Or, we can believe what the Bible teaches about Christ. Thus we believe the Bible and therefore Christ is a fact and not a farce. I believed in Jesus Christ before I was saved, as far as believing that He was – that He was, as far as history was concerned. It revealed a character that lived by the name of

Christ Jesus who claimed to be the Son of God. Being raised in a missionary Baptist home made me believe that. I believed that! I believed that those who believed it were honest and had integrity and would not lie. I believe them to be right. And by virtue of their testimony, I believed in Jesus Christ. But my friend, I did not believe with the heart. But there came a time when I did believe with the heart. When God enabled me, by His grace to see my sins and see my need of a Savior, I was brought to see Christ Jesus and I saw – I believed for the first time in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. It was a heart belief. It came from within; for it had been worked within by the power of God’s Holy Spirit making the Gospel effectual.

For those who are saved believe with the heart. For we read, for example in Romans 10 and beginning in verse 8, **“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness”** (and the righteousness here is the righteousness of God that is accounted to the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ). So **“with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”**

So beloved, when one is truly converted and is a true believer; it is a heart belief. But mind belief only can be staggered. It can be changed. It can believe one day and disbelieve another. When one is made alive by the Spirit of God and the Gospel comes to them not in word only but in power, in the Holy Spirit, with much assurance, that is a heart belief and you can talk until you’re blue in the face and never convince them that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. My friend, that’s the difference between a heart belief and a mind belief only. One who has believed with a heart has believed with a mind. But you can believe with a mind and not believe with the heart. And the difference is, one who has believed with the heart will always believe. There will never be any wavering with reference to who Jesus Christ is. But those who believe only with the mind, they will waver and they will differ in their view with reference to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here comes one – he is a great orator! He is a great talker! He is knowledgeable and he leads them away because they believe only with the mind. I can remember many times prior to my conversion how that I met men who said that they didn’t believe in the Bible and they would put up some arguments and I could not argue with them. I didn’t know that they might not be right. I

knew what I believed. I thought what my father and mother believed – what other men and women who I believed and trusted in and knew to be honest – were right. But here was a man who seemed to have the evidence that they might be wrong. And I was led to believe at times, perhaps, could my father and could my mother...could that preacher have been wrong? Could these others be wrong? I want to tell you that since the time that I have been enabled to believe with the heart I have heard them speak and others deny but there was not one doubt in my mind as to who Jesus Christ was. He was my Lord and He was my Savior! He was real if they did not know He was!

Therefore, beloved, those who are saved are believers. But they are those who have been enabled to believe with the heart – there referring to their innermost being. It is the inner man that has been quickened and made alive by the Spirit of God and it is from there that we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And so beloved, those that are saved believe with the heart. You may not know what you want to know and certainly you do not. You may not know what you want to know about the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. But I want to tell you that if you have been saved by God’s grace, you know that He is the Savior of those who believe. You know that He (and no one else) is the Savior of sinners and that He is indeed your Savior. So those who are saved by faith have believed with the heart.

May I say beloved, to the believer the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God. For those who are enabled to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospel is the power of God. In Romans 1:15-16, Paul said, **“as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. 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. For therein [that is in the Gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”** Now notice, beloved, to the believer – for those who have been enabled to believe with the heart, they believe and know that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God.

Now may I suggest unto you, beloved, that the promise in that verse, Romans 1:16, is to the believer. The Gospel is the power of God unto **“every one that believeth.”** Now I ask a question many times: Is the Gospel the power of God unto the unbeliever? No my friend, it is not! For example, in I Corinthians 1:18, **“For the preaching of the cross”** (What is the preaching of the cross but the Gospel of Jesus Christ?)...**“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish [the unbelievers] foolishness;**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Please explain the meaning of Zechariah 14:16. - Tennessee

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When the battle of Armageddon is over, everyone that is still alive which came against Jerusalem will enter into the thousand year reign of Christ. These persons will be unsaved people from all the nations to rise up against Israel at that time.

The feast of Tabernacles will be observed during the worship of the King, and those who do not participate will be punished.

There is no reason to spiritualize the plain teaching of God's Holy Word.

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I believe Zechariah 14:16 is referring to the time of the thousand years... which we know as the "Millennial reign of Christ." **"And it shall come to pass..."** meaning it had not happened yet in Zechariah's day.

"That every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King..." I believe they are all those that are left alive (Gentile nations) that will be saved by God's grace that went up against Israel to destroy it. The rest that God does not save will be destroyed, **"And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth"** (Zech. 14:12). In his book "Elementary Eschatology" by Tom Ross (which is out of print, sad to say) he explains very well who will walk into the millennium alive.

These nations will be saved for the purpose of worshiping the King, the Lord of hosts, **"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house**

shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. 2:2).

I believe these nations will have representatives (not every single person) sent by each nation to go up every year and bow down to the King of Kings who will rule and judge them with a **"rod of iron."** **"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"** (Rev. 19:15). He will be the One and only universal King and there will be peace for a thousand years until Satan is once again loosed for a very brief time. Remember, Satan will, at this time, be chained in the bottomless pit, and have no influence on these nations, **"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season"** (Rev 20:1-3).

Merrill F. Unger (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, pg. 2060) has this to say concerning **"the feast of tabernacles"** and I quote **"The saved Gentiles will express their adoration of the LORD by observing the feast of tabernacles (Lev. 23:4-44), the only one of the seven Jewish festivals that is represented in this prophecy as being observed in the Kingdom age. The apparent reason is that it is the only one of the seven feasts of the LORD that will be unfulfilled typically at that time, and the only one that will be in the process of fulfillment by the Kingdom itself, and hence throughout the Kingdom age."** End of quote!

Much more could be said, and many more Scriptures given but we will leave it at that. For me this will be one of the most wonderful times for the saints of the Lord, whether you believe this position or not, for I will be dead and any disagreements will be brought to light and my place in all of this has already been decided and I praise the Lord that He did not leave it up to mankind, but that it was set in stone before the foundation of the world. God Bless!

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Zechariah 14:16 states: **"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."**

"And it shall come to pass" signifies that the prophecy or promise to follow will literally be fulfilled in the future. Whenever God specifically states that something shall come to pass we must take Him at His word.

"...That everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem..." indicates that there will be survivors of the Tribulation period who are saved and who enter into the Millennial Kingdom at the Judgment of the Nations (Matt. 25:31-46 cf. Prov. 2:21-22). The elect survivors of the Tribulation period are identified as the Lord's sheep. They will enter the Millennial Kingdom with their natural bodies, thus they will still possess a fleshly nature. They will also be capable of procreation. Their children will be born as sinners with an inherent depraved nature.

"...Shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts..." signifies that during the Millennial reign of Christ upon the earth, Jerusalem will be the capital city and the place where the throne of King Jesus resides (Isa. 24:23; Jer. 3:17-18; 25:5-6). Jerusalem will be at the center of Millennial worship. This passage indicates that the inhabitants of the earth will be responsible to worship and pay homage to King Jesus by making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem at least once a year. There are at least two Psalms that describe the responsibility of the inhabitants of the earth to worship the Lord during the Millennial reign (Psa. 67 and 72). Even those born with a fleshly nature during the Millennial reign of Christ will be responsible to pay homage to the King. If they fail to obey the command, the context of Zechariah 14 indicates that they will be judged for their rebellion (14:17-19).

"...And to keep the feast of tabernacles..." seems to indicate that some aspects of Jewish worship will be restored and practiced during the Millennial reign of Christ. The feast of tabernacles was celebrated as a reminder of Israel's redemption and deliverance from Egyptian bondage. They were set free from the bondage of Egypt

and the dominion of Pharaoh. By way of application, all of God's elect may celebrate their deliverance from the bondage of sin and dominion of Satan through faith in the redeeming blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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I love to read the last few chapters of the book of Zechariah! I am no great interpreter of prophecy, but Zechariah gives a clear detailing of the last times that we can all get a blessing from. Chapter 12 begins with the restoration of the nation of Israel (in 1948 AD) and brings us through the Six Day War (1967 AD) until the time of the Rapture (Imminent AD). Chapter 13 continues the narrative of a torn, secular Israel learning and seeing the Messiah finally through the last times and into the Great Tribulation, where one-third of the Israelis will become God's children of Israel, yet again.

Chapter 14 begins with the last hours of the time of Jacob's trouble when the second advent of the Lord will occur at the end of the seven years Great Tribulation where the Blessed Son of God will put His foot down on the Mount of Olives and deliver the chosen nation in the Battle of Armageddon, as Revelation 19 is fulfilled with the saints of God coming with Him in His power and great glory! What a day that will be...! Selah! Think about it! Christ will finish off the enemies of Jerusalem with the sword of His mouth and a plague will devour them in an awful manner, similar to a nuclear holocaust, except that the city will be safely inhabited!

This leads us to our text passage, which commences the Millennial reign of the King of kings and LORD of lords! Zechariah 14:16-19- **"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Since "God so loved the world" (John 3:16), why does He tell us "Love not the world" (1 John 2:15)?

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Many of Baptists have for years showed that the first part of this verse of Scripture (John 3:16) "For God so loved the world" is not referring to all (every single person) but mainly to the sinful Gentiles first, and some Jews (John 1:11) that were chosen in Him.

"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles" (Matt. 12:18).

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4).

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him" (James 2:5)?

If you do not believe in Unconditional Election and Particular Redemption (Limited Atonement) do not read any further. God does not "LOVE" all of mankind but He loves His own.

"The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (Ps. 5:5).

"God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day" (Ps. 7:11).

"The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Pro. 15:29).

A thorough study of the first three chapters of Ephesians will reveal this truth, that God did not love nor did Christ die for every single man, woman, and child that walked/walks upon the face of the earth. But what God did do is love His own, those He chose, elected, predestinated, sanctified, and justified.

"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3).

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

It says He loved "US," those whom He chose, "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). The only ones the Father gave are His elect, no one else.

So if God hates all workers of iniquity then it would only make sense we should not "LOVE" the world. Verse 16 tells why we should not "LOVE" the world, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16). Paul said in Ephesians 2:3, "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Not only are we not to "LOVE" the world but Paul also said, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22).

What is in our world, sex and more sex, nakedness, sodomy, drunkenness, drugs, lust, evil, wickedness, haters of God, haters of Christ? "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17). God Bless!

