

The Berea Baptist Banner

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" Ps. 60:4

Preach the Word

By Jason Shults
of Washington, Illinois

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.



I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering
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Seeing Jesus

By Timothy J. Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

John 12:20-50
"And there were certain Greeks ... saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me" (John 12:20, 21, 41, 45).

The last official passover feast of the Jews was about to take place, and God's Passover Lamb was about to be sacrificed and

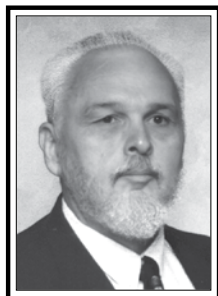


the blood that delivers from death shed for the remission of the sins of God's elect (John 12:1). There were present at the feast Greeks, or Gentiles, non-Jews, who were converts to the Jewish faith. They **"came up to worship at the feast."** Whatsoever manner of proselytes to the Jewish religion that they
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Whenever the Gospel Is Preached

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

God's man Paul faced much opposition from the Jews. Some of them mocked him by repeating what he preached in an insulting manner. The faithful apostle had this to say by the Holy Ghost: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the



other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. 1:15-18). Paul rejoiced whenever and however the
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Considering Faithfulness

By Donnie Burford
of Irvine, Kentucky

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." (Heb. 10:25).

It is sure, that one of the greatest concerns in the ministry today for the man of God and even the faithful church member is, Why are so many who profess Christ as their Lord and Savior so easily moved to forsake the assembling of themselves together when their church meets? My friend



this is no small matter, as so many today have come to believe. In fact it is an indicator of a far more serious and spiritual problem that many today who profess to love the Lord, and think they are being faithful to Him, seemingly are infected with. Let it be stated as clearly as possible:
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**If you cannot find water in the sea,
where will you look?**

If God does not help you, who can? Why go to the streams
when the ocean of mercy is before you?

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strength-en His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellow-ship around His Word.
6. To inform people of world events in light of Bible prophecy.
7. To condemn and expose error wherever it may rear its ugly head.
8. To stimulate Christian growth in grace.
9. To make the Devil and his demons as mad as possible.

Gospel Preached

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gospel was preached: even when preached in a mocking hateful way. Why was this and what does this have to do with us today? We think Paul's words have much to do with us today. We live in a specific time period prophesied by our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord called this time **"the beginning of sorrows,"** (Matt. 24:8). As one sign of this time He said, **"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many"** (Matt. 24:5). In the first eight verses of Matthew twenty-four our Lord gave general signs. While these have been present since apostolic days, they are increasingly present as this epoch draws to a close. Some think that our Lord meant in this verse that false Christs would appear and deceive many. We think not. Rather, it seems that here Christ is saying that many shall come, claiming to have His authority. These shall say that Jesus is Lord, i.e., that He is the Christ or Messiah. In spite of their words these are deceivers and shall deceive many. Why do we take this position? First of all because (1) when prophesying of a later time in the same discourse in this same chapter Christ said, **"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect"** (Matt. 24:24). To give the same sign for two different periods of time would not only be confusing, it would be pointless. If there were a duplication of signs we could not know which time period the Lord meant. And (2) we are now living in that very period of time designated by Christ as **"the beginning of**

sorrows." To those who say this verse means that during this time men will claim to be the Christ we ask: just where are all these people who go around saying that they are the Christ? And where are the **"many"** whom they are deceiving? Several years ago there was a man who called himself **"Father Divine."** He had a small following. A few others of this sort have arisen from time to time. But none of these men who claimed to be divine deceived enough people to qualify as **"many."** What we do see going on in this our day - **"the beginning of sorrows,"** is this: we see many preachers come claiming to be Christ's men who say that Jesus is the Christ, or Messiah, but they deceive many. They **"come in my [Jesus's] name, saying I [Jesus] am Christ,"** [brackets added]. They proclaim the Messiah-ship of Christ, but preach a false gospel. Today we have our Joel and Victoria Osteen and others who deceive many. We have seen Jimmy Swaggart rise, fall and get up again. In our day have come Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Joyce Meyer, Oral Roberts, Pope this and Pope that, Billy Graham, et al. They all have said that they believe Jesus is the Christ. They all require some sort of works in order to obtain God's favor. On the local level (yes, you have them in your town) and on the international level **"many"** are being deceived by preachers who say Jesus is the Christ. The Lord Jesus prophesied about these people again in Matthew 7:22-23, saying, **"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you:**

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returned wrong address.

Gospel Preached

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depart from me, ye that work iniquity. True believers in Christ are beset 'round about with false religionists. They claim to have Christ's authority, i.e., they say they come in His name. They loudly cry "**Lord, Lord,**" and produce great and "**wonderful works.**" Crowds follow them. In their future judgment the Lord will not dispute their claim to having miracle-working power. They are popular with the masses who are uninformed as to what the Bible teaches and who "**have no light in them**" (Isa. 8:20). But Christ does not and never has known them. Therefore they shall be forever cast out of His presence. Theirs is a Christ-less religion in spite of all they say and they, the Lord said, shall have a Christ-less eternity.

Perhaps someone shall say, "What about I Corinthians 12:3? It says that nobody can call Jesus the Lord except by the Holy Spirit. Does that not contradict your view? If a preacher says Jesus is Lord, does not that mean he is from God?" Let us look briefly at that verse. It says, "**Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.**" Brethren, context! context! context! The context in this chapter is dealing with speaking in unknown or unlearned languages or "tongues." In apostolic days prior to the completion of the Bible as a witness to the truthfulness of the apostolic doctrine, God enabled some people to speak in unlearned languages by miraculous power. The verse above has to do with men speaking in those real but unlearned tongues. If a man in

a miraculously spoken language said that Jesus was Lord, it was the Holy Ghost speaking. If a man in a miraculously spoken language said Jesus was accursed, it was not the Holy Ghost speaking. Rather it was a demon or the devil empowering that man. That is what that verse is all about.

But how does Christ's prophecy relate to us? In this way: our nation and much of the world is filled with "Christian" preachers who preach a false gospel even though they say that Christ is the Messiah. They always add some kind of work as the way to salvation and to Heaven. We have stated many times that there are only two religions in the world. There is that religion that says that salvation is by grace alone and there is that religion that teaches that works has a part in obtaining salvation. Whether one says make a trip to Mecca or take a dip in the Ganges River or be sprinkled or be dipped: essentially they are all the same. Indeed, today "**many**" are deceived even among our kin and neighbors: deceived into thinking that being dipped by a particular brand of preacher or having had a little water sprinkled upon them by some Catholic priest or Protestant minister is going to get them to heaven. Most "Christians" are members of baby-baptizing churches – churches that teach that their "baptism" (usually sprinkling) saves. A friend of mine, a well educated and faithful Methodist, told me recently that while the Methodists do not believe that what they call baptism washes away sin, they "...believe you must be baptized in order to go to Heaven." If that is not a false gospel of works then this preacher does not understand the meaning of words. This view is typical of both Catholics and mainline Protestants as well

as Restorationist churches of various sorts such as Mormons and Campbellites. All add to the gospel their particular baptismal-regeneration ideas.

Others among the ranks of "Christian" preachers – even among many calling themselves Baptists – take it upon themselves to teach that a sinner cannot be born again apart from doing this or that or the other. Now we grant that a born again person will do a lot of things, but the new birth does not come about because a person prays or makes a decision or "goes forward" or is baptized. Prayer and scriptural baptism have to do with conversion, but nothing to do with causing the new birth. (The new birth and conversion are not the same thing.) In fact the Bible does not anywhere tell us what it is that a person can do in order to be born again. The Bible says the new birth or regeneration is a work of the Spirit. Our Lord Himself said, "**That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again**" (John 3:6, 7). Why does not the Bible tell us what we must do in order to be born again? Because the new birth does not come about by any act of man! This is made even clearer by John 1:13 which tells us the reason that some people received Christ when He came. That verse says that those who received Christ did so because they "**...were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**" And yet some believe that a sinner can birth himself into the family of God by doing something. That is saying that the new birth is brought to pass "**by the will of man,**" but this last verse specifically negates that idea in toto. Not only is the



Quotes from Brother Ritechus N. Dignation

by Joseph Harris

Years ago some preachers started saying the church should engage the culture to make the Gospel relevant and reach people. Unfortunately, the church got engaged to the world, followed by an unholy marriage which produced offspring with a lack of morality, an irreverent attitude and a form of godliness that denies and despises truth.

exercise-your-will-in-order-to-be-born-again idea contrary to the metaphor (word picture) which presents regeneration as being a birth, it is in direct contradiction to the plain teaching of the Bible. (A baby is a passive participant in its birth: never causative. The mother labors, not the infant! So with the new birth: the sinner is born again by the Spirit of God, not by his effort or exercising his will.) The Holy Spirit, by Paul, said, "**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast**" (Eph. 2:8, 9). Again in II Timothy 1:9 Paul wrote these words, speaking of God, "**Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.**" Did you get that? Grace was given to God's people who were "**in Christ Jesus before the world began!**"

This is one of many verses which takes the new birth out of man's

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Gospel Preached

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hands, showing us that salvation, including the new birth, is all in God's almighty hands and is a matter of pure unmerited favor. Have you come to see that? Do you believe that salvation comes by merited favor? Merited favor is not grace!

What we are seeing in the superabundance of works-religion today (whether among the Catholics, Protestants or among some Baptists) is what our Lord prophesied. He said, **"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many"** (Matt. 24:5). What false preacher on the radio or TV has not boldly proclaimed "Jesus is Lord," or, "Jesus is the Christ"? Even the "Jesus-only Pentecostals" with their works-for-salvation doctrine assert that Jesus is God and the Messiah. Indeed, **"many"** around the world are deceived by these preachers who claim to be from Christ. They loudly proclaim that Jesus is the Christ, God's Messiah and then go on to preach that works of one kind or another is necessary for salvation. They teach the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as payment for sins – usually for the sins of all men. Of course, Christ's work is not enough. You must add your faith or decision or baptism, etc., to be saved – according to them. In other words, they preach the powerless blood of a powerless Christ sent by a poor God up in Heaven who would like to save all men, but is powerless to do so! What blasphemy! We do not excuse their misapplication of the blood of Christ when they teach that the blood of Christ is not able to save those for whom it was shed, but the facts of the gospel are at times preached by them. It is their

misapplication of Christ's blood, their false ideas regarding the ability of sinners, their additions to the gospel that make it a false gospel. These we cannot condone. Nor can we compromise with any who preach a false gospel.

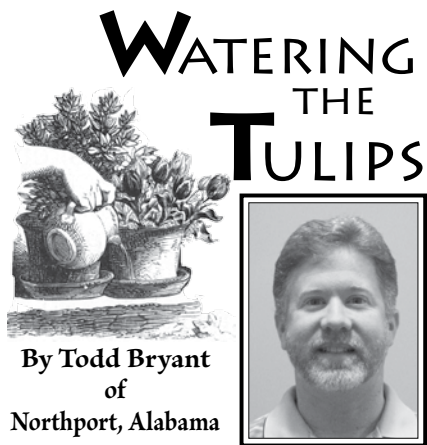
Yet Paul wrote that he rejoiced when his enemies mockingly proclaimed the gospel from evil motives – seeking to add to his suffering. We quoted in the beginning of this article his words on this matter. How could he rejoice at unsaved men mimicking his preaching? Ah, Brothers and Sisters, here is where the absolute sovereignty of God enters the picture. Proverbs 20:12 says, **"The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them."** Both the natural ear and the spiritual ear, as we say, and both the natural eye and the spiritual eye, God made them. And while some people only hear and see physically with natural vision and hearing, others are given **"eyes to see and ears to hear"** (Deut. 29:4). Are there not sound Brethren whose first real hearing of the gospel and initial conversion was under unsound preachers? We mean men who added to the Word of God by imposing works as a requirement for the new birth. Do not some preachers demand what no New Testament era preacher ever did? Do they not demand that the sinner "come forward" and "pray the sinner's prayer" in order to be born again? Do they not mistakenly claim that doing this is to **"call upon the name of the Lord"** (Rom. 10:13)? And have not some hearers been regenerated and their conversion begun in spite of such additions to the gospel? Is not God able to cause one to hear the truth, repent and believe even when untrue statements are mixed in

with the truth? Is God not able to cause a person to hear what He wants them to hear? Can He not shut their ears and eyes to any admixture of error in a man's sermon? This in no way excuses preachers from mixing error with truth. It in no way means that the members of the Lord's congregations should compromise with works-mongering preachers and churches.

We have an example in the New Testament of a sinner who heard the gospel from the mocking lips of false religionists. Remember the thief nailed upon a tree alongside the Lord Jesus – the one that repented? Some have supposed that he heard the gospel prior to his being nailed to the tree. We cannot prove or disprove that because the Bible is silent on the matter so we must remain silent too. But what we do know is this: while hanging there beside the Lord Jesus he heard the truth about Christ. Mockers gathered around said, **"He saved others..."** and **"...if he be Christ, the chosen of God"** (Luke 23:35). That thief, as did the other one, heard **"saved others,"** and **"Christ"** (Messiah), and **"chosen of God."** Not only did this thief hear divine truth proclaimed in a derisive way by those standing around the execution site, he also joined in, repeating the same things. We know this from Matthew 27:44 which says: **"The thieves also, which were crucified with him [Christ], cast the same in his teeth,"** [brackets added]. Perhaps he had heard the Scriptures read in a synagogue – the verses that say, **"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in**

the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law" (Isa. 42:1-4). **"My servant!"** God's **"elect,"** i.e., the Messiah! **"He saved others!"** **"Christ!"** **"the chosen of God!"** The thief heard divine truth even though he heard it spoken in derision and mockery. He heard the other thief and also heard himself saying the same things. But then something happened. Something the free-will crowd cannot explain. He was made alive by the Holy Spirit of God! And in that new birth the Holy Ghost gave him the gifts of repentance and faith – those inseparable twins! It must have been so for we read these words about saving faith: **"...faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"** (Eph. 2:8). And again we read, **"But the fruit of the Spirit is... faith"** (Eph. 5:22). Faith, that kind which is called **"the faith of God's elect"** (Titus 1:1) is not the product of the sinner. Man does not naturally have it and cannot manufacture it. And so it was that one thief was enabled to hear with the spiritual ear. And although he heard the truth preached in a mocking fashion, he was given faith and therefore believed the truth. He was born again and therefore turned (repented) toward God and believed on Christ even in what was seemingly Messiah's darkest hour. He was given faith to believe in spite of circumstances. Probably he did not understand how Messiah could die, but he believed and expected Jesus Christ to come into His kingdom for he said, **"Lord, remember**

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By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama

Accepted in Christ

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6).

The phrases “accept Christ” and “accept God” have almost become trademark phrases of modern Christianity. Though, in light of the verse before us, one must question whether those phrases are actually proper. Is it we who accept God through Christ? Or, is it God Who accepts us on the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross? These are opposite perspectives and honestly need to be considered in light of the common usage of these terms and our text verse.

First of all, we must understand that God is in charge. He is the Sovereign Ruler of His creation. He is the Judge. Man is accountable to Him – not vice versa (Rom. 3:19-20). Mankind is fallen. We, as a whole, are a race of rebels. The whole Adamic race is naturally at enmity with God (Rom. 8:7). We are, by nature, at odds with the Judge of this world. We are the ones in danger of eternal condemnation. Those simple, foundational truths should be enough to show that we need God to accept us...or else! A human “accepting God through Christ” or not will have no affect on God’s eternal abode. He is

not in need. However, if God rejects us, we will be eternally condemned! Again, we need God to accept us!!

From Cain’s discussion with God (Gen. 4:7) throughout both Testaments (I Pet. 2:5), there is a common thought. Continually, man’s need of being accepted by God through a substitutionary sacrifice is the theme of the Bible. Over and over again we see the truth that man is in need of God to accept him. Over and over again we see that the alternative results in eternal punishment. Not even once do we see any idea that God needs man to accept Him. Man is told to repent and believe the Gospel (Acts 19:4). But never once is it suggested that man should “accept Christ” or “accept God.” In reality, it is the opposite of what is needed. We, as filthy sinners, are in need of the Holy and Righteous God accepting us!

So then, how are we accepted by God? I mean, He has given us a Law that every one of us has broken without exception. We are guilty. It matters not the depth of sin any of us are in. If you have broken one point in the Law, you are guilty of breaking the whole Law (Jam. 2:10). Simply, **“all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23). If God is a Holy and Righteous Judge (and He is), we are all then condemned. This is not debatable really. A righteous Judge must condemn the guilty. If He does not, He ceases to be righteous! How then are we accepted? Simple – Jesus willingly paid for our sins and took the death we deserved. He paid the penalty. Consequently, we are now accepted by God.

Perhaps this all seems like semantics to some...and maybe it is. But we never need to confuse

the idea that we are accepted by God through the meritorious work of Jesus on the cross. Any confusion of what happened at Calvary is a bad thing.



Gospel Preached

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me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42). He in so doing confessed Christ as his only hope! His understanding of divine truth, his becoming **“light in the Lord”** (Ephesians 5:8), his turning to God (repentance) and his faith in Christ was all brought about by his new birth. Those who boast that it was their faith or their praying that brought about their spiritual birth do not understand I Corinthians 4:7. There the Holy Ghost said, **“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”** Are you different from those around you? Have you been brought to repentance toward God? Do you have faith in Christ? Do you dare to think that you produced it? God says you received it! Understanding that all of salvation, including the new birth, is the work of God excludes boasting.

This preacher often quotes from the old A.D. 1833 New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith. It is not perfect and obviously it is not the Word of God. In spite of its weaknesses, it expresses very well what old-time Baptists believed about the new birth. More importantly, it expresses concisely, how God saves sinners. It was once the most popular Baptist confession in the Southern and Southwestern

United States. The vast majority of older Baptist churches in those parts once agreed with it. Many churches adopted this confession as a statement of what they believed. Many others were organized on the basis of these truths. In spite of this, most Baptists today have never heard of this old confession. It is a sad fact that most of today’s Baptists no longer believe what their old Baptist forefathers believed about the new birth. Therefore we include it here as proof of what the old-time Baptists believed and taught – what sound Baptists still believe and teach. Article 7 of that confession says: “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.” Old time Baptists believed– and some today still believe - that the Holy Spirit births people into God’s family and that as a result of this regeneration or new birth there is a “voluntary obedience to the gospel.” That is, the gospel is believed. Sound Baptists still believe that the evidence of the new birth is “repentance, and faith, and newness of life.” This is the truth, we believe, and also as the confession states, this new birth “is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth...” Yes, sometimes God causes men to hear “divine truth” with their spiritual ears even when preached

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Gospel Preached

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mockingly or by one adverse to it – even when the preacher may go on to add his particular “hoop” which he says the sinner must jump through in order to be born again.