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This is an excellent question that clearly reveals that the word "world" must be interpreted in light of its context. John 3:16 would have been a revolutionary statement to the Jews that heard it. The Jews thought they were exclusively the elect of God. They did not recognize the idea that God would extend His grace and love to heathen Gentiles. John 3:16 declares: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This verse indicates that God loves the world of believers that would include His elect among Jews as well as Gentiles. God has His elect scattered all over the world who will in time believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ because they have been born again by the quickening power of the Holy

Spirit (John 3:3-5). God's redemptive purpose extends to all the nations of the world, not just to the nation of Israel. Revelation 5:9 states: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." God's elect will hail from all nations. God does not love every man in the world without exception (Psa. 5:5-6; 7:11-12; 9:16-17; Rom. 9:13), nor does Christ's work of redemption extend to every man. There is a world of believers who are God's elect. There is also a world of unbelievers who are not God's elect. The world of the elect and non-elect are revealed in the High Priestly prayer of Christ: "I pray for them (the world of the elect who in time will be given saving faith); I pray not for the world (the world of the non elect who never are brought to saving faith), but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." The ones the Father gave the Son before the world began (Eph. 1:4-5; II Thess. 2:13; II Tim. 1:9) to redeem are those who will be given eternal life: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2).

The "world" that God's children are not to love is the system of ungodliness that is opposed to God's truth, His law, and His commandments. This "world" lies in wickedness and the Wicked One, Satan (1 John 5:18-20). This "world" system is governed by "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" which is not of the Father. This is a "world" that believers are to be separate from (II Cor. 6:14-18). God's elect must not be found in agreement or friendship with a world system that promotes ungodliness, rebellion, hatred, and sin (James 4:4). God's elect are in the world, but we are not to be of the world or in agreement with its principles that oppose God (Rom. 12:1-3).

Thus, it is obvious that the word "world" does not have a uniform meaning in every passage of Scripture, but must be interpreted and understood in light of its context and relationship to other passages where it is used. Perhaps the best explanation I have ever found of the usage, distinctions, and meanings of the word "world" in Scripture is in A.W. Pink's book "The Sovereignty of God." Under Appendix III entitled "The Meaning of 'Kosmos' in John 3:16", Pink gives a powerful exposition. The following is an excerpt from page 312: "Thus it will be seen that 'kosmos' has at least seven clearly defined different meanings in the New Testament. It may be asked, Has then God used a word thus to confuse and confound those who read the Scriptures? We answer, No! nor has He written His Word for lazy people who are too dillitry, or too busy with the

things of this world, or, like Martha, so much occupied with 'serving,' they have no time and no heart to 'search' and 'study' Holy writ! Should it be asked further, But how is a searcher of the Scriptures to know which of the above meanings the term 'world' has in any given passage? the answer is: This may be ascertained by a careful study of the context, by diligently noting what is predicated of 'the world' in each passage, and by prayerfully consulting other parallel passages to the one being studied."

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God so loved His elect He gave His only begotten Son. In the continuity of God's Holy Word Jesus only died for those that God gave Him to die for, Jews and Gentiles.

God has told us to not love the world because of what the world contains such as "the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God, and are obstacles to the cause of Christ." (Greek lexicon) If you love these more than Holiness, then the love of the Father is not in you. I am thankful for the love of God that dwells within the elect.

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John 3:16 is such a wonderful promise of God's particular love toward those that "believeth in him"! What most folk do not stop and see here is how the love of God is LIMITED by that little word "so." Twice already in this third chapter of John it has been used (vs.8, 14) and it does not change in verse 16. It means "God so <in this manner> loved the world..." What manner, the beloved reader may ask? It truly is AWESOME! The manner in "...that He gave His only begotten Son..."! Selah! Think about it!

Once we see that John 3:16 is a verse that attests to the limited atonement of the blood of Jesus Christ, (God loved the world in such a way that He made it possible for those that believe should not perish) it makes the rest of the Biblical

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Forum #1

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shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

What an awesome thing it is- to meditate and study Scripture on the 1000 year literal fulfillment of all of the promises that God has given His people down through the history of this earth!

1) All of the promises that Abraham received concerning the land of the Middle East being given to his seed will come to pass!

2) The throne promised David and the tribe of Judah will be set up in Jerusalem and Mount Zion will ring with the proper hallelujah's and glory to God in the highest!

3) Every promise found in the prophets (primarily Ezekiel, Isaiah, etc) concerning the restoration of Temple worship will also be fulfilled at this time. That is where our text is showing that all those that have come through the Great Tribulation will be the recipients of a glorious one world government and one world religion headed by the Creator of this universe...!

Revelation 5:9 says that God will save a very diverse people: **"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"** So while I believe that the horrible time of the Great Tribulation, culminating in the Battle of Armageddon, will eventually purge every lost person, so that only God's people will enter the Millennial Reign, every nation will still be represented by the grace of God! (Abortion and child death rates will account for many darkened nations that never saw the light of the gospel delivered by man's mouth.)

The Feast of the Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34-43) is appropriately mentioned in Zechariah's account of the Millennial Reign. No more pilgrimages by God's people for the Passover Feast or the Day of Atonement! NO! Those Israeli feasts have been fulfilled and completed, but this one is not fulfilled UNTIL this great day! Study John 7:37-8:12 and the surrounding passages to see that the I AM the Living Water and Light of the world both point to their ultimate fulfillment as the Feast of the Tabernacles brings the God of Israel into the midst of HIS people to tabernacle (or dwell) among them forever and ever! (Rev. 21:3, 23).

MATTHEW STEPP



Forum #2

(Continued from page 191) ♦

context much easier to understand. There are simply no statements of indiscriminate love in the ENTIRE Bible! God loves and has determined to **"...save HIS PEOPLE from their sins"** in Matthew 1:21; **"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to US-WARD, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"** (II Peter 3:9) (tms emphasis in CAPS).

The love that God has is for a particular people and He is not willing that any of the absolutely known elect will ever perish! They most certainly will believe in Christ and repent from their sins, as surely as John the Baptist was foreordained to be a prophet before he was even born! Is God able? Certainly the Scriptures show no doubt of God's predestinating will...! Selah! Think about it!

This indeed is the most important fact in understanding the seeming contradiction in terms in the admonition from God to **"Love not the WORLD, neither the things that are in the WORLD. If any man love the WORLD, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the WORLD, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the WORLD. And the WORLD passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."** (I John 2:15-17), (tms- emphasis in CAPS). Take some time to understand the six times the word **"world"** is used in this one passage three different ways! First of the "world system of values", then of the "Earth", then thirdly it speaks of "all humanity minus the believers"! Just in this short passage, much less the entirety of Scripture!

In his pamphlet *The Meaning of Kosmos*, Arthur Pink delineates seven distinct and different usages of the Greek word "kosmos" in Scripture and correctly declares that the meaning MUST be determined by the passage's context. Let us open up our Bible and see for ourselves.

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the WORLD (earth) was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the WORLD (humanity): thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. ...I pray for them: I pray not for the WORLD (humanity minus believers, or explicitly, the reprobate), but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:5-6, 9), (emphasis in CAPS & definition-tms).

Any serious student can find through

a simple study that they cannot rigidly hold this one Greek word to one simple meaning. **"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged"** (Rom. 3:3-4). We must rightly divide the Word of God and the truth will not be hard to find. The Bible is so simple that even a child can have a definite understanding of it, but it also is so deep that many a soul has drowned in its remarkably, infinite depths! Selah! Think about it!

Christ, Himself tells us in John 7:24, **"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."** There will be many that will wrest with the Word of God, but it will be only to their destruction (II Pet.3:16). **"Righteous judgment"** of the Scriptures will reveal that God loves Jacob, but hates Esau. God will doubtlessly and incontrovertibly save His beloved sheep, and the despised reprobate goats will be sentenced by the wrath of God to an eternal torment of Holy justice. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Belief and the

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but unto us which are saved it [the preaching of the cross or the Gospel] **is the power of God."**

Now beloved, I do not want to minimize the Gospel, nor do I want to leave an impression that the Gospel is unimportant. I do trust before I finish I will have told you that the Gospel is a must in order for sinners to be saved – in order for them to be saved in the sense of justification and have righteousness imputed to them from Almighty God. Therefore beloved the Gospel is the power of God – however, unto the believer. That verse does not say that the Gospel of itself has power to make believers! What it does say is that it is the power of God unto believers. This verse of Scripture presupposes a believer.

Now my friends, I do not believe that sinners are saved apart from the Gospel! For **"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."** Salvation (in the sense of judicial justification before God) is by faith in Jesus Christ and is imputed when one believes. But my friends, the Gospel of itself and by itself has no power to make believers. Oh beloved, the Gospel is important. Because **"how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how, shall [of course] they preach, except they be sent?"** And if they are sent

then they are sent to preach repentance and remission of sins through the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But at the same time beloved, the Gospel (while it is not within itself the power) has within itself the power to make believers. It is the means to faith. Without the Gospel there can be no faith. But may I suggest beloved that the power for faith is in the effectual call of the Holy Spirit of God. Unless the Gospel of Jesus Christ is accompanied with the life giving Spirit of God, the Gospel preached is foolishness. But my friend, when the Gospel is accompanied with the invincible and efficacious work of the Spirit of God, it is effectual and produces believers who are justified by their faith in Jesus Christ.

Now we see then that apart from regeneration, justification is an impossibility. One is not saved without justification. But, without regeneration justification is an impossibility. And in the effectual call of God there are both aspects of salvation – spiritual life and judicial life and we have them both in the effectual call of the Word and the Spirit.

When we talk about the effectual call of God, we are talking about an invincible work – a work of God that really works bringing faith to the individual – the Holy Spirit taking the Word of God. Let me, for example, give you an analogy from the Scripture what I mean – that the Gospel by itself does not have power to make believers. It is the means to faith. But the power for faith is in the work of the Holy Spirit. Now for example, Paul said in I Corinthians 1:18, **"the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."** Now notice that the Gospel is preached indiscriminately. That is we do not select God's elect. The church nowhere is to select the crowd that it is to preach to. But we are commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature. But my friends the preaching of the Gospel for some is mere foolishness. Now why is it foolishness to one while it becomes the power of God to others? I want to tell you my friends that the thing that makes the difference is the work of the Holy Spirit of God! He works sovereignly! No one can dictate to Him where He is going to work, when He is going to work, or on whom He is going to work.