It is evident that no man can save himself. It is also clear from the Bible that if God were not sovereign and almighty – able to do what He pleases in every situation – no man would ever be born again. After all, **“the wind bloweth where it listeth** [desires or chooses],” (John 3:8) indicating that the Holy Spirit also moves sovereignly, i.e., according to His own will. So like Paul, those who understand something of the sovereignty of God can rejoice whenever the gospel is preached. And just what is the gospel? Boiled down to its essence the gospel was made clear by Paul when he wrote: **“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”** (I Cor. 15:1-4). Nothing here about God loving all men or trying to save all men if they will only let Him. Nothing here about coming forward or praying some magical prayer. Nothing here about being sprinkled or baptized. Have you **“received”** the gospel? Is it **“wherein ye stand”**? Do you **“keep in memory”** that good news? The good news or gospel

is what Christ has done! It is the message of His death, burial and resurrection as God’s Lamb. John the Baptist said of Him, **“Behold the Lamb of God!”** (John 1:36). Have you eyes to behold Him? Do you see Him as God’s sacrificial Lamb – your only hope? Has God given you repentance and faith? Have you been born again by the Holy Spirit of God? Do you, like Paul, rejoice whenever the gospel is preached? Remember, **“Salvation is of the LORD”** (Jonah 2:9). Whenever the gospel of Christ is preached something happens: something that cannot be “revival-ized up.” Hearers either reject the truth or they repent and believe. And no man can stop either of those things from happening. When God is pleased to birth into His family those whom He wills to save, the new birth takes place as the old confession says, “in connection with divine truth,” or as our title says, “Whenever The Gospel Is Preached.” Let us do two things: first of all let us rejoice that God is sovereign and almighty – i.e., well able to birth into His family those who hear the gospel even when preached mockingly and for the wrong reasons. Second, let us be faithful in speaking the “divine truth” - i.e., the gospel to others. By giving, going, praying, preaching and witnessing to lost men and women, let us be busy **“pulling them out of the fire”** (Jude 1:23).



Preach the Word

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and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn

away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (II Tim. 3:15-4:5).

Brothers, we need to preach the Word of God. I assume everyone reading this would agree with that statement. Unfortunately, even within the ranks of Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptists, not everyone is doing it. There are many ways to convince ourselves that we are preaching the Word, but in fact we may be deceived.

It is my goal to approach this subject as delicately and yet directly as possible. I fear we have found ourselves, as Baptist preachers, in a time where we don’t distinguish between preaching what is true and preaching the Truth. We believe that as long as what we say is true that it carries the same authority as preaching the Word itself. It does not.

We would recognize that a preacher who proclaims false doctrine is not preaching the Word. However, I challenge you to consider:

- A preacher who delivers an entire 40-minute message without once referring to the Biblical text has not preached the Word.

- A preacher who uses a text as a “jumping off point” simply because it contains a single word like “joy, love, fear, etc.” and then follows it with 40-minutes of their own thoughts on “joy, love, or fear” has not truly preached the Word.

- A preacher who knowingly twists a text from its original meaning to some different (but also true) meaning has not honestly preached the Word.

Even if every word and every point of the above sermons were accurate Biblically and conveyed

truth, all of them are failures to preach the Word as Paul commanded. I fear we are losing the distinction between simply saying words and preaching the Word. We too often settle for speaking truthful words instead of proclaiming the Word of Truth.

Even Baptist preachers like us need a reminder of the importance of preaching the Word of God. When you undertake to do the work of the ministry, especially the proclamation of God’s Word, you are undertaking an extremely important task. Much like any other big job, we expect a set of instructions before we begin. We get those instructions in the Scriptures. Dear reader, you are not the first person to be urged to preach the Word of God. When Paul left the elders at the church of Ephesus, knowing he would not be there to guide their ministry any more, he urged them to “feed the flock of God” (Acts 20:28) and left them in the care of “God, and to the Word of His grace.” The Word of God is primary in the work of a preacher.

As Paul wrote a final letter to his young friend Timothy, he urged Timothy to preach the message of God as it had been revealed to him by the Scriptures. The reason for this is that the Word of God is the only effective means for the salvation of sinners and the growth of saints, and therefore God has ordained that preaching the Word is His chosen tool to bring glory to Himself and His Son Jesus Christ.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO PREACH THE WORD

I want you to first consider the kind of accountability a preacher has to preach the Word of God. There at the beginning of verse 2 is the simple command, **“preach the word.”** However, there may

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Preach the Word

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be no more glorious introduction in the Scripture introducing such a simple command. See how Paul introduces the idea of **“preach the word.” “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ... preach the Word!”**

There can be no doubt that the preacher is held to account for the preaching of the Word! Paul does not just make the simple statement to Timothy saying, “you preach the Word because you will be held accountable.” No, Paul goes to great length, no doubt putting in much thought, to intensify this command with layer upon layer of accountability.

He begins with **“I charge thee.”** The word **“charge”** he uses is the Greek word διαμαρτυρομαι (*diamarturomai*) which means “to testify, to solemnly affirm, to earnestly or religiously charge.” In other words, Paul is not just giving a suggestion, but he is issuing a solemn and binding order saying, “I charge thee ... I solemnly command thee ... I am ordering you in the most serious of manners ... preach the Word.” Not only that, but this solemn charge is done in the name and the presence of **“God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”**

And do not for a moment think that Paul is naming the Father and Son to the exclusion of the Spirit. He has already asserted to the Corinthians that **“my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”** (I Cor. 2:4). Paul clearly testifies that the effective preaching of the Word of God requires the unction of the

Holy Spirit.

All three persons of the Godhead have a stake in the proclaiming of the Holy Scriptures. The Father who elected His people from the foundation of the World is glorified through the proclaiming of His Word. The Son Jesus Christ who came in flesh to redeem those people through His work at Calvary has a stake in the preaching of the Word. The Holy Spirit who uses the very Word of God to draw sinners to faith in Jesus Christ has a vital stake in the preaching of the Word.

This little command is a most solemn charge, in the presence of the Triune God, to represent the Word of God with accuracy and proclaim the Word of God with power. And I would add Paul certainly seems to say, “you do it or else.” **“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ... preach the word.”**

I think it safe to say, it would not have escaped young Timothy’s notice that Paul invokes the judgment of Jesus Christ Himself on the obedience to the command of preaching His Word. You proclaim the full counsel of God as it is revealed in the Scriptures

- I would hope you do it because you love it.

- I would hope you do it because you take it seriously.

- I would hope you do it remembering you are always in the presence of God.

- but if for no other reason, you must be the herald of the message of God because Jesus Christ will someday return and you will be held accountable to Him for your obedience to the command to preach His Word.

Do not think for one moment, my friends, that your calling is less

than solemn. Do not dare think, “I will prepare myself better next time” forgetting that you stand as a representative of God at this time! And do not ever forget that you will give an answer to your Lord and Savior for how seriously you dedicated yourself to this great calling.

You have an accountability to the preaching of God’s Word, but you are not accountable for the results. The Word does the work because it contains all the authority necessary to impact the lives of the listener.

AUTHORITY TO PREACH THE WORD

Our second point regards that authority. We have the authority to preach the Word. What a frightening thought it would be if we were to be held accountable for impacting the lives of the listener! I cannot bear the thought that I alone am responsible for bringing them to Jesus Christ or urging them toward godly holiness. It is not possible that we could conjure up in our own hearts and minds the necessary means to accomplish that task.

Paul does not simply tell Timothy to preach, for that in itself would be a burden too heavy to bear. But Paul eases that load by telling Timothy what to preach. Preach the Word! You do not have to preach your own heart for it is desperately wicked and could aid no one. You do not have to preach your own mind because it came into this world blinded and full of vain imaginations.

Instead, the preaching of Jesus Christ is the proclaiming of a message that is NOT our own. Yes, it is ours through experience like a witness who testifies of what they have seen for themselves. But the authorship of the message rests with God and it is merely entrusted to us as a go-between.

We are like a town herald who brings the royal decree from the king ... and it is good news! We are, as Paul writes in II Corinthians 5:20, **“ambassadors for Christ”** making a plea with sinners in the very place of Jesus. An ambassador does not get to make up a message! And ambassador brings the King’s message to the people who are at war with Him. An ambassador simply says, “Here ... these are the terms of peace.”

And since it is not our message, it must be the message of God Himself through His Word. Have you ever stood before a congregation – or any group of people – and just thought, “I do not know if I have anything to say that is going help them. I do not know if I have what they need to hear”? Then remember the context for this command to preach the Word. **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”**

If you have God’s Word, you have what they need to hear. That Word which you hold in your hands – and that Word which you proclaim when you preach – is inspired. It is literally God breathed. And in being God-breathed it contains not only what you need to preach, but also what the listeners need to hear. It is profitable. It will do you good. It is God’s inspired message and contains within it everything necessary for the benefit of your listeners, **“and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”**

Doctrine is that fundamental truth that we must hear and obey.

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Preach the Word

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Reproof is the Greek word that means “evidence” or “conviction” about a truth. Correction is the idea of setting something straight or putting it back right. And instruction in righteousness is revealing of the principles and truths that promote Godly holiness. If I may be so bold as to say it this way: The Bible is God’s Word and it is good for you. It contains what you need to learn, what you need to believe, what you need to change and what you need to teach.

Because of that, we do not just know what to preach, but how to preach it. Do not miss the parallel between II Timothy 3:16 and II Timothy 4:2 where Paul says, **“reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”** The authority of the Word in 3:16 matches with the way we preach the Word in 4:2. It is good for doctrine – preach doctrine. It is good for reproof – so reprove. It is good for correction – so rebuke wrongdoing to correct it. It is good for instruction in righteousness – so exhort them to good works with longsuffering. It contains authority – preach it with authority!

Now will that make you or your listeners suddenly sinlessly perfect? Of course not. The Greek word for “perfect,” *αρτιος* (*artios*) means, it makes you complete. It brings you to maturity. And therefore, it is that inspired Word that our congregations, the world full of lost sinners, and even we ourselves need to hear.

That is the authority of the Word when it is preached. God not only commands men to repent, but He also uses His Word to bring repentance. God not only demands holiness as He

is holy, but He also sent His holy Scriptures as a means to initiate holiness in His children. He not only demands (as Paul notes in 3:17) good works, but also uses the preaching of His inspired Word to furnish and complete His saints, preparing them for those works.

We do not have the authority to preach our own ideas or our own desires. But when we preach the Word – when we give a **“Thus saith the Lord”** we may do so with the highest authority in the universe. Only then can we preach with confidence. After all, “Thus saith Jason” does not lend any confidence to me as the preacher or you as the listener.

The unfortunate truth is a lot of people would be willing to listen to

“thus saith Jason” more than they would **“Thus saith the Lord.”** We are not just accountable to preach the Word, and have authority to preach the Word, but we will also expect:

ADVERSARIES TO THE PREACHING OF THE WORD

Paul says, **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”**

Has that time come, brothers? Do we not live in a world that resists sound doctrine? You can preach in the name of Jesus and

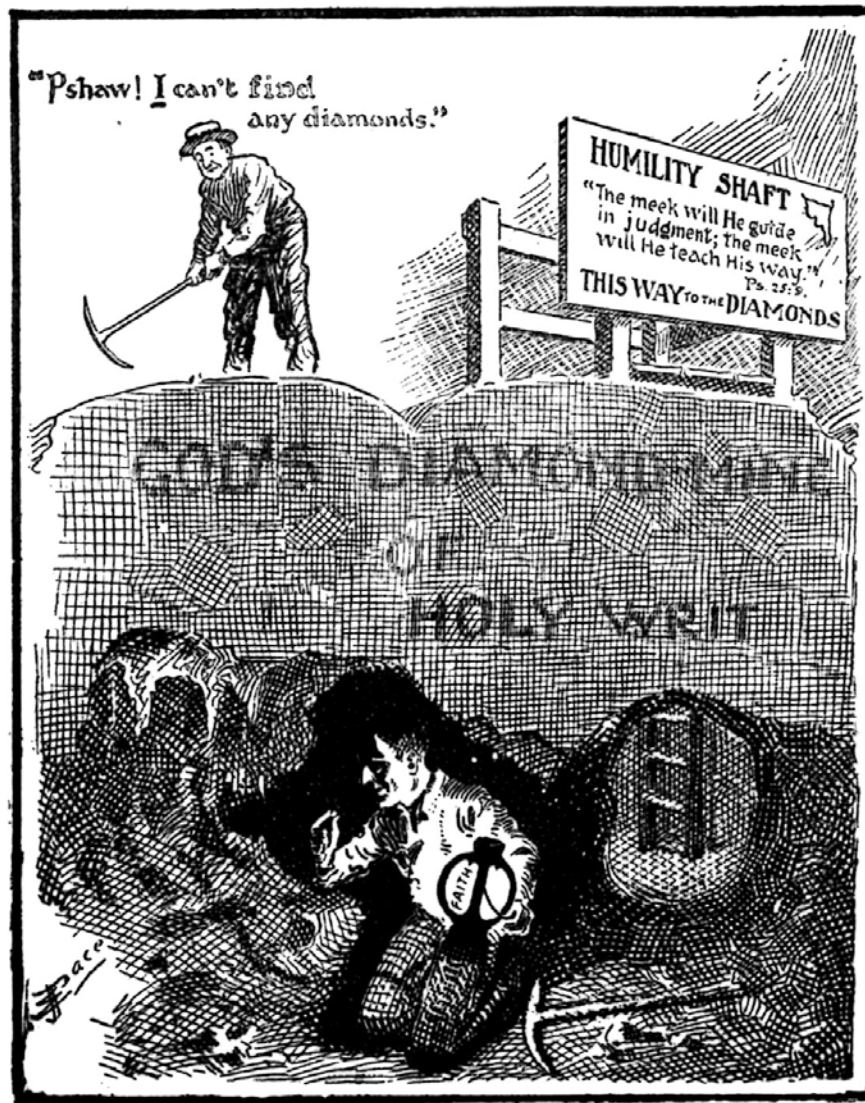
not preach the Word. You can claim the calling of God, but not proclaim the Word of God. And when a world full of false prophets does that ... crowds will follow. We could have huge coliseums filled with folks if we wanted. All we would have to do is leave sound doctrine behind. Just favor your own words over God’s Word and you will attract a crowd.

Oh the dangers of going there! It rejects truth and does nothing for its followers. We could preach the Prosperity Gospel, standing weekly before 30,000 listeners telling them God will bless them with everything from a new house to a better car to a parking spot up front at the crowded mall through the power of positive thinking. You will just make God accountable to bless you because He has to.

The vile preachers of the prosperity gospel have not accurately represented God ... but they have not surprised Him either. Paul describes in verse 3 that the desire of people will not be to hear the truth of God’s Word proclaimed, but instead, they will have itching ears. Literally, they would prefer to have their ears tickled. And they will have no trouble finding preachers to do it.

“They shall heap to themselves teachers,” says Paul. The picture there is a visual one – heap or pile up teachers. You might be the only one preaching the truth of God’s Word, but there will be a whole pile of evil-preachers out there tickling the ears of sinners. You will have adversaries telling fables and people will turn away from the truth and to those fables.

But let me ask for a moment how people are to know the difference? Imagine for a moment that you are a lost listener. If false preachers use the Lord’s Word in a



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perverted way to preach lies from it ... and then a Baptist preacher proclaims truth, but without using the Scripture as their authority ... who has credibility? By consistently preaching our own thoughts instead of the Biblical text, we run the risk of conditioning listeners to believe whatever they hear. Would it not be better to condition them to believe the Word of God? It would be a glorious thing to have churches demand to have every doctrine proven by Scripture from the pulpit! We must turn to Bible-based exposition as the means of preaching the truth. There is no other authority to claim in the face of these adversaries.

No matter the adversaries, the command is still here, **"Preach the Word!"** Be instant – take a stand – in season and out of season. Make a full proof of your own ministry. Take a stand when it is easy and take a stand when it is hard. Preach the Word because no matter how many thousands will follow after the fable, there is no power or authority in that fable. It is the Word of God alone that is alive, powerful, a sharp two-edge sword which is meant to penetrate into the deepest parts of the listener.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I urge you dear reader, as you; prepare a message for your church, a Sunday school lesson for the youth, teaching your children at home devotions. Rely on the Word! Study a passage. Learn what it means. Present that meaning to those who will hear it.

If your sermon preparation begins with you getting an idea for a sermon and then searching for Scripture to preach it, you have the process backwards. Be

in the Word. When you settle on a passage camp out there for awhile and present the main idea from the passage itself. Any sub-points supporting that main idea can come from the context of the passage, too.

Use Nehemiah 8:8 as a standard. Early in the chapter, the people of God begged to hear the Word. So Ezra and the priests: **"... read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."**

Do you see that pattern? Read the Word. Explain the Word. Apply the Word. That has always been God's design for the use of Scripture.

It will likely not prove popular with the masses. However, too many of us (including myself) have fallen prey to seeking popularity. You have no doubt heard Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist preachers proclaim God's sovereignty and church truth without truly showing it from the Scripture. And you have also no doubt heard Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist crowds answer those messages with rousing choruses of "amen!" apparently unaware or indifferent that the sermon is not based in the Word. Is that not our own form of tickling ears and having ours tickled in return?

Let every preacher commit to returning to the priority of preaching from the Word itself. And let every congregation crave the exposition of the Word of Truth and refuse to settle for anything less. The Word of God is the only effective means for the salvation of sinners and the growth of saints, and therefore God has ordained that preaching the Word is His chosen tool to bring glory to Himself and His Son Jesus Christ.

Make sure your message is not only faithful to God's Word, but that it is also clearly based on the Word. When you do, God will not send out His Word void. He will honor it and be glorified by it. Only by a reliance on God's Word can we ensure our preaching will be with Spirit and with power.

Do not for one moment forget that you are the man of God preaching the Word of God to the people of God. Take it seriously in your reading. Take it seriously in your preparation. Take that same seriousness and authority into the pulpit and where you can, confidently and authoritatively **"preach the Word!"**



Seeing Jesus

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were, they had heard of Jesus and were desirous to see Him; to which end they found one of His disciples, namely Philip, and made known their desire to him. The seed was about to fall into the ground and die that it might bring forth fruit. Christ's hour, which on many occasions prior He had said was not come, was now come. The purpose of His coming forth, of His being sent from Heaven, of His emptying Himself of His infinite, eternal, and essential glory to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh, was now about to be fulfilled. He would suffer for sins in the flesh, being crucified in the flesh, that He might bring us to God. **"Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"** (Heb. 9:26). The mystery of the gospel, which had been hidden in ages past, and of which the prophets who prophesied of Christ' sufferings had sought to

find out the time of its fulfillment, and which the angels even now desire to understand and fathom, was about to unfold in open view.

The inquiry of these Greeks was a precursor to the sending forth of the gospel and the shedding of divine light unto the Gentile nations. Long had the mystery of the gospel been hidden with the Jews, who neither comprehended it nor saw in Christ their Savior and King. Their eyes were blinded and their hearts hardened – **"Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them"** (John 12:39-40), – so that when they saw Jesus they could only see the carpenter's son, the Nazarene from Galilee, and not He that cometh from above and is above all (II Cor. 3:13-15). They were about to observe the passover feast, which Moses had, by the Word of God, commanded them to keep. But in their midst was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, the Lamb whom Abraham their father had said God would provide Himself, whose day Abraham had seen and was glad, **"Christ our passover"** (I Cor. 5:7); and they knew Him not. They knew not that all which the thousands of memorial passovers which had been observed prior to that time had symbolized and typified would all be fulfilled when Christ laid down His life, bearing **"our sins in his own body on the tree"** (I Pet. 2:24). They could not see Jesus. Now what is required to see? What do all men need in order to see anything? The answer is light. In order to see Jesus, divine light is required.