My friends, this says in short that when one is saved it is the work of God; not the work of the preacher; not the work of the program; not the work of anyone else. But it is the work of God. And I am not minimizing the Gospel! But notice now if you will, for example, in that same context, Paul says **"we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews the stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."** Now my friends, showing

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you that the Gospel alone preached in Word only does not have power to give faith – does not have power for faith. It is the means to faith! No one will ever believe without the Gospel! But at the same time it has no power within itself to make believers. For example we said “we preach Christ to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greek foolishness.” We preach it indiscriminately – to Jew and Gentile alike. But to one it is foolishness and to the other it is a stumbling block. **“But to them which are called”...“but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”** Now what made the difference? The calling... The call made the difference.

The Gospel is preached indiscriminately to everyone but the Gospel of itself, unaccompanied by the call of the Spirit, will be sheer foolishness. On the one hand, to the unbeliever it will be a stumbling block. But to those who are called...who are called by the Spirit, the Gospel becomes the power of God and the wisdom of God. It becomes their means for faith. My friends it reveals Christ in the Gospel and they have now grounds for faith. It is preached that Christ died, was buried and rose again and that sinners are saved by faith in Him. They hear that. They are enabled to believe on Him. And the Gospel becomes the means of their faith by which they are justified. But the power for that faith was in the call of the Spirit of God.

Paul said, for example, in I Thessalonians 1:4-5 he said **“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”** How? **“For our gospel came not unto you in word only.”** In short, the Gospel comes to many in word only. But it came to you **“in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.”** Beloved it was accompanied by a work of the Spirit of God and the result was faith in Christ and salvation thereby. So beloved to the believer and to the believer only is the Gospel the power of God unto salvation – to the believer only! The believer only is justified before God. Therefore beloved it must be to the believer only that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

And so let's never...never miss this point because here oftentimes many miss the mark and become rank Arminians in their Theology with reference to salvation. My friends, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit taking the Gospel and making it effectual, the preaching of the Gospel is in Word only. It doesn't mean we are not to preach it for I don't know and you don't know and we don't know when it's going to be made effectual for the salvation of the sinner and when

it isn't. That's God's work and we can't do God's work! It is our work to preach the Gospel indiscriminately. But you remember that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to believers only... believers only! Now my friends, I tell you that believers have something. They have something that the world knows nothing about...the world of unbelievers.

Thirdly, the believer only can please God. The believer only can please the Lord. Now I know this rubs the grain the wrong way many times for we have the idea that all men can in some degree, in some way, please the Lord. Now my friend, when an individual pleases the Lord, that means that the individual is going to be blessed by the Lord for the act that he does. And it is proven and an affirmation that we will receive blessings. But my friends the Bible declares in Hebrews 11:6 that one must believe in order to please God. For the Bible says, **“without faith it is impossible to please. . .[God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”** Who is it that seeks the Lord? Well the first part of the verse tells us – why it's believers! **“Without faith it is impossible to please. . .[God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is.”** One will never come to God unless he believes that God **“is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”**

My friends, there are those who say “I sought the Lord.” I want to tell you the night of my conversion, I don't know what the term for it is but as far as I knew, I was seeking the Lord. I really was! I wanted to be saved. I wanted to be saved more than anything in the world. I had a fear of death and Hell. And I was, in fact, seeking the Lord...in my way. But let me tell you, that was the result of having been sought and found of God. That was the result of having been sought out by the Holy Spirit and found of His Gospel. My friend, the Lord had found the one who sought Him – but, not until He first sought us.

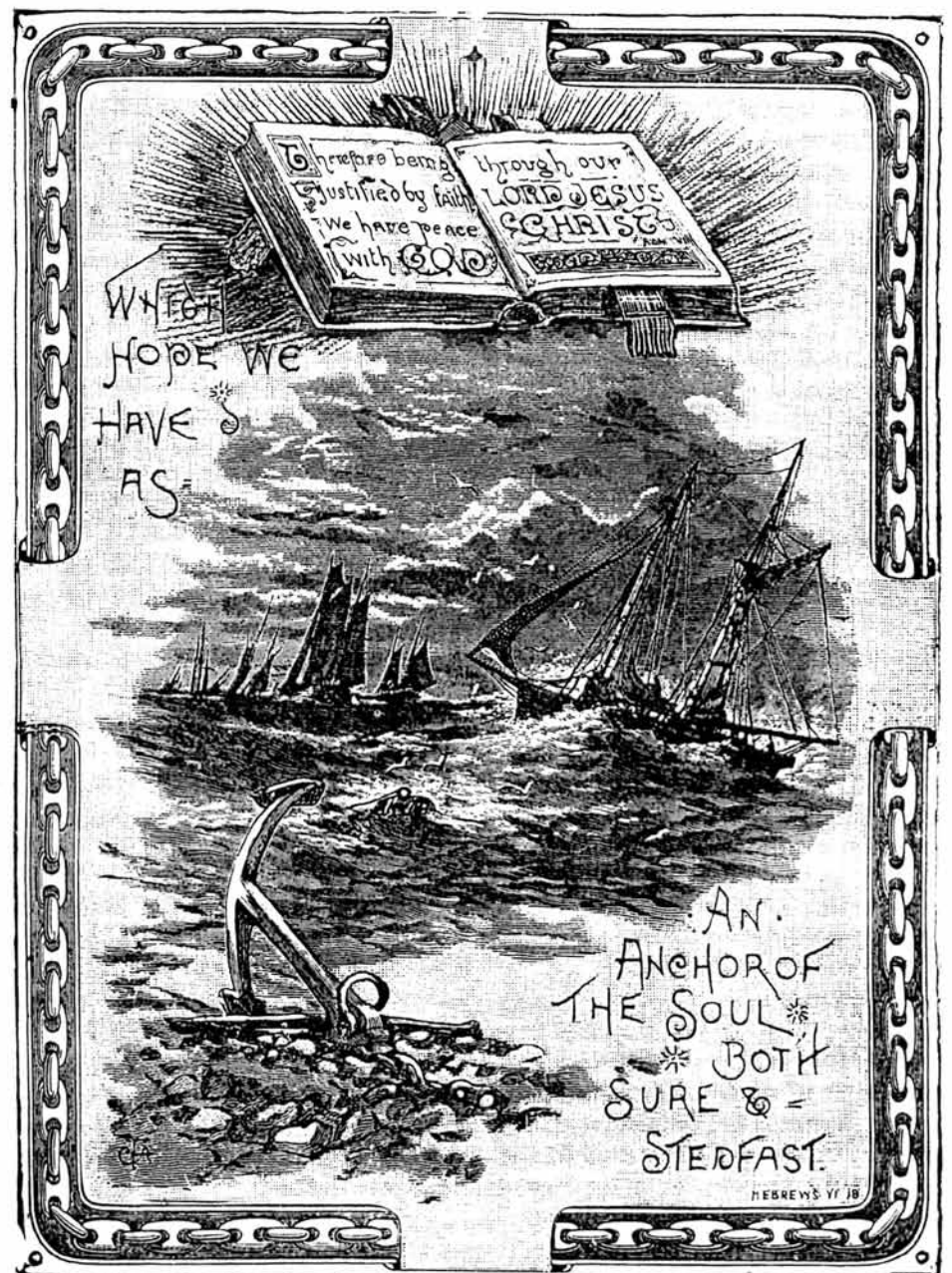
So beloved we have here, for example, in Luke 14 that the table was spread which is indicative of the Gospel feast – that we should preach unto all men indiscriminately and the Gospel of peace has been spread. **“Go out”** he says “and invite them to come.” Well the Gospel does invite men to come and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ – to eat and to come and buy without money and without price. The Gospel feast is spread and free. Come eat and drink! My friends, the Gospel does that and the Gospel invites sinners to come. But my friends, they all began to make excuses. The Bible says they all began to make excuses. And finally the Lord of the supper said to his servant, “you go out unto the lanes and the city and the highways and the hedges and you compel

them to come in that mine house may be filled.” My friends, the Gospel (though it is preached indiscriminately by the Lord's people in His churches) in essence says come to Christ – eat and drink; be hungry no more and thirst no more. It's full and free. It is without money and it's without price. But my friends, the Gospel, unattended by the Spirit of God will go unheeded. Men will make excuses. Men will make excuses. But when the Spirit of our God, which is the Holy Spirit, goes out and compels men to come, they will come! And when they come to Christ, they are believers. They are believers! And they will please God in their coming and they who come to Him will not be cast out.

So beloved, only believers please God. And it pleases the Lord for one to come to the Lord Jesus Christ. And coming to Christ is synonymous with believing on Him or trusting in Him. So beloved, only the believer can please God. The unbeliever in all that he or she does or says can in no wise please the Lord. That only belongs to the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone can please Almighty God.

Let me say further that only true believers know who Christ really is. Only true believers know who Christ really is! As I said a moment ago, I cannot remember a day when I did not believe that Jesus Christ was. So, oftentimes I would argue with many that didn't believe but I wondered if they might not be right and another be wrong. But my friends, those who have been truly brought by the Holy Spirit and the Gospel of Jesus Christ; my friends, they only know who He is. No one else does. You did not know who Christ was before you were enabled to believe on Him and come to Him. Until you were brought to Him, you did not know who He was. You knew the name Christ. You knew the name Jesus. You knew that they said He was the Son of God. You knew that they said this and that about Him. But my friends, you...when you were brought to know Him...knew exactly who He was. No one had to tell you. The Holy Spirit of God through the Gospel introduced you to the One Who loved you, Who died for you, Who was dead and rose again.

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THE SURE AND STEADFAST ANCHOR.

Belief and the

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My friends, the night I left Old Hurricane Missionary Baptist Church meetinghouse, no one had to tell me who Jesus Christ was. He was my savior! I knew that! I knew that! I knew that He died in my room and stead! I knew that He was alive! I knew that He was my Lord and He was my Savior! I couldn't tell you much else but I knew that. Only true believers know who Jesus Christ really is. Others talk about Him. Others lecture about Him. Others log His life. Others talk about the virtues of Jesus Christ. But only one who has been brought to believe on Christ really knows who He is.

In John chapter 6, you will recall in verse 67 Jesus looked to those 12 after others – all others – had gone away and He said, **“Will you also go away?”** Peter said **“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”** Look what he said in verse 69. Notice now, **“And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”** My friends, Peter knew who Jesus Christ was. And at least 10 others of those apostles knew who Jesus Christ was. Who is it that knows who Christ is? We believe and are sure. My friend, it's the believer only – one who has been brought to faith in Jesus Christ as his or her personal savior; only they know who He is. Only they are sure who He is.

Before my conversion it was second hand knowledge. I said He is because they said He is. But after the Lord revealed Himself to me as my Lord and Savior, I can say I believe and I am sure that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God.