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Seeing Jesus

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"Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light" (John 12:35-36). There is both the light of opportunity and the light of revelation. Every person who has traveled understands the difference between traveling in the day and in the night. We often want to reach our destination while it is daylight, because of the hindrance caused and the difficulty caused by our inability to see in the darkness. Oftentimes we have noticed how very different things appear in the day than in the night. Things great and large and even crucial may be unnoticed, unobserved, and unfound in the dark which had been visible in the light. The Jews to whom Jesus spake at this time had the light of opportunity. The gospel was being presented unto them, and the very Person of the gospel, Jesus Christ, was in their midst, and they saw His miracles and heard His teachings. Yet, they lacked the light of divine revelation. **"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath that arm of the Lord been revealed"** (John 12:37-38)? **"The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?"** (John 12:34).

More than mere human

perception is required to see Jesus in a soul-saving, heart-converting, spirit-quickenning way. He must be revealed to a man, woman, boy, and girl: and He is only revealed by the Word of God, **"which by the gospel is preached unto you"** (I Pet. 1:25), (Matt. 16:13-17). The hearing of faith by the Word of God is the only way in which Christ is revealed unto lost and dying men (Rom. 10:13-17, II Cor. 4:3-6). The outward light of gospel preaching must be accompanied by the inward illuminating work of God in the heart of man. **"Ye were illuminated"** (Heb. 10:32), (Matt. 4:12-17). The preaching of the gospel message of **"repentance toward God and, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Acts 20:21) brings saving light unto men. It does not mean that all who hear the gospel are effectually saved; but it means that without the hearing of the gospel none are saved. The work of God's messengers is instrumental, and the inward working of God's Holy Spirit is essential, in spiritually illuminating the sin-darkened hearts of men, women, boys, and girls so that they see Jesus as the soul-saving, sin-removing, life-giving Son of God.

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness" (John 12:46). Believing on Jesus as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of all who trust in Him, both Jew and Gentile, is how men are enlightened. They receive the Light of God which is provided, manifested, and given in His Son Jesus Christ. No man ever saw Jesus except by faith. These in our text beheld Him with their natural eyes, but their hearts were blinded so that they could not behold Him as the Savior of sinners, and the One in whom all the prophecies, types, and shadows

of their religion find their terminus and substance. **"The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever"** (John 12:34). Yet, they did not see that **"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"** (Rom. 10:4).

We find that the Greeks desired to see Jesus. The Jews were blinded and could not see Him as the Lamb of God, the true Passover. Isaiah the prophet **"saw his glory, and spake of him"** (John 12: 41). Now if God can reveal His Son Jesus Christ to His holy prophets hundreds of years prior to His birth, then He is also able to reveal Jesus unto those who hear of Him and His saving work which He accomplished at the cross many centuries after He died, was buried, arose from the dead, and ascended up to Heaven to be seated at the right hand of God. **"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"** (John 12:32). He will draw all kinds, irrespective of nationality, culture, ethnicity, background, upbringing, language, skin tone, intellect, education, wealth, or social standing. He had drawn from the Jews; He was about to draw from among the Gentiles; and He will draw unto Himself all that the Father hath given Him from before the foundation of the world, and redeem them unto Himself a peculiar people of His own, to the praise and honor and glory of His amazing grace (John 6:35-40). I know that people, in their carnal and sinful minds, are always occupied with and concerned with the wrong questions. Many want to pose the question, "How do I know if the Father gave me unto Christ? How do I know if He chose me in Christ from all eternity?" That is now your question! That is



Quotes from Brother Ritechus N. Dignation

by Joseph Harris

The answer to our problems in America is not government, but God. We should spend more time tending to the things of God than anything else, but that doesn't do away with our obligation to speak up and vote when the time comes. So vote right. If folks would start checking out the candidates as close as they do when buying a horse, then things might start looking up the day after election.

God's business. God's electing whom He will is His choice and determination. Your business is, "Have you believed on the only begotten Son of God?" Jesus never did tell people to be concerned with whether or not God had given them to Christ. He said, **"He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst"** (John 6:35). **"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day"** (John 6:40). **"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light"** (John 12:36). **"Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness"** (John 12:44-46).



Considering

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If, by the grace of God, you have been made a church member in one of His New Testament churches, and yet will not be faithful to assemble with that church when it comes together to worship and do the work God has called it to, **YOU ARE NOT BEING FAITHFUL TO GOD!**

There is little question that even some who may assemble regularly are not spiritually being faithful to God, but there is no question concerning those who forsake the assembling of themselves together when the church meets. Again, let it be stated clearly, **YOU ARE NOT BEING FAITHFUL TO GOD!**

Some will think themselves faithful because they attend one or two services a week, or a month, but again, that is not what the Scripture says concerning those who are not providentially hindered. The implicit command is concerning ANY and thus ALL times the church has covenanted together to assemble. If you did not agree to that when you joined the church, you were dishonest or personally deceived.

It is a fact that the accepted standards of faithfulness have been undermined by the practices of the un-faithful church member. Many churches and pastors are unwilling to call sin "sin" in our day. All unfaithfulness IS sin and being unfaithful to attend any called assembly of the church is sin, even if it is the customary and accepted manner of most church members in our day not to attend every service. And we wonder why we don't see the great blessings of God upon His churches today as in days gone by. It is hard to recognize blessings when you're in the midst of

chastening.

It is true, church attendance is not everything, but it is also true that you and your church will not be or do much God has purposed without it. Let this be a reminder if not a warning to those who have come to accept non-attendance as an acceptable practice, it is still a sin, and that of the worst kind, for it is, every time it is participated in, a show of rebellion (Heb. 10:25).

Those who have become so accustomed to forsaking the assembling of the church have, to some degree, had their conscience hardened to the point that they seem to no longer have guilt or shame about it, nor their rebellion against God's Word (Heb. 10:25). It may be that the problem goes far deeper than their conscience, for it may be they are not Baptists at all, or even worse. The "faith" received and practiced by true and faithful Baptists has always included the understanding of this most rudimentary truth: Baptists faithfully attend church! Every time it assembles, as God has commanded it to (Heb. 10:25), Baptists assembled. This is the truth seen in the first church composed of the Apostles, and it is the truth that is continually seen as it was believed and practiced by the churches that succeeded from it (Luke 22:14; 24:33, 51-53; Acts 1:12-15; 2:1, 41-47).

It is believed that it is no coincidence that many of the excuses used today for unfaithfulness were never heard in the first churches, let alone even considered. "I have to be at work in the morning, so I can not make it for evening services." Many quit their jobs in that day to assemble faithfully. "I can not tithe or share with the needs of the church this week, I have bills to pay." They sold their possessions and goods,

maybe including some of their toys, so they could. No, you hear no mention of weariness, sickness of themselves or even a tired child which, in many instances today is recognized for what it is, just an excuse for their own lazy, fleshly ease. We do not hear of any missing for family reunions, birthdays or because mom is having us over for dinner. There was no mention of an activity at the Synagogue for the children that they would have to excuse themselves for. No, the practice of the early Baptists was not one of excuses, no matter for what, it was one of faithfulness to assemble when their church met.

To those today who have come to accept most any excuse they pick for missing church, it is suggested that you try searching throughout the Scriptures for one that is condoned in God's Word. If you find one God condones, then we will excuse you as well. Let me save you some time, you will not find ONE! Yes, we recognize providential hindrances, but be also sure, God is well aware if they are indeed of His providence or not, or just another excuse for the sin of being unfaithful (Heb. 10:25).

To those who do, or are being tempted by the example of those who do, to be unfaithful, it should be considered, "Is their custom after the faith which has been revealed or is it something different from what God's children have normally practiced in days gone by (Jude 3-4)?"

To those who may think we are being too harsh in our discernments concerning what is involved with being a faithful church member, we would only ask for you to show by the standards and examples revealed in God's Word that we are wrong. It is sure your time would be better

spent to follow such exhortations as II Corinthians 13:5 demands, than to try to find fault with our interpretation.

It is our hope that maybe just one, before they try again to find justification for their excuses for unfaithfulness to the Lord in not assembling with His church, will first consider how God has always felt and dealt with vain excuses for the sin of unfaithfulness to assemble when He calls (Luke 14:15-35).



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The Burden

By James Smith
(1802 - 1862)

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Rom 7:24)?

This is the language of the Apostle Paul, and conveys to the mind some idea of the strong inward conflict he endured. He speaks in the first person singular all through the connexion, and uses language which it is difficult to misunderstand, unless the mind is prejudiced against the truth. Here is Paul's heart laid open, the working of his mind set forth, the conflict in his bosom exposed; the flesh was lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that he could not do the things that he would. He delighted in the law of God, which none but a Christian can do; he panted for holiness as with every breath, but he felt evil working in his

♦ (Continued on page 223)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What is “an high day” mentioned in John 19:31, and how does it differ from the regular Sabbath? - Maine

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“And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King” (John 19:14)! This verse is the key to what you ask. This day was an high day Sabbath called the Passover, which landed on a Thursday. The day of preparation was a Wednesday, the day Jesus was crucified and placed in the grave. The Sabbath landed, as usual, on a Saturday, which in turn made Friday a preparation day for the Sabbath.

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“And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto

you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever” (Lev. 16:29-31).

Jewish feast days were called High Sabbaths, because it did not matter which day of the week they fell on. It became a holy day or high sabbath where no work was done and God was worshipped with very specific protocols. For example, the day of atonement is ALWAYS on the tenth day of the seventh month. Just like our birthdays fall on different days of the week, so, too, do these Jewish holy days, and thereby are determined special holy days, or high sabbaths. If the holy day falls on Tuesday, then there will be TWO sabbaths that week- Tuesday and the normal Saturday Sabbath. Selah! Think about it!

The High Sabbath differs not from the observance of regular sabbaths, in that they are termed ‘holy convocations’- a day of rest and a day of worship. But there were usually additional requirements or preparations that involved the priests (day of atonement) or every family (Passover & Feast of Unleavened Bread or Feast of Tabernacles).

“And ye shall keep it (the Passover lamb) up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening” (Ex. 12:6). In 30 A.D., the year Christ was crucified, the 14th of Abib (called Nisan since the captivity), fell on a Wednesday, so the Jews would have slaughtered their paschal lambs in the evening, at precisely the time when Jesus

Christ the Lamb of God would have been on the cross of Calvary, giving up the ghost after the conclusion of the three hours of darkness from noon until 3 p.m. God sacrificed HIS Lamb just as the Jews would have been! Selah! Think about it!

This is the point where John 19:31 comes in, **“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”** As the last few hours (and minutes) of the Passover Day (of preparation) concluded, Thursday (which would start at 6 p.m. by Jewish reckoning) was coming, which would be the first High Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Since this High Sabbath held all of the connotations of a regular Sabbath (even more!), the desire to get the Saviour into the grave was imminent and pressing. **“And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even” (Ex. 12:16-18).**

Therefore, Christ would be in the grave the evening/morning of Thursday, the High Sabbath, the evening/morning of Friday

and finally the evening/morning of the regular Saturday Sabbath. Having made the atonement and fulfilling all prophecy, Jesus would have come forth out of His borrowed sepulchre at precisely 72 hours (3 full nights and 3 full days) from His entombment at 6 p.m. on Wednesday night/Thursday commencement, to Saturday evening as Sunday (the first day of the week) started! I do not doubt our sovereign God emerged as the clock turned from 5:59:59 p.m. Saturday to 6:00:00 p.m. on Sunday, and our Saviour departed the grave as our Triumphant Redeemer! Selah! Think about it!

“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils” (Mark 16:9).

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I consulted John Gill and A.W. Pink on this verse and, to my dismay, they do not agree with what I believe the Bible teaches. I believe that after Christ was crucified He was in the tomb for 3 full and literal days, not just parts of 3 days. Thus, I do not believe He was crucified on a Friday. Rather He was crucified on a Wednesday, taken down from the cross, prepared, and placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea later that evening. He rose again in the early morning hours of the first day of the week, or Sunday, hours before sunrise.

During Passover week the Jews

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. I hear a lot today about Christian liberty. If we use Galatians 5:13 as a starting point, how much liberty is too much liberty? - Alabama

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Well, first let me make this statement, "Liberty that Paul is talking about is not a license to sin." The question is a good question and the way it is asked here is not how many have asked it of me in times past. Most of the time the question is asked in order to trap me and get a pat on the back for them (my approval that something a person has done or about to do is alright) from me saying it is okay.

Allow me to give two examples; the first one happened when I was a young minister (well, I am still young) and just getting started (made a lot of mistakes by the way). A member of the church at the time (they, a family of four eventually left) came to me before the services were about to start and said, "We will not be here next Sunday," I asked, "Are you going on vacation?" No, I was given Cleveland Cavaliers tickets for Saturday night's game and we will not get back home until around midnight (they only lived about ten minutes from the church house). Well I was not happy but what he wanted me to say was (and a big pat on the back) that's okay Brother you have a great time. Paul said, **"Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh."** Oh, by the way, this same man

gave me two Cleveland Cavaliers tickets before this occasion but it was during the week, not on a weekend. Now I had to be at work at six the next morning, and my son had to go to school the next day, I had never been to a pro basketball game, and I will never go again. We went to the game, drove an hour back home, it was around one o'clock in the morning, and I got up and went to work and my son went to school. Now I do not want a pat on the back here, but it has always been a fact, work is more important than church...is it?

The second example; A member comes into the church building Sunday morning late and has his camo hunting clothes on, ah, it is turkey season...really, are you serious? My memory escapes me but I think he was the adult Sunday school teacher at the time. Now you know why preachers have gray hair or no hair? So he comes in and sits down folds his arms in defiance and glares at me like he is saying, okay preacher I dare you to preach to me!!! **"Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh."** Just to add, "I HATE HUNTING ON SUNDAY!" I wished they had never changed the laws concerning it. I was preaching one Sunday and the church building was out in the country and all of a sudden, Bam, Bam. I looked toward the window and there were two hunters outside deer hunting 10-20 yards from the building at the edge of a cemetery. Oh, by the way the turkey hunter did not get a turkey...really, Wow, I wonder

why?

You might say Brother Reed is fired up! You bet-cha I am fired up! Christian people use these verses on having liberty to justify just about everything they do when it comes to sin, and the sad thing is I believe they know they are doing wrong. But somehow, thinking they have this liberty makes it all right. I will be the first to tell you, IT IS NOT ALL RIGHT! It will never be all right!

Now that I have said my piece, let us see if we can answer the question. One writer puts it this way, "Ours is a day that cries for liberation. Men, women, and even children are demanding more freedom to do as they please. In the name of personal rights, authority is flouted and restrictions are resisted. Like the Israelites in the days of the judges, sinful people want to do what is right in their own eyes (see Judges 17:6; 21:25; cf. Deuteronomy 12:8).

But ours is also a day of addiction, not only to alcohol and drugs but also to sexual passions, violence, and many other forms of bondage in which a person eventually becomes powerless to escape. When people choose to persist in a sin, they develop less and less control over it until eventually they forfeit any choice entirely." **"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"** (John 8:34). Fallen man is a slave to his sinful nature, an addict who cannot successfully control his sinful thoughts and actions even when he may want to."

The problem today is that people believe God is who they think He is, not who He really is but what they "think" He is. **"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways**

of death" (Prov. 16:25). **"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat"** (Matt. 7:13). So if you use Galatians 5:13 as a starting point (it really starts with Galatians 2:4) we will find that what Paul is really talking about as to our liberty (freedom from the law) is this. Paul states this liberty is freedom from being bound to law as a system of government regulating daily life, including the Old Testament ceremonies, under which the Judaizers wanted to drag believers. He speaks about freedom from the frustrating, oppressive, condemning tyranny of a legal system that was impossible to keep. It is the freedom of knowing that one is accepted by God because of Christ's completed work, rather than of knowing that one's own insufficient merit is never enough to please Him. It is the freedom of a total cleansing that even the godliest Old Testament saints never fully understood. Their consciences were never completely clear, because they knew they could not totally and finally satisfy God's demands in the law and because the rituals and ceremonies were but outward temporary acts symbolic of a reality they never experienced permanently. Not until the work of Christ did believers have the sense of complete righteousness imputed to them, once and forever making them right with God. **"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"** (John 8:36).

Now, and until I die, I can rejoice that I have the **"liberty"** to proclaim, **"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy,**

◊ (Continued on page 228)

Gleanings

(Continued from page 223) ♦

nature, and sometimes prevailing against him, and he cries out, **“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”**

He was burdened, and he groaned being burdened. But his burden was nothing external; he could triumph over all his external trials, and say, **“None of these things move me.”** Nor was it his natural body, which he inhabited as an inconvenient tabernacle. But it was the corruption of his nature; the plague of the heart or the law in his members, warring against the law of his mind; and this, like a dead corpse fastened to a living body, was weighty, loathsome, deadly, and a constant hindrance to him. It was the consequence of Adam’s sin, and is in the seat of life; and, like a flowing fountain, sends out streams of corruption, which defile the thoughts, desires, motives, plans, affections, and operations. Its parts, are the lusts of the flesh working powerfully; its tendency, is to death, or separation from God; and while it is a part of the Christian, he renounces it, disowns it, and says, **“It is no more I, but the sin that dwelleth in me.”** Still it bears him down to earth, hinders him in every holy exercise, depresses him and sinks his spirit in gloom, unfits him for the enjoyment of the high and holy privileges of the gospel, and causes him in bitterness of soul to cry, **“O wretched man that I am!”**

But we are not to suppose the Apostle was positively unhappy, for he was not. He was delivered from guilt; and though occasionally overcome, he was not a slave, but a son of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. Still he felt sin working, lust rising, and pollution

flowing; these things hindered him. They were powerful, he hated them; they put him to grief and pain, and as a person grieved in spirit, he groaned; as one opposed, he wrestled; as one in pain, he sighed for ease; as sorrowful, he pined for comfort; as wearied, he longed for rest; as unable to deliver himself, he applied to his God; as conscious that it would last through life, he cried, **“O wretched man that I am!”**

“Who shall deliver me?” He knew Who would deliver him, and he thanks God for it; it is not the language of ignorance, but of impassioned desire. He longs for deliverance, and that, because he knew that his God hated sin, and his one ruling desire was to please God in all things. He found also, that his burden prevented or interrupted his fellowship with God; and being led away by its effects sometimes, his Father hid His face from him. His evident love to holiness had become natural; consequently his hatred to sin, in every shape and form, especially in himself, was strong and painful. He found also, that sin dwelling in him, unfitted him for those high and holy duties which devolved upon him; and indisposed him occasionally for attending to them. It led him into evil, and gave Satan and the world a degree of power over him. All which things raised in his soul a burning desire for entire deliverance from this body of death, this fountain of impurity, this law in the members; and therefore he cries out, **“Who shall deliver me?”**

See, my Christian reader, the nature and tendency of sin; it plagued, pained, hindered, and caused an Apostle to call himself a wretched man. See also what we are to expect below, even sorrow,

grief, hindrances, and pains; the body of death will burden us, press us down, and cause us sometimes to long to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Believer, thy case is not singular, or new; but thy experience is the experience of all the saints, even of those who were most highly favoured; Paul felt just as you feel, groaned as you groan, and longed for deliverance as you do now. Nothing affects the true believer so painfully as sin; and when his conduct is so correct, that those around him can see no cause for sorrow or complaint, he feels enough to mourn over, on account of the sin that dwelleth in him.