I would like for you to remember in John chapter 4, the woman had met the Lord at the well – Jacob's well. She went back into the city and told the men “there was a man who told me everything that I ever did.” **“Is not this the Christ?”** And the Bible reveals there how they believed on Him because of the sayings of the woman. But they remained there for three days and preached – Jesus did. And then the inhabitants of that city said to the woman, **“Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”** First they believed because somebody else said it. But now we don't believe in the Lord because you said it, we believe now because we have seen and heard it and believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world! So beloved, only true believers know who Jesus Christ really is. Others write about Him; talk about Him; even people sing about Him. But only true believers know who He is.

May I confess further as we think about the blessings that believers have,

that only believers receive answers to their prayers. Only a true believer can receive answers to prayer. In Matthew 21:22 Jesus said **“all things”...“all things, whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”** To believers, He said, if you will just keep on believing that whatever you ask in my name ye shall receive. Who is it that receives answers to prayer? It is only a believer.

Now not every believer who has been justified by faith in Jesus Christ gets everything that he asks for. I don't want you to get that impression. Oftentimes we as true believers ask amiss and we do not receive because we ask amiss. We have to confess with the Bible that oftentimes we know not what to pray for as we ought. And so beloved it's not that we receive everything that we ask for. But those who do receive what they ask for are believers only. In other words, only true believers receive what they ask for. And so, beloved, what a wonderful time that we have as believers that we can in fact ask of our Lord what we will and receive of Him, if we ask in accordance to His divine will.

And let's see further – to the believer all things are possible. All things are possible! Our Lord said in Mark 9:23 to a father who was very distraught because of the physical condition of his son; Jesus said unto him when he said Lord, heal my son. Jesus said unto him **“If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”** **“If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth”** even the welfare and health of your son. And of course, the son was made whole in that the Lord cast out the demon. For those who believe... and what did his father say? **“Lord, I [do] believe!”** **“Lord, I [do] believe! help thou mine unbelief.”**

My friend, that does not mean that one believes with a perfect heart – that is to the point that there is never doubt or wavering. It isn't to the point that we believe as we ought. We believe to the saving of our soul and we believe to justification but oftentimes those who have been justified by the work of Jesus Christ are unbelievers. Oftentimes I know it is so – that I don't lay a hold of that, and believe with the heart and the mind the rest of it. I do not find it without the help of the grace of God. So beloved, like this man, that I do believe – **“help thou mine unbelief.”** That should be the hope of every one of us – that we do believe and help thou our unbelief. We have unbelief many times as the children of God. But to the believer, all things are possible.

Finally tonight, the believer and the believer only is admonished to continue in good works – the believer only! The unbeliever is never admonished to work for the Lord. The unbeliever is never admonished to continue in a work because he is never convinced. He may

be a Sunday school teacher. He may be a Baptist preacher. She may be headed for sisterhood but she has never been convinced of the work of the Lord until he or she has become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so beloved, the believer only is admonished to continue in good works. **“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works”** (Titus 3:8). This is good and acceptable in the sight of God. And so beloved, notice if you will, **“These things are good and profitable unto men.”** Those that have believed in God and continue in good works are profitable. My good works will renown in the glory of the Lord here and will also renown to our rewards at the Judgment Seat of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And so beloved, tonight there are many innumerable blessings promised in the Word of God for those who believe – **“whosoever believeth.”** My friends, not one word is used to one who has not been brought to believe of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Now we have and may lay hold by faith. And may we ask for grace and faith that we truly might lay hold of the Word of God with the grounds for faith and belief in God's Word. Like Abraham, may we believe God's Word. God said to Abraham through thy son Isaac all the earth or should I say through thy seed in Isaac, through Isaac shall thy

seed be called and shall be numbered as all the stars of heaven. And yet God said, Abraham, take thy only son Isaac upon the mountain and therefore offer him as a sacrifice to me. Now wait a minute, Lord. You said in Isaac I would be blessed. But, because God said it Abraham believed it. And therefore he set out to do exactly what the Lord said to do. Now God has said to Abraham that I will give you a Seed that comes from thine own body and through that Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And therefore God said to Abraham take thy son, thy only son Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice unto me. And Abraham believed God. He believed it when God told him that through Isaac he would be blessed. He believed God! Abraham did not know what the Lord was going to do. But he did believe the Word of the Lord. What God says, you and I can depend upon it too!

May God give us grace to walk like it... to talk like it...and act like it. If God said it, then I have to believe it, too. So Lord, help me to believe that I might, like my father Abraham according to the faith, make my faith perfect by thy Word.

(Editors note: This sermon was transcribed verbatim from a recorded sermon of the late Elder Elvis Gregory. Every attempt was made to retain the actual words spoken by Brother Elvis on this wonderful subject).



- A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS -

By Timothy Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

Chapter Twenty – Laws of Separation: the Penalty of Sin

Whereas the previous two chapters have described various sanctifying laws, in obedience to which the children of Israel would distinguish themselves from the ungodly nations of the world and obtain divine blessings, this chapter sets forth the penalties and punishments of disobedience in regard to those same laws. Anything which is contrary to the teaching of the Word of God is sin. **“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law”** (1 John 3:4). You cannot be saved by keeping the law because you cannot keep the law. The law, nevertheless, is holy, just, and good, every ordinance an instance of God's wisdom and goodness, and every disobedience an evidence of your own sinfulness. The law sets forth two immutable truths: (1) all are guilty sinners before God; and (2) the wages of sin is death (Rom. 3:19-23; 6:23; James 2:10-11). We who profess faith in Jesus Christ cannot think to inherit the blessings of God as long as we continue in sin. Where the commandments of God are concerned, there is joy and blessing



for the child of God in the keeping of them (John 13:17; 14:21-23).

Chapter Outline

i. The penalty for idolatrous practices: vs. 1-5

ii. The penalty

for heathen spiritism: vs. 6

iii. Sanctification commanded and the means thereto revealed: vs. 7,8

iv. The penalty for cursing parents: vs. 9

v. The penalty for unlawful marriages and lusts: vs. 10-21

vi. God's character and covenant the motive for sanctification: vs. 22-26

vii. The penalty against heathen spiritists: vs. 27

I. VERSES ONE THROUGH SIX.

God here commands Moses to revisit some laws already given, and add to them the punishment which would follow disobedience to those laws. **“Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel . . .”** People of this day and hour are fond of hearing only new things; and yet we often stand in need of hearing the same truths again and again, until they have become perfected in us. Many of you who are

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saved did not believe the gospel the very first time you heard the gospel preached; but thanks be to God you heard it again, and God gave you the gift of faith. We can be sure that the things which God repeats are for our benefit, and we have need of hearing them again and earnestly attending to them. God now reminds the children of Israel concerning the warning against sacrificing to the gods of the heathen and worshipping according to heathen practices. **“Whosoever he be . . . that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death.”** A particular form of idolatry is here referred to, which was to be considered a capital crime. In the worship of this heathen god, parents would cause their children to be dedicated or sacrificed to this false god by passing between burning fires. This is a sin which disregards the true God of heaven and earth, who alone is to be worshipped, as well as the life which God gives and the order He establishes for that life (Eph. 6:4).

The sin here described provoked the very wrath of Almighty God, as does all sin. **“And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people.”** People make a mock at sin and make light of sin; but sin is the reason Jesus went to the cross, where He endured the wrath of God against sin in the place of guilty, vile, and helpless sinners such as you and me (I Tim. 1:15; I Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Rom. 1:18; 2:1-12, 16). God’s wrath is real, and everyone who is in unbelief and has not come to Jesus Christ for salvation and the forgiveness of sins is under God’s wrath (John 3:18, 36; 8:24; Luke 13:1-5). God will deal with sinners Himself.

Sin is defiling. **“He hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.”** Sin is a disrespecting and dishonoring act toward God, who is utterly holy. When someone who professes to be a child of God sins willfully, worships contrary to God’s commands and instructions, and disregards God’s will for his or her life, that person is guilty of profaning God’s name (I Cor. 3:16-17; Heb. 10:23-31). Church members who do not worship God aright in spirit and in truth, do not worship God faithfully, and forsake the services of His house are guilty of defiling God’s sanctuary and profaning His name. If we come into His house hypocritically, then we, too, have defiled His sanctuary and profaned His name. If you are saved, you ought to serve and worship God according to the teachings of His Word.

God’s people are not to look lightly upon sin or have a part in sin. We are not to allow or condone sin. Many in churches today look upon sin in the

wrong perspective. Sin spreads and brings ruin to as many as it touches. Many want to ignore sin, and **“hide their eyes from”** those who are guilty of continually following after sin (I Cor. 5:1-2, 6-7, 13; Ps. 97:10). The fear and love of God is inseparably intertwined with the abhorrence and hatred of sin. There is a difference between a person who falls into a sin through weakness and a person who follows after and continues in sin (Gal. 6:1; II Thess. 3:6, 11-15). Whether we follow God’s teachings and commandments regarding sin or not, God will deal with sinners. Those who go after the ways of the world are said to **“go a whoring after”** them, because they have left Him who was their first love, the true and living God (James 4:4).

A similar penalty is added to a second particular class of sin, that of turning **“after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards.”** This refers to those who profess and pretend to have communication with the dead, and with spirits (such as demons and angels), and with animals, and thereby claim to be able to tell the future and personal fortunes and give supernatural guidance to private persons. Many similar things are found even in the world today, and in modern society. All such things, whether astrology and the reading of horoscopes, or psychic readings, or tarot card reading, or many other similar things, all come of demon worship and are a reliance on some power or powers other than that of the true and living God (I Sam. 28:4-8). Many people say that such things can be done as “harmless fun”; but sin is never harmless (Acts 19:18-20). Those who are saved ought to have done with the ways of the world.

II. VERSES SEVEN AND EIGHT.

Here is the essence of all the regulations, restrictions, and injunctions being given to Israel. **“Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God.”** The worship of God and the lives of His people are to be in agreement with God’s character and the essential quality of His Person and Being. The gods of the heathen were like the heathen, debauched and unholy, which is only fitting seeing they were the creation of the imaginations of depraved and sinful men. Israel was to be sanctified, set apart, from all false and unholy ways, set apart unto their God and Saviour and King, JEHOVAH.

“And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you.” God’s statutes are that which cause us to be sanctified, set apart from sin and falsehood to God and the truth. The teachings of God’s Word have a sanctifying effect in the lives of those who both believe them and obey them (John 15:3; Eph. 5:25-27). God’s Word will cause you to be different, to think differently, to behave differently, to live differently, and to talk differently than

you did before God revealed Himself and the truths of His Word unto you. The rule of God today is still that His people whom He has saved (as He saved Israel from Egypt by His own working and power) keep His statutes and do them (James 1:22; Rev. 22:14). Sanctification is the work of God in the life of one who is His child (I Thess. 5:23; Phil. 1:6).

III. VERSES NINE THROUGH TWENTY-ONE.

God now delivers to Moses the punishment associated with various sins against God’s regulations for home, family, chastity, and purity. **“For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death.”** God had previously commanded, **“Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father”** (Lev. 19:3). This was to be considered a capital crime. How much care God takes in His precepts for the home, and how little care do professing “Christians” take for their homes today spiritually speaking (Matt. 15:4-9; II Tim. 3:1-2)! The disregarding of parents that is prevalent in society stems from the disregarding of God that is in the hearts of men, women, boys, and girls.

Various crimes of marital and sexual impurity are now named and their punishments given. These had previously been forbidden (Lev. 18:3, 6, 24-25). First is given the punishment for adultery. **“The adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”** This sin is a disregarding and casting aside of God’s law of marriage and the design for which God made man and woman (Matt. 19:4-6, 9; Prov. 5:15-23; 6:27-29). Have you ever wondered why the scribes and Pharisees only brought the woman taken in adultery to Jesus, and not the man? Their intention was not to uphold the law of God, but to have a charge with which to accuse Jesus (John 8:1-11). Jesus wrote upon the ground before and after He spoke to the Pharisees, showing that He who wrote the law knows the sins of all men, and shall judge all men without respect of persons. He ceased writing on the ground with His finger before He spoke to the woman and released her from the guilt and penalty of her sins. The law condemns; but Christ, who fulfilled the law, **“is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth”** (Rom. 10:4). **“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”** (Acts 13:39).

Unlawful relationships and their punishments are next described. The children of Israel were not to marry or have carnal relationships with a **“father’s wife,” “daughter in law,” “a wife and her mother,”** one’s own **“sister,”** aunt, or **“brother’s wife.”** All such affairs involving those who were **“near kin”** were punishable by death. These were the practices of the idolatrous heathen,

and were not to be known among the people whom God had redeemed and given His covenant. In certain cases those who committed such were to be stoned with stones, and in some cases they were stoned and then **“burnt with fire.”** Such was to show the awfulness of sin and the sure penalty of sin before a just and holy God. In each case, all participants in the illicit affair were to **“be put to death,”** and of them it is said, **“their blood shall be upon them,”** indicating their guilt and their forfeiture of life through disobedience toward God (Ezek. 18:4).

Other sins mentioned with their associated penalties are the sins of bestiality, homosexuality, and lying with a woman in the time of her sickness. Such things are committed even today, and are allowed, condoned, and glorified in various parts of society. That such is the case is an evident token of the spiritual deadness of all human beings outside of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:32). To say that something is wrong and is against knowledge and is contrary to the will of God is not being judgmental, no matter what any may say. We are to speak the truth in love, and love **“rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth”** (I Cor. 13:6). People do not want their sins being called SIN; but changing the name of sin does not change the nature of sin or the ruinous effects of sin upon individuals and society. Sin comes from the depraved lusts that are in the sin-darkened hearts of men, women, boys, and girls (James 1:13-15). People can try to blame God by saying, “God made me this way,” but the fault lies within their own hearts, where their love for sin lives and grows. Yours and mine is not to punish lost sinners. **“But them that are without God judgeth”** (I Cor. 5:13), (Luke 9:51-56; I Cor. 6:9-11). Christ saves any sinner who believes with all his or her heart that Jesus is the Son of God, turning from sin and unbelief to God and the truth.

IV. VERSES TWENTY-TWO THROUGH TWENTY-FOUR.

“Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out.” In order that they might enjoy the blessings which God had promised them in covenant relationship, the children of Israel were to keep the commandments of the Lord their God. God’s statutes are His laws governing life, and His judgments are His estimations and values and authoritative determinations. Having the statutes and judgments of God was a blessing not known to any nation apart from Israel. These divine regulations were to govern them in the land to which God was bringing them, which He had promised to their fathers. Disobedience on the part of the children

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of Israel meant disinheritance from the blessings of the covenant, as the land of promise. **“And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.”** (See also Deut. 9:4-5) The inhabitants of the land of Canaan were abhorred by God because of their sinfulness. **“God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day”** (Ps. 7:11). **“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people”** (Prov. 14:34). The ways of the world may be prevalent, but we who are saved are not to follow them.

God promised special blessings to the children of Israel. He would give them a good land, in which they could live and prosper, if they would obey Him. The only way for a child of God to prosper spiritually is through obedience to God's will (John 15:10-11; Ps. 1:1-3; Deut. 6:17-24). We ought to expect all blessings from God, and look nowhere else for blessings. We ought to do so because He has made us His people. **“I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people.”** (See also Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9)

V. VERSES TWENTY-FIVE AND TWENTY-SIX.

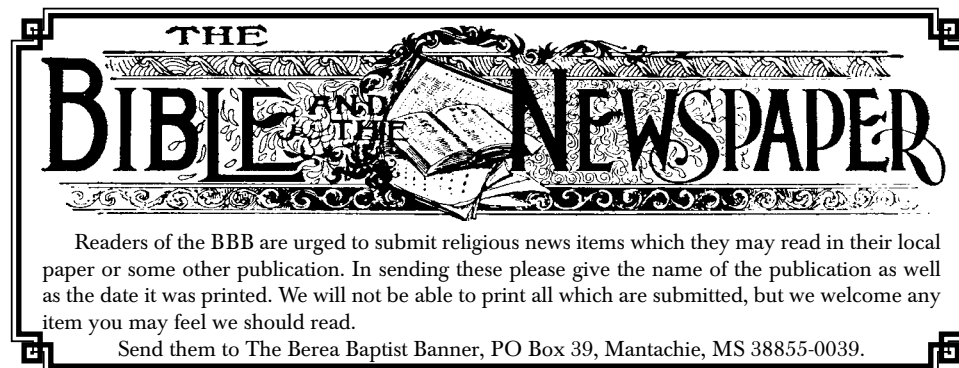
Because God had made Israel His special people, they were to live differently than all other people. Because God has saved us and called us with an holy calling, we are to be holy, and not to walk as those who have not known Christ. **“Ye shall therefore put difference between clean . . . and unclean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable. . . by any manner of living thing . . .”** (See Eph. 4:17-19) That which God calls unclean is to be unclean to you and me. We are not to defile ourselves through sin and association with the ways of the world (1 Cor. 15:33-34; 10:31; Isa. 5:20). God's people are to distinguish between that which is spiritually clean and that which is unclean, that which is holy and that which is unholy.

“And ye shall be holy unto me.” Holiness consists in being separate from the sin which is in the world and being consecrated to God in righteousness and truth. You cannot be separated unto God and participating in sin at the same time. **“For I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.”** God who divided the light from the darkness has divided His people from all other people. No ties exist spiritually between those whom God has saved and the lost and dying world. We whom He has saved belong to Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 14:7-8). God's ownership of us is motive for holiness.

VI. VERSE TWENTY-SEVEN.

A final penalty is included in this section against the sin of heathen spiritualism. Those who sought after such were condemned in a previous verse; but now those who were the actual practitioners are condemned and the penalty of their wickedness is prescribed. **“A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death.”** The manner of their punishment was stoning, and they were alone guilty of forfeiting their lives. That this sin is seen to be on the rise in this so-called “modern” and “educated” hour is an indication of the reprobate condition of men's minds. God's holiness, sovereignty, authority, and covenant are the motives for being separate from sin. That this law is included here at the end

of this section in one sense communicates the danger of heathen and pagan customs being adopted by those professing godliness, and the danger of “spiritualism” being regarded on an equal plain with true spirituality and spiritual life. **“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils (demons): ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils (demons)”** (1 Cor. 10:21). This final commandment also reiterates that which the law communicates, singularity and the penalty of sin (Rom. 7:10-14; 8:3-4). The law teaches us our sinfulness that we might flee to God for mercy and life through the One who fulfilled the law and whom the law foretold, Jesus Christ, the only Saviour.



COURT: TENNESSEE COUNTY CAN CONTINUE PRAYING

(WNS)--A federal district court in Tennessee ruled on Aug. 29 that Hamilton County officials can continue opening their meetings with public prayers as a lawsuit against them proceeds. The plaintiffs in the case, Thomas Joseph Coleman III, and Brandon Raymond Jones, claim the county officials' prayers violate the Constitution, and asked the court to halt the activities pending the outcome of the case. A trial date has not been set.

MINNESOTA HIGH COURT RESTORES MARRIAGE AMENDMENT BALLOT LANGUAGE

(WNS)--The Minnesota Supreme Court ruled Aug. 27 that state officials who tampered with the title of a ballot initiative last month overstepped their bounds. As a result, the original wording for the proposed amendment to the state constitution defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman will appear on the ballot in November. The Legislature passed the language in 2011, but Secretary of State Mark Ritchie and Attorney General Lori Swanson changed it in July. “Allowing the Secretary of State, an Executive Branch officer with no constitutional authority over the form and manner of proposed constitutional amendments, to simply ignore the Legislature's action in proposing and passing a title to accompany a ballot question on a constitutional amendment potentially risks interfering with the Legislature's constitutional authority,” the judges opined.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS VINDICATES MARK REGNERUS

(WNS)--The University of Texas at Austin announced Aug. 29 that a sociologist who has been excoriated by some in the media over a study showing that parents' homosexual relationships can have negative effects on children is innocent of academic misconduct. Dr. Mark Regnerus made headlines in June, when his study was published in the widely respected journal *Social Science Research*. According to his findings, children raised by homosexual parents are more likely than those raised by married heterosexual parents to suffer from a variety of negative consequences. After sequestering all of Regnerus's correspondence and conducting both written and oral interviews with him and his accuser, Scott Rosensweig, Research Integrity Officer Robert Peterson wrote in an Aug. 24 memorandum to administrators, “None of the allegations of scientific misconduct put forth . . . were substantiated either by physical data, written materials, or by information provided during the interviews. Since no evidence was provided to indicate that the behavior at issue rose to a level of scientific misconduct, no formal investigation is warranted.”