*“Why should a soul redeem’d with blood,
Called by grace and born of God,
Feel a perpetual war within,
‘Twix reigning grace and striving sin?”*

*‘Tis but to make him ev’ry day
From self to Jesus turn away;
And ‘tis a sign of life within,
To groan beneath a load of sin.*

*Who but the soul who feels his woe,
Will to the blood of sprinkling go?
And seek salvation only there,
From all that he shall feel or fear.”*



Forum #1

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were commanded to observe a special Sabbath the day after the offering of the Passover lamb. In essence the Jews were to observe two Sabbaths during the Passover week, the first one came to be referred to as “an high day” because it was a special Sabbath to be observed only one day out of the year. This special Sabbath observed the day after Passover is clearly revealed in Exodus 12:16: **“And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation,**

and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done In THEM (emphasis mine, TWR, plural pronoun indicating more than one Sabbath was observed during Passover week)...” So the first day after the Passover was observed there was a Sabbath (Thursday) and on the normal seventh day of the week (Saturday) a Sabbath was observed. The only difference that I can discern between the high day Sabbath and the regular Sabbath is that the high day Sabbath was observed only once a year during the Passover week, whereas the normal Sabbath was observed every week throughout the year.

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“And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree” his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance” (Deut. 21:22-23).

“And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein” (Lev. 23:6-7).

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Forum #1

(Continued from page 226) ♦

There were several things going on here during this time of year and it all falls in line with the prophecies and the promises of God. I really can not do any better than what A.W. Pink has to say on the subject. **“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away”** (John 19:31). “The day on which the Saviour was crucified was **“an high day:”** it was on the eve of the regular weekly sabbath and also of the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, from which the Jews reckoned the seven weeks to Pentecost; the same day was also the one appointed for the presentation and offering of the sheaf of new corn, so that it possessed a treble solemnity. Hence the Jews’ urgency here - the breaking of the legs would serve the double purpose of hastening and ensuring death. Behind this motive and act of **“the Jews,”** zealous for the Law (Deuteronomy 21:22-23) (which you have read above), we may behold, again, the over-ruling hand of God. Seemingly, Pilate would have allowed the body of Christ to remain on the cross, perhaps for several days, after He was dead. But the Lord Jesus had declared He would be “buried” and that He would be in the grave three days. For the fulfillment of this He must be buried the same day that He died; therefore did God see to it that no word of His failed! Once again were the Lord’s enemies unconsciously executing the Divine counsels.” Brother Pink had such an insight and a

way with words that it would be futile for me to do better.

I want to point out also that this was not only a Sabbath, and a Sabbath in the Passover week, but it was a day when all the people appeared and presented themselves before the Lord in the temple, and the sheaf of the first-fruits was offered up, as mentioned by Brother Pink. It was a very celebrated day. John Gill states, “It is in the original text, it was a great day of the Sabbath.” Just to mention also, the Jews urgency was no work was to be done as stated above (Lev. 23:6-7).

My only problem with these two great writers is that they do not actually give the day that this **“high day”** was on, this seems to be the consensus with most writers. I have exhausted my research to find most writers have not elaborated on this particular passage of Scripture to give us an exact day of the week unless it was to show that Jesus died on Friday, thus supporting the Good Friday theory, which I do not believe. So I am incorporating two more writers to shed some light to the actual day this **“high day”** was on! What it comes down to is this, you either believe Christ died on Friday or Wednesday to which I believe the latter. Before I continue let the reader understand there is much to be studied here, and because of space it is impossible to lay down every proof. So I would encourage the questioner and you, dear reader, to exhaust your study to come to the right conclusion. But now allow us to hear from two other writers on the subject.

First, I would like to quote B. H. Carroll who I feel needs no introduction. Brother Carroll, though he, as others, does not give an exact day makes this statement concerning (John 19:31), “The

Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day) asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.” A sabbath did not necessarily mean the seventh day. Any high day could be a sabbath, and the Jews wanted those who were crucified to die soon. A crucified man might linger several days. So Pilate, out of deference to the Jewish law, commanded their legs to be broken, so as to bring about an earlier death. Now, when they came to break the legs of Jesus, to their surprise, He was already dead. There was nothing in the mere physical anguish in the crucifixion to bring about the death of Jesus Christ. He died under the hand of God. He died by the stroke of the sword of the law.”

The point I want to make here is Brother Carroll states, “A sabbath did not necessarily mean the seventh day. Any high day could be a sabbath, and the Jews wanted those who were crucified to die soon.” Again, he does not give us a certain day of the week, but without doubt Christ did die on this **“high day.”**

The second writer I would like to quote which should sum this all up for the exact day our Lord died on, which was a “high day” is R. Belanger. He states, “According to our Lord’s prophecy of Matthew 12:40, seventy-two hours would transpire from the time of His death, burial and resurrection. The keys to the confusion over this lies in two places: 1. How many Sabbaths were observed at this time? 2. When did the day begin? First of all, the Bible and the Jews reckon a new day to begin at 6:00 p.m. in our evening. This is based upon the statements of Genesis

1:5, 8, 13, etc., that the **“evening and the morning”** were the first day. Evening being the start of the new day as it was in the beginning of creation because light came forth out of darkness as God spoke it into existence (Gen. 1:4); From Matthew 27:46 we observe that it was **“the ninth hour,”** or 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon, that is, three hours away from the start of the new day, when the Lord willingly gave up His earthly life. Because a Sabbath was to approach at 6:00 p.m., the start of the new day which would be Thursday, the Lord’s body must be removed from the cross and before the new day or Sabbath. What are we leading to? In order to find a complete 72 hour period in these occurrences we must conclude that the Sabbath mentioned here was not a Saturday Sabbath. It is, in fact, referred to as **“the Jews preparation day”** in John 19:42. In John 19:14 it is called the **“preparation of the Passover.”** Again, in John 18:28 we read of the coming Passover observance. Thus, this Passover was a Sabbath because it was the first day of the Passover. In Numbers 28:18 we read, **“In the first day (of the Passover observance) shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work therein.”** Work was forbidden. It was therefore an high Sabbath or special Sabbath which began at 6:00 p.m. or three hours after our Lord had surrendered His life. The Lord Jesus Christ was then crucified on a Wednesday and was placed in the tomb prior to the dawning of the new day of Thursday at 6:00 p.m. This would be our Wednesday evening by today’s reckoning. What we know as Saturday night, 6:00 p.m., was near the time the Lord Jesus Christ arose from the grave. This

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Forum #1

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was the beginning of the first day of the new week or Sunday. Only this answers to a complete 72 hours! Here we have a Thursday Sabbath, a Friday, and a Saturday Sabbath. This is why the women did not go to the tomb until early on the **"first day of the week"** (Matt. 28:1). At the time the women saw the empty tomb and the angels, our Lord had already been risen from the dead for about twelve hours."

Well, there it is! This is how I see and believe it. I hope the questioner will be satisfied with my answer, and if not I am sure my fellow forum pastor brethren will have a far superior answer than I have given.

Dear reader, let me close with one last thought, whether you agree with this answer or not is not really up to me because only the Holy Spirit can reveal the truth to you. But what I would like you to see is this, do you not find it disturbing and heart wrenching that the Jews were about to have a great celebration and present themselves in the temple just having murdered the only begotten Son of God?...Oh the depravity of man, and to think we were there as well. **"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."** God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

(Continued from page 225) ♦

and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). I am not bound by the ceremonial laws. **"Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh."** God Bless!

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"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). True liberty is living as we should, not as we please. James has a lot to say about liberty, like James 1:25. In fact, the whole of the book encourages the Elect to practice Christian liberty. James, also, on the other hand, discourages a grudging attitude towards others and reminds us of our limits concerning our liberty. **"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin"** (James 4:17).

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Galatians 5:13 declares: **"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."**

I believe it is important to define what "Christian liberty" really is from the Holy Scriptures. We will start with our text and determine what "Christian liberty" is not. This new found freedom in Christ is not to be used to feed or indulge in fleshly lusts that war against the soul. There is no freedom or liberty in the works of the flesh as named in Galatians 5:19-21. Some would have you believe that

Christian liberty is the freedom to do whatever we please, including unrestrained indulgence in sin simply because we are forgiven in Christ. This is a lie of Satanic origin and promoted by antinomians. Anyone who is truly saved knows there is no freedom or liberty in sin, only bondage and guilt. Jesus declared as much in John 8:34-36: **"...verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."**

Real "Christian liberty" means that through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ we are justified and forgiven of the guilt and penalty of our sins. We have been liberated from the condemnation of the law and are now free for the first time in our lives to please God as demonstrated by love, obedience and service that brings forth fruit. Jesus set forth the connection between pleasing the Father and real freedom in John 8:29-32: **"And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I always do those things that please him. As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."**

Real Christian liberty means that having obeyed the saving truth of the Gospel, we are free to serve God acceptably and bear fruit that glorifies Him. Before we were saved we had absolutely no ability to bring forth fruit unto God. We were spiritually dead, controlled by Satan, in bondage to the flesh, and incapable of

pleasing God (Rom. 8:7-8). Romans 6:17-22 expresses this truth beautifully: **"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. Being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."**

We are free to love God, serve Him, obey Him, and bring forth fruit unto Him! We can never have too much of that kind of "Christian liberty!" Let us serve God, not ourselves or our fleshly lusts. May God be pleased to produce in us the fruit of the Spirit and holiness which is the essence of real spiritual freedom (Gal. 5:22-25).

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The two definitions for liberty are: 1) free to do; unfettered and 2) free from oppression. But essentially, they come down to

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Forum #2

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the same thing, do they not! The only way one can have the first, is if they have the second! Selah! Think about it!