NINE-YEAR BATTLE TO PROSECUTE KANSAS PLANNED PARENTHOOD FACILITY COMES TO AN END

(WNS)--A Kansas prosecutor last week dropped all remaining criminal charges against a Kansas City-area Planned Parenthood facility accused of performing illegal late-term abortions. The decision ended a nine-year legal battle initiated by

then-Kansas Attorney General Phill Kline to prosecute the abortion giant in criminal court. Johnson County District Attorney Steve Howe announced that 32 misdemeanor charges against Planned Parenthood had been dismissed. Those charges were the last part of a criminal case Kline filed in 2007 that initially included 107 criminal charges, 23 of which were felony charges of “false writing” for faking abortion reports. Howe said his decision to end the case came after consulting current Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt. All three are Republicans. Most of the charges from 2007 have been dismissed over the previous 10 months, notably when Howe's office revealed last fall that state officials in departments controlled by Democrat Kathleen Sebelius, then-governor of Kansas and now secretary of Health and Human Services under President Barack Obama, had years ago shredded documents that were key evidence against Planned Parenthood, a major Sebelius supporter.

BLACK CHURCH SPLIT?

(WNS)--Religion News Service (RNS) is reporting that some -- though not many -- black churches are splitting with Barack Obama on same-sex marriage. “President Obama's support for gay marriage, followed quickly by the NAACP's, has put some black clergy in a bind,” according to RNS. The clergy are “torn between their political loyalties and their religious beliefs.” In one of the most telling -- and perhaps the saddest -- statements I've seen in a while, Andra Gillespie of Emory University said, “You've got to balance religious convictions with all of your other interests, your racial interests, your economic interests.” The story goes on: “Most blacks still prioritize their rights as African-Americans and economic issues over social issues, she said.” But not all black clergy are going along. “I would hope that the president would become wise, come to his senses and know that he has made a mistake,” said William Owens, president of the Coalition of African-American Pastors, at a National Press Club news conference. He is leading an effort of African-American pastors to ask Obama to “repudiate his assertion that gay marriage is a civil right.”

SCHOOL STRIKE IRONY.

(WNS)--The Chicago school strike continues. The ironies in this situation abound. It is hard, for example, not to take a kind of perverse delight in seeing Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a former Obama Administration official, get mugged by reality. He is finding out that being pro-union makes great political rhetoric, but is impractical as a governing philosophy. Another irony is GOP VP nominee Paul Ryan's statement, on behalf of himself and Mitt Romney, that “we stand with Rahm Emanuel.” Emanuel, who has a famously profane mouth, must have uttered a few choice words when he heard that. Also ironic -- surreal might be a better word -- is the situation itself. Unemployment is high, and the median household income in the U.S.

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is about \$50,000 per year. Chicago teachers, however, average more than \$70,000 each year. They turned down a 16 percent raise, holding out for 30 percent. One final note: The city's charter schools and private schools have remained open during the strike. In those schools, at least, education goes on.

CHILD ABUSE?

(WNS)--Camp Arranū'tiq, in Connecticut, is the first transgender camp for kids in the nation, according to a recent story in the Boston Globe. The 65 campers wear name tags "with the words '(HE)' or '(SHE)' under their names" so others will know how the child wants to be addressed. Program at the camp includes discussions about "coming out," "transitioning," puberty blockers — and bullying. The camp is run by a 29-year-old transgender male named Nick Teich. Kids as young as 8 come to the camp, which now operates a branch in California. It's hard for me to understand how encouraging an 8-year-old to "come out" as transgender is not child abuse. Even the liberal American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders lists transgenderism as a mental disorder. But such, I guess, is the world in which we now live.

MEGACHURCH HIGH

(WNS)--A new study by University of Washington sociologists suggests that worship at megachurches may induce a drug-like spiritual "high" which helps explain these congregations' success. Scientists note that large gatherings around shared experiences, from concerts to football games, can trigger physiological reactions and feelings of joy and transcendence. They say that the brain releases a specific chemical, oxytocin, at higher rates during such events. The study indicates that worshipping at megachurches can have similar effects. Professor James Wellman, one of the co-authors, says that megachurch attendees whom they interviewed recounted experiences of "unalloyed joy over and over again." That's why the authors say that the feeling of going to a megachurch is "like a drug."

NEW MARRIAGE CHALLENGE APPEALED TO SUPREME COURT

(WNS)--A Boston group supporting special rights for homosexuals appealed another case to the U.S. Supreme Court on Aug. 22 — the sixth so far to challenge the constitutionality of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). In this most recent case, Pedersen v. Office of Personnel Management, Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) are representing 13 people in (or widowed from) same-sex marriages in Connecticut, Vermont or New Hampshire who are seeking federal benefits related to marital status. Under DOMA, such benefits are allowed only to opposite-

sex married couples. A seventh case asks the court to decide the constitutionality of Prop. 8, the constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman in California, passed by voters there in 2008.

PASTORS PLEDGE TO DEFY IRS, PREACH POLITICS FROM PULPIT AHEAD OF ELECTION

(FOX News)--More than 1,000 pastors are planning to challenge the IRS next month by deliberately preaching politics ahead of the presidential election despite a federal ban on endorsements from the pulpit.

The defiant move, they hope, will prompt the IRS to enforce a 1954 tax code amendment that prohibits tax-exempt organizations, such as churches, from making political endorsements. Alliance Defending Freedom, which is holding the October summit, said it wants the IRS to press the matter so it can be decided in court. The group believes the law violates the First Amendment by "muzzling" preachers.

An amendment was made to the IRS tax code in 1954, stating that tax-exempt organizations are "absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office."

"Violation of this prohibition may result in denial or revocation of tax-exempt status and the imposition of certain excise tax," the IRS says in its online guide for churches and religious organizations seeking tax exemption.

San Diego pastor Jim Garlow, say the IRS regularly threatens churches that they will lose their tax-exempt status if they preach politics. But Garlow claims the government never acts on the threat because it wants to avoid a court battle. "I'm very concerned about the spiritual side of this," Garlow said, "There's a phenomenon occurring in America and that's a loss of religious liberty."

"If I would have said 50 years that 'Tearing up a baby in the womb is a bad thing,' people would have said 'Of course it is,'" Garlow said. "But If I said that today, people would say 'Pastor, you're being too political.'"

HOBBY LOBBY FACING BACKLASH AFTER FILING LAWSUIT

(FOX News)--Oklahoma-based Hobby Lobby filed the suit Sept. 12 in U.S. District Court in Oklahoma City, alleging that the new ObamaCare mandate violates the religious beliefs of the company's owners. While a judge has not yet ruled on Hobby Lobby's suit, a Facebook page calling for a boycott of the company, which operates 500 stores in 41 states, has appeared online, and several other forums have featured posts urging customers to steer clear of Hobby Lobby. As for the boycott, the company's founders believe customers have the right to vote with their feet.

Hobby Lobby owner David Green is a devout Baptist who owns one of the world's largest collections of Biblical artifacts. The

Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which represents Green in his suit, argued that compliance with the offending portion of the health care law that the nature of their suit is "would force religiously-motivated business owners like plaintiffs to violate their faith under the threats of millions of dollars in fines."

"The Green family's business practices reflect their Christian faith in unmistakable and concrete ways," the complaint states. The company employs full-time chaplains; closes all store locations on Sundays and monitors all marketing and operations to make sure that it is consistent with their beliefs.

"Our government threatens to fine job creators in a bad economy," Green wrote. "Our government threatens to fine a company that's raised wages four years running. Our government threatens to fine a family for running its business according to its beliefs. It's not right."

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS GERMAN OFFICIALS PROSECUTE RABBI OVER CIRCUMCISION

(WNS)--In Germany, officials have pressed charges against a Jewish rabbi for performing circumcisions. The action comes in the wake of a court ruling in Cologne that

banned all circumcisions but those done for "medical" reasons. After the ruling, a physician filed a complaint against Rabbi David Goldberg, who serves as a mohel (a ritual circumciser) for the Jewish community of Hof, in northern Bavaria. The 64-year-old Goldberg says he has performed more than 3,000 circumcisions on infant boys, procedures which are required under Jewish (and Muslim) ceremonial law. The German court ruled that when medically unnecessary, circumcision represents a "severe and irreversible interference into physical integrity." Many Jewish, Muslim, and Christian leaders have argued that prosecuting Goldberg represents a major violation of religious liberty. Activists in San Francisco also attempted to ban religious circumcisions in a citywide vote in 2011, but a judge forbade the initiative, noting that state law prevented localities from regulating healthcare providers. Princeton University professor Robert George, a member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, has called on Americans to defend Jews' right to maintain the practice, saying that banning religious circumcision is, "in effect, to forbid Jews from being Jews."



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Grace of Christ

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9).

When the Apostle Paul wanted to press home a duty on church members, he would place the example of Christ before them. Here he sought to encourage liberality in giving to the church. He enforced this duty by a reference to the life and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. He told them how Christ became poor that He might be a blessing to others. Even so we should be willing to part with our earthly possessions in order that others might be helped spiritually.

HIS ORIGINAL RICHES

The original riches of Christ are seen in the words **"though he was rich."** To no period of Christ's life on earth can this apply. These words have no meaning if Christ did not exist previous to His birth in Bethlehem. These words do not mean that Christ was rich in power and in the Holy Spirit as Socinians contend. These words teach the pre-existence of Christ and His supreme divinity. It was the eternal God who for our sakes impoverished Himself. Jesus Christ was

the eternal Son of God that was sent forth into human history, the One who came into the world, the eternal Word who became flesh.

Christ before His incarnation was rich in the perfections of His divine nature. The Word who was God and the Creator of all things was made flesh (John 1:1-3, 14). When He was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, **"God was manifest in the flesh"** (I Tim. 3:16). Our Redeemer was **"in the form of God"** and **"equal with God"** before He **"took upon him the form of a servant"** (Phil. 2:6-7). During the days of His flesh, He declared: **"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"** (John 14:9). Again He said: **"I and my Father are one"** (John 10:30). In the Lord Jesus Christ dwelt **"all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"** (Col. 2:9). Those who looked upon Christ saw **"God blessed for ever"** (Rom. 9:5; cf. I John 5:20).

The Redeemer in His divine nature was possessed of almighty power; immaculate purity, infinite knowledge, boundless goodness, immutable truth. Before He came down from Heaven to

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The Grace of Christ

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earth He was rich in all the glory and blessedness of the upper world. In His divine nature He never became poor. Although He assumed poverty in His human nature, He never at any time gave up the riches of His Divine nature. The riches of His divine nature were hidden behind the poverty of His human nature.

Prior to Christ's coming to earth He was rich as the Proprietor of all things. He was the Creator of all (John 1:3; Col. 1:16), and, as the Creator of all, He had a right to all things. The earth and its fullness belong to Him by right of creation. He owned all the silver, the gold, the diamonds, and the pearls found in sea and land. This was not even the half of His wealth, for, as the Creator, the universe was His. Travel from planet to planet, go from solar system to solar system, then pass beyond all of these, and you can never go beyond the bounds of His rich estate.

Before His advent to earth Christ was rich in honor and praise. Millions of angels celebrated His praise. Every flower on earth was fragrant with His perfume, every brook murmured His goodness, every breeze whistled His glory, every wave of the sea roared His greatness, every tree of the forest extolled His power, every ray of the sun displayed His splendor, every star was brilliant with His radiance, and the cattle of a thousand hills sounded out His honor and praise. In His primeval glory with the Father all creatures and all worlds gave Him reverence. All things were of Him, and by Him, and for Him.

Christ's wealth was underived and eternal. No man who ever walked the face of earth ever had wealth to compare with the riches of the Creator and Proprietor of the universe. The Rockefellers, the Rothchilds, etc., were poor in comparison to the Christ of God. How poor and worthless is all the gold and silver a man can accumulate compared with the inexhaustible riches of Jesus Christ!

CHRIST'S VOLUNTARY POVERTY

The great wonder of my text is seen in the words "**he became poor.**" I have known many poor men who became rich, but I have never known a rich man who voluntarily became poor. But this is what Jesus Christ did. His poverty was not accidental, nor was it because society was unwilling to take care of Him. Christ's poverty was the result of His own voluntary engagements as the surety of His people. In the Covenant of Redemption before the morning of time Christ had agreed to become poor to enrich His elect.

The first step in this poverty was the

assumption of human nature. In His human nature He became the reverse of what He was in His divine nature. The Ancient of days (Dan. 7:22) became an infant of days (Isa. 65:20). The Creator became a creature. He who made all things (John 1:3) was made flesh (John 1:14). He who made man was made in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:7). He who made the law was made under the law (Gal. 4:4). He who was "**clothed with honour and majesty**" (Ps. 104:1) was "**wrapped in swaddling clothes**" (Luke 2:12). Such condescension is inconceivable! It was the union of eternity with a span, infinity with infirmity, grandeur with meanness, power with weakness, glory with degradation, omniscience with ignorance, immortality with mortality!

Second, Christ assumed our nature in its lowest form. Not only did He become a man for us, but a very poor man at that. He "**took upon himself the form of a servant**" (Phil. 2:7). He was born in a stable of poor parents. Joseph and Mary were too poor to bring a lamb unto the priest at His birth, so they brought the poor man's offering (Luke 2:22-24; Lev. 12:1-8). Christ grew up in the skid row of Palestine, Nazareth (John 1:46), working with Joseph in the carpenter's shop. He never own a house of His own (Luke 9:58). The only donkey He ever rode was not His own. In order to pay His Temple tax He was so poor that He had to perform a miracle (Matt. 17:24-27). Christ was no world traveler, for He never went but a little over a hundred miles from His home. Often for food He had to depend upon wild fruit from a fig tree. At His crucifixion He was stripped of what few clothes He had. Then Christ was buried in a borrowed tomb. He was born in poor circumstances, lived a poor life, and died in poverty (Ps. 41:1; Zech. 9:9).

Third, Christ became poor in reputation. Philippians 2:7 says: "**But made himself of no reputation.**" Solomon said: "**A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches**" (Prov. 22:1), but how poor was Christ in this respect! He was holy and without spot (I Pet. 1:19), yet they called Him "**a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners**" (Luke 9:34). He was a man of peace and good will, yet they accused Him of being a trouble-maker (Luke 23:5). Jesus Christ spoke nothing but the truth, yet they said He was a "**deceiver**" (Matt. 27:63) who had "**a devil**" (John 8:48) and who worked miracles by the power of devils (Matt. 9:34; 12:24). Christ was despised and rejected of men (Isa. 53:3). They looked upon Him as "**a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people**" (Ps. 22:6). Finally, He was charged with a crime and put to the ignominious death of the cross.

WHY CHRIST BECAME POOR

Mark carefully the words of my text:

"**. . . that ye through his poverty might be rich.**" Christ was rich in power, yet in order to enrich us He voluntarily surrendered this power and became obedient to His Father's will. He was rich in glory, but for our sakes He laid aside His glory and assumed human flesh. He was rich in wisdom, but for our sake He surrendered the independent use of His wisdom and became subject to the Father's judgment.

Christ had to merit our riches by the endurance of poverty, suffering and death. He came from Heaven to lead us to Heaven. He became a man child that we might become children of God. He became sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:21). He became weary that we might have rest. He became hungry that we might be filled with all the fullness of God. He was degraded that we might be dignified. He gave up His life that we might have eternal life. He was hated that we might be loved. He bare the curse that we might never be accursed from God. He descended to the grave that we might be raised from the dead to eternal glory. All blessings are through Christ. He is the medium of every mercy!

The sinner's poverty is clearly implied in the words of my text. Originally in Adam we were rich in holiness and dominion, but by means of the fall we became "**wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked**" (Rev. 3:17). We lost our crown and forfeited our inheritance. We relinquished our moral purity and sacrificed our health and happiness. We are not all poor materially, but we are all "**poor in spirit**" (Matt. 5:3) because we are awful sinners before God. We are so poor that even our means of salvation had to be "**without money and without price**" (Isa. 55:1). By our sins we were in debt to God and had nothing with which to pay.

PAUPERS MADE RICH

Had the grace of God not intervened, we would have continued for ever poor lost sinners, persons who would have had to pay everlastingly on our debts to the justice of God. But Christ became poor that paupers might be made rich. He took our flesh and blood that we might become partakers of His everlasting riches. Let us consider the sense in which He did this.

First, believers are made partakers of "**the riches of his grace**" (Eph. 1:7). We are enriched with the blessings of the Spirit and the gospel. We are rich in the love and favor of God, rich in the regenerating and adopting grace of God, "**rich in faith**" (Jas. 2:5), rich in the blessings and promises of the new covenant, rich in pardoning grace and eternal life. Truly those who have Christ's "**greater riches**" (Heb. 11:26) possess "**all things**" (II Cor. 6:10).

"Do you see these extended fields?" said the owner of a vast plantation to a

friend. "They are all mine." "Do you see yonder poor cottage?" was the reply of the friend, as he directed his attention to the abode of a poor widow. "She has more than all this. She has Christ as her everlasting portion, and that is more than all." The person who has Christ as his Redeemer has more than a king's ransom, more than the richest man or woman on earth.

Second, Christ has made the believer rich by the heirship of an "**eternal inheritance**" (Heb. 9:15). "**And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ**" (Rom. 8:17). Hebrews 1:2 says the Father has appointed Christ to be "**heir of all things.**" All things are ours as a joint heir with Christ (I Cor. 3:22). There is for each of us an incorruptible inheritance reserved in Heaven (I Pet. 1:4). Through Christ's poverty the Father "**hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light**" (Col. 1:12). "**In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will**" (Eph. 1:11).

AN ACT OF UNPARALLELED GRACE

Consider further the words in my text "**the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" The word grace signifies free, unmerited favor, the opposite of right or desert. Man, as a voluntary sinner, had a right to the curse of the law; he deserved eternal banishment from God and everlasting torment. Had man received justice, he would have suffered the wages of sin, which is death. But God, who is rich in mercy, devised a scheme of infinite grace that through Christ's poverty believer's might be made rich toward God.

This stupendous grace was displayed when we consider the worthlessness of the objects. They were sinners and ungodly persons; they were poor bankrupt beggars totally dependent upon Heaven's charity. The people Christ came to enrich were utterly undeserving, had nothing good in their flesh. They were incapable of yielding a return to Christ for His favor. They were totally degraded, wretched, vile, and unlovable!

The marvelous grace of Christ was displayed by the sacrifice He offered. It was the blood of God (Acts 20:28), poured out for sinful man. It was "**the precious blood of Christ**" (I Pet. 1:19) that redeemed us unto God. He paid all the debt that His people owed to the justice of God. He "**put away sin by the sacrifice of himself**" (Heb. 9:26), "**having obtained eternal redemption for us**" (Heb. 9:12). Oh, these finite minds can never calculate the worth of His atoning sacrifice on this side of eternity.

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The Grace of Christ

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THE EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF BELIEVERS

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ..." Angels, demons, wicked men, and the Devil may know about the grace of Christ, but true believers only know it as a happy and saving experience. This truth is well known to all them who truly believe in Christ. They are not ignorant of His grace and love toward them. They know that He left the bosom of the Father to become poor in order to make them rich. The person who does not know the grace of Christ in truth is not a Christian!

The Corinthians knew this because Paul had preached **"the gospel of the grace of God"** (Acts 20:24) among them. They had been saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9), and they stood upon God's free and sovereign grace (Rom. 5:1-2). It was through grace that they had believed the gospel. It was when they had cordially believed the saving message about Christ that they had come to see the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith they had made an application of it to their souls.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. Learn from this the vanity and worthlessness of all earthly possessions. See the contempt Christ placed upon them in my text. He chose to be poor rather than rich! He could have come in a golden chariot and have lived in a stately palace. He could have had more riches than King Solomon. But He chose not to do so.

2. Christ became poor to be an example before the whole family of God that men need other things than wealth. There are objects that deserve and demand our time other than the accumulation of property.

3. Let this remind us of our spiritual poverty. By nature we are all in a poor, graceless state. This is not true of just a few people in the human family, but is a universal fact beyond controversy. Let us realize it that we might be enriched by Christ.

4. Learn from this the greatness and glory of the salvation that Christ has provided. A Redeemer who took our flesh and place. A Savior who removed every obstacle at the infinite expense of suffering and humiliation for us. God designed to make us rich eternally by Christ's poverty. These riches are treasured up in Christ and offered in the gospel of grace to sinners who believe.

5. Let us make every effort to seek after the riches of eternity. May we seek to know the grace of Christ in truth and be satisfied with nothing less. May we realize the extreme folly of indifference and unbelief. Those who continue in such a state sink into perdition.



It Is Not the Church's Business To Clean Up the World, Prevent War, Furnish Civic Leadership, But Preach the Gospel

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

Many people look upon a church as just another welfare agency. A man who didn't attend church, and had paid no attention to churches through the years, stopped by the home of the caretaker of our church. He was looking for financial aid, and in course of conversation he said to the caretaker, "You know it's the business of a church to look out for people in my shape." He was a child of the Devil, and it was his opinion that the children of God were obligated to take care of the needs of the children of the Devil. The truth is, *it is not the obligation of a church to help the children of the Devil.* Speaking to Christians, Paul says (Gal. 6:10): **"As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."** He means that as opportunity presents itself, do good to all we come in contact with, but he says that we have a *special duty toward Christians--"the household of faith."* Our church has many times helped unsaved people, but that is not our particular duty. That duty is to render aid to those who are God's people.

IS IT OUR DUTY TO CLEAN UP THE WORLD?

We recall one preacher who waged war on vice conditions in his town. The evil element burned his church. He was made chief of police, but he didn't know what to do with the job. He found himself poorly adapted to politics and he did not succeed in cleaning up the town. After a short period he resigned. Certainly the minister ought to be outspoken against sin and evil, and he ought to encourage his people to vote against and stand against evil conditions, but it is not his business or that of his church to spend their time trying to clean up communities from the outside. The truth is, such is an impossible task. John (I John 5:19) says, "The whole world lieth in the evil one." The world is like a sinking ship, and for a church to spend its time in reform and clean-up movements is like men painting the sinking ship, when they ought to be engaged in rescue work trying to save the passengers. Incidentally, any community will become better the more completely it is evangelized.

IS IT THE CHURCH'S DUTY TO PREVENT WAR?

During the First World War there was raised the cry, "The Church has failed!" Thus it was charged that such a



war could not have broken out had not "the church" failed in its duty. Churches can do all they please, and they cannot eliminate war from the earth.

Jesus predicted wars and rumors of wars as a part of the course of this age (Matt. 24:6-8). The commission given by Jesus to His church is not one to put a stop to war or poverty or any such thing. "Social gospelers" are devoted to such tasks and they are wasting their time. The biggest social experiment ever undertaken is the one being carried on by Russia. Communism purports to be out to put a stop to all the evils that society has known in the past, but practically, what has it done? It engulfed much of the world in the most brutal slavery ever known, and it is keeping the world an armed camp today.

IS IT A DUTY TO FURNISH CIVIC LEADERSHIP?

Many a minister becomes involved in all sorts of civic enterprises. He belongs to various organizations, and he is on this and that committee. A large portion of his time is taken up dealing with civic matters. He has no orders from God to do any of these things. Many such ministers have churches so worldly they stink. While he tries to curb the blaring evils, his own people go uninstructed and are a reproach to the cause of Christ.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH OWE THE WORLD?

It owes it THE GOSPEL (see Rom. 1:14). Each church owes it to the world to give it the gospel--which is the good news of salvation and eternal life. Other things that a church can engage in are trivial in comparison with the giving of the gospel. The good news of eternal life is the most revolutionary news that people can ever hear. It turns life from failure to success. It turns death into victory. It has the power to change lives in a way that nothing else can or does. So often churches try to take over functions that can better be performed by other agencies, while neglecting to magnify the one great mission given of God. We Christians have the Word of eternal life. We can tell people how to live forever. No agency of this world has anything like that. Every church ought to lay itself out full length in spreading the news of eternal life just as far out into the darkness of the world as possible.



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 8-1-2012 to 8-31-2012

Beginning Balance\$5,165.85

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 100.00
Calvary B. C., Everson, WA200.00
..... 525.00
TOTAL5,690.85

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time 450.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES\$450.00
..... \$5,240.85
Interest + .04
.....5,240.89
Less Corbin, KY des.-1,203.72
ENDING BALANCE\$4,037.17

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance\$1,363.72

RECEIPTS:

.....0.00
TOTAL1,363.72

EXPENDITURES:

WCTT160.00
ENDING BALANCE\$1,203.72

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 8-1-2012 to 8-31-2012

Beginning Balance\$1,702.37

RECEIPTS:

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX25.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brinfield, IL 75.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL 60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX 50.00
Bible Believer's B. C., Naples, ID 50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV313.45
B. J. Cook, Seffner, FL 6.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 150.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL 25.00
Dave Zuhars, Somerset, KY 5.00
Ernie Ransom, Coeur d'Alene, ID 25.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK 35.00
Harold Flynn, Craigsville, WV 50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV 100.00
Jackie Edwards, Cameron, OK 10.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC 50.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC 50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY 20.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN 50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR 50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS 50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX 30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA 50.00
Subscriptions286.00
Anonymous \$1,200.00
Dividing checks 150.00
Sub Total\$3,765.45
TOTAL\$5,467.82

EXPENDITURES:

Printing 550.00
Postage 680.45
Wages 2,300.00
FICA 175.96
Supplies81.32
Dividing checks 150.00
Total Expenditures \$3,937.73
..... 1,530.09
Bank charge -13.00
ENDING BALANCE \$1,517.09

The Christian Crowns

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

There are five mentioned in the New Testament which are promised to God's children upon certain conditions. They may be won or lost (Rev. 3:11). They are made of gold (Rev. 4:4).

1. The Incorruptible Crown (I Cor. 9:25). This crown will be given to those who are temperate in all things, to those who have not let the **"cares of this life"** (Luke 21:34) interfere with their Father's business.

2. The Crown of Rejoicing (I Thess. 2:19). This is the soul winner's crown. Those who win souls for Christ, whether by personal work, by preaching the gospel, or by distributing the gospel in print, will receive this crown. (See also Phil. 4:1; Dan. 12:3).

3. The Crown of Glory (I Pet. 5:4). This is the pastor or elder's crown, given to those who have willingly cared for the flock of God as overseers---not as lords and not for the sake of financial gain, but as a shepherd who cares for his sheep.

4. The Crown of Righteousness (II Tim. 4:8). This crown is given to all those who love the appearing of Christ. These dear people are not only trusting Christ for salvation, but they are looking for His soon return to the clouds of Heaven. Because of this blessed hope, they endure afflictions, fight the good fight of faith, and speak the truth in love. They are loyal and faithful to Christ at all times (I John 3:3).

5. The Crown of Life (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10). This is the martyr's crown which is given to those who **"loved not their lives unto the death"** (Rev. 12:11). Many such as Stephen, James, John, Peter, Paul, Tyndale and countless others will receive this crown.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Glade Creek Baptist Church, Summersville, WV, is in need of a pastor. This church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and church truth. Any interested Elder should call Bro. Rodney Perkins at (304) 742-3050 or Bro. Allen Frame at (304) 742-5775.

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

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

The Citrus Missionary Baptist Church at Inverness, FL and Pastor Troy Sheppard would like to announce a Revival and Fellowship Meeting, October 24th thru 28th. The guest speaker is Elder Tom Horn pastor of the Sovereign Grace Baptist church of Pensacola, FL.

Service times are Wednesday thru Friday at 7:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Meals will be provided by the church at noon on Saturday and Sunday.

For more information please contact Pastor Sheppard at (352) 860-1636 or at ourbaptisthome@yahoo.com.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Silsbee, TX and Pastor Jose' Serrano would like to announce their upcoming 27th Annual Bible Conference on October 19th thru 21st, 2012.

Service time is Friday at 7:00 p.m. with a meal provided at 5:00 p.m. Lunch and dinner will be provided on the 20th and dinner on the 21st.

For more information contact Pastor Serrano at (409) 385-9344 or Email pastor@sovereigngracebaptists.org.

The Amazing Grace Baptist Church of Stockdale, Texas is in need of a pastor. The church believes in preaching and teaching the doctrines of grace and the Lord's church. Any interested brother my contact Bro. Charles Reddin at (830) 401-0310, if there is no answer please leave a message.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elders may call (618) 288-4236 for more information.

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any

interested brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

The Liverpool Independent Baptist Church of Liverpool, New York (north of Syracuse) is searching for a sovereign grace pastor. The church believes in the doctrines of grace, the local church, and is pre-trib and pre-mil. Interested brethren should contact Bro. Greg Sigworth at (315) 677-3819.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH is in need of a pastor. Any interested candidates possessing the qualifications and traits concerning the office as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are asked to contact either of the following: Bro. Randy Coffey at (614) 871-2406 or email recoffeypot@aol.com, or Bro. Joe Vass at (614) 846-8699 or email

jami joe@wowway.com.

The Bethel Bible Baptist Church, PO Box 85, Mansfield, LA is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elder should call Connie McMellon at 318-872-1647.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS will be hosting their annual Bible Conference Friday, November 2nd thru Sunday, November 4th.

For more information contact Pastor Nathaniel R. Hille (620) 845-3624 or visit the church's website: www.sgbccaldwell.org.

Any church that is without a pastor, please feel free to send your information in regards to the pastoral position for publication in these announcements.



The Preacher Don't Treat Me Right

It is a shame the way preachers treat me. No matter how good I've been all week, when I go to church Sunday the preacher just preaches straight at me all the time. It would not hurt so bad if he would preach at the other fellow some, too.



The week I mashed my finger with a hammer, he preached about taking the Lord's name in vain. The week I slipped off and watched them dance a little while he preached about setting good examples before young folks; while he didn't say a word about my going there, I could see he knew about it. Just wait until I find out who is doing all the tattling. With so many hypocrites in the church and all the preaching directed straight at me! The week old Arvel accused me of lying to him in a trade and cheating him, he preached on living good, pure upright lives so all who knew us would have faith in us. The time I felt a little bad and slipped out the back alley and met a bootlegger to get a little medicine, he preached on temperance and didn't stop at that but went on to total abstinence and just hit

me hard and plenty. I accused my wife of tattling but she said not to worry for she was ashamed for him to know so much about me.

But if I ever find out who is doing all this tattling that preacher will be busy for a while burying a tattler. And that reminds me; everybody knows a preacher has nothing hardly to do so I made up my mind to have a talk with him.

I tried two or three weeks for a chance to see him but every time I went he was gone to marry somebody, to bury somebody, to see a sick person---or else somebody had just beat me to him. I don't see how he ever gets time to study up all the things he preaches at me on Sunday.

Another reason I wanted to see him was to tell him some things I thought he ought to preach about, but if he preaches on half the things that others have told him, it will take two or three years to get around, so I just gave up that part of it. In a way I feel sorry for him, for I don't see how he ever gets time to write a letter.

I have been dealing with good and sorry people, and hypocrites in and out of the church all my life and I don't suppose quitting the church would help me any, for the church is the only organization on earth that is trying actually to help men here---by pointing them to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer---through the proclamation of the gospel. Yes sir, our church is trying to reach the lost with the gospel message and change their destiny from hell to Heaven---change their position and standing before God from that of lost sinners to new creatures in Christ through the new birth. So I guess that preacher ain't going to run me out of our church by pouring it on me about my devilment. No sir, I'm going to stick it out.

---Selected



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