Before we decide what Christian liberty is, let us inquire into God's liberty and get a basis of understanding of what the Bible's answers will be for us. God, Himself is free (at liberty) to do whatever He wants to do! But, at the same time, He is also bound to His holy nature, in that He can not do everything or anything, unlimited- He cannot lie, cheat or steal! The only way to properly define God's liberty, is to say that He can do anything and everything He desires to do, because God will only desire what is good, perfect and holy! Selah! Think about it! He is at liberty to do nothing else.

A Christian also has been given a new nature, but problems occur because, unlike God, we have an old nature also. **"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another"** (Gal. 5:13). God could never abuse His liberty, but what about us? If we use our Christian liberty to benefit our flesh, we might find ourselves doing questionable things and crossing the line from holiness to ungodliness.

With our basic definition of liberty, there really is no such thing as too much liberty, is there? We all have the same liberty from sin (oppression) in the blood of Jesus Christ. We all have the same liberty (now) to do whatever righteous and good works we desire to do! No one, particular Christian has acquired more liberty from the sacrifice at Calvary than any other Christian-

so why the difference in the exercise (or abuse) of liberty in our lives?

We have to look within ourselves, now. Not typically a pleasant endeavor, even after we have been saved. You see, the problem with the abuse of Christian liberty occurs (not because we have too much liberty, but because we do not all love God the same amount. **"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he (Christ) said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged"** (Luke 7:41-43). Our Lord said that Simon was right! Some will love the Redeemer more than others, and it is based, again, not on the absence of the debt (liberty), but the magnitude of the forgiveness! How far down in that miry clay were we stuck, when He freed us? Selah! Think about it! Deep, deep? Or just 50 pence?

"And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke 7:44-47). Both Simon and the woman had liberty to

wash the Lord's feet, but only one exercised that liberty. Both could have kissed the Lord, but only one did. Both had access to ointments, but only one chose to anoint the Master. Beloved, I do not really think God saved Mary from more grievous sins than Simon. Simon just thought He did, and that perception has colored his logic and his love for the Saviour!

Beloved Reader, I think so many of us miss the point of liberty! We have been made free! But free to do what? **"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."** How much do we desire to empty ourselves from

fleshly carnality and embrace spiritual maturity? Carnal Christians use their liberty for an occasion to feed their flesh and starve their spirit! Many are the questions posed to their pastors: "Can I do this and still be a Christian?" "How much of this/that?" "Nothing wrong with this, is there?" The real question tends to be unasked: "Is there anything right with this/that?" "How holy can I live and still be considered a resident of this world?" That is Christian liberty! Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

FLORIDA JUDGE STRIKES DOWN MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

(WNS)--A federal judge on Aug. 21 declared unconstitutional Florida's ban on same-sex marriage. Repeating an argument made by many other federal judges, Judge Robert L. Hinkle in Tallahassee said the constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman, approved by Florida voters in 2008, violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. Hinkle stayed his decision until the Supreme Court rules on the issue, which it is almost certain to do in 2015.

NEW YORK FARMERS ORDERED TO HOST GAY WEDDINGS

(WNS)--An administrative law

judge in New York has found a couple guilty of discrimination because they refused to allow two lesbians to rent their farm for a wedding ceremony. The judge ordered the couple to pay \$13,000 in fines and damages and undergo "anti-discrimination" re-education. Robert and Cynthia Gifford own and operate Liberty Ridge Farm, a 100-acre property in Schaghticoke, N.Y., about 20 miles north of Albany. For 15 years, they have operated a family business renting various areas of the farm for public events, including weddings, parties, corporate meetings, summer camps, and an annual fall festival. The Giffords have 60 days to appeal the decision.

IS COMMON CORE LOSING THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION

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TEST?

(WNS)--The education standards called Common Core have been adopted in more than 40 states, but according to a Phi Delta Kappa (PDK)/Gallup poll released in August, the majority of Americans oppose them. By the end of 2012, all but a handful of states had adopted Common Core. But the 2013 PDK/Gallup poll showed 62 percent of Americans had never heard of the standards already in place. Public awareness has grown since then, and so has public concern. Eighty-one percent of poll participants this year had "heard at least a little" about Common Core, and 60 percent said they don't want it in their classrooms.

WOMEN'S COLLEGE REDEFINES "WOMEN"

(WNS)--An all-women's college in South Hadley, Mass., has expanded its definition of "women" with a new admissions policy this week. Mount Holyoke College President Lynn Pasquerella announced in her convocation speech that the school would accept openly transgender students, including students who were born male but identify themselves as women. The policy change comes after Mills College in Oakland, Calif., announced this summer it would accept "self-identified women" into its all-women's school—the first single-sex college in the United States to publicly establish such a policy.

CALIFORNIA: ALL HEALTH INSURANCE MUST COVER ABORTION

(WNS)--Health insurance companies in California may not refuse to cover the cost of abortions, state insurance officials have ruled. The decision is a reversal of policy

stemming from the decision by two Catholic universities not to fund elective abortions through their employee health plans. Although the federal Affordable Care Act does not compel employers to provide workers with health insurance that includes abortion coverage, California's Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) Director Michelle Rouillard said in a letter to seven insurance companies on Friday that the state Constitution and a 1975 state law prohibits them from selling group plans that exclude the procedure. Rouillard said her department had "erroneously approved or did not object" to a small number of health insurance policies that excluded abortions.

CRUZ WALKS OUT ON GALA TO PROTEST ANTI-ISRAEL HECKLERS

(WNS)--Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, walked off the stage at a gala dinner for Middle Eastern Christians after some in the crowd booed his pro-Israel remarks. "I told the attendees that those who hate Israel also hate America, that those who hate Jews also hate Christians, and that anyone who hates Israel and the Jewish people is not following the teachings of Christ," Cruz said in a statement after the speech. He was speaking at a dinner hosted by the recently founded group In Defense of Christians (IDC), which seeks to call attention to the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. When the hecklers would not quiet down, Cruz reportedly said, "If you will not stand with Israel and the Jews, then I will not stand with you" and walked off the stage. IDC has denounced the disruption, saying a small group of political opportunists caused it.

FEDERAL JUDGE: LOUISIANA HAS A RIGHT TO BAN GAY MARRIAGE

(WNS)--A federal judge in New

Orleans became the first in the nation to uphold traditional marriage laws on Sept. 3, ruling Louisiana has a right to regulate marriage as it sees fit. Louisiana bans same-sex marriage and does not recognize such unions formed in other states. U.S. District Judge Martin Feldman said the couples challenging the laws failed to prove they violated the U.S. Constitution's equal protection or due process provisions. The couples also argued the state's laws violate the First Amendment because they can't file joint tax returns, which would allow them to access federal tax deductions. The Louisiana couples, represented by Forum on Equality, plan to appeal to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE LAWS FALL IN TWO MORE STATES

(WNS)--A three-judge panel of the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously struck down traditional marriage provisions in Wisconsin and Indiana. A constitutional amendment approved in 2006 by voters limited marriage in Wisconsin to heterosexual couples, while state law did the same in Indiana. Neither state recognized same-sex marriages performed in other states. During oral arguments in August, Ronald Reagan appointee Judge Richard Posner said bans on same-sex marriage amounted to "hate" and "savage discrimination." Posner continued his extreme language in the court's opinion on the case, stating, "homosexuals are among the most stigmatized, misunderstood, and discriminated-against minorities in the history of the world." The 7th Circuit is the third federal appeals court to reverse state laws on marriage.

LOUISIANA ABORTIONISTS CAN PRACTICE WITHOUT HOSPITAL SUPPORT, FOR

NOW

(WNS)--A federal judge on Aug. 30 temporarily blocked enforcement of a Louisiana law that requires abortionists to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. Three of the state's five abortion facilities filed suit, represented by the Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR). The law requires all Louisiana abortionists to obtain admitting privileges at hospitals within 30 miles of their respective facilities. Violators risk losing their licenses and a \$4,000 fine. The restraining order allows abortionists to continue to practice while they seek admitting privileges. District Judge John deGravelles said he will hold a conference in 30 days to evaluate the progress toward obtaining admitting privileges and set a court date for his ruling on a preliminary injunction.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS CUBA CRACKS DOWN ON CHRISTIANS

(WNS)--Cuba's communist government has increased its oppression of religious institutions, according to a Christian watchdog group, with reports of religious liberty violations almost doubling in the last six months. According to a new report from Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), there were 170 religious freedom violations from the start of 2014 through mid-July. In 2013, there were only 180 incidents documented. This year's violations included government authorities beating pastors and lay workers, dragging politically dissident women away from Sunday services, and enforcing arbitrary detentions, church closures, and demolitions, CSW said. Since 1959, the Cuban government has planted informants within churches and religious groups to report anything critical of the state or deemed "counter-revolutionary."





From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Delay of Divine Justice

“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Eccl. 8:11).

Sin is in itself a crimson dye. Its guilt is greatly increased by its abuse of divine patience. Some people sin against divine mercy, hoping God will either pardon their sins at the last moment, or simply overlook them in some manner. Such a person is sadly deceived and certain of eternal torment.

THE DELAY OF RETRIBUTION

The Moral Governor of the universe does not always immediately punish sin. We are often surprised and startled that the most flagrant sin is not swiftly subjected to God's wrath. We wonder why a fire from God does not devour the sinner as it did Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2). We marvel that he or she is not struck dead on the spot as Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). We are dumbfounded how such an one can avoid collision with the civil government. Why can families advance to honor and wealth who are lacking in moral character? We are amazed how even nations for centuries can persevere in injustice and violence, while growing in power and acquiring renown.

God in His infinite mercy allows even the worst of sinners to continue to live and even prosper in this world. The blasphemer is not smitten by death the moment

he utters blasphemy. The sabbath-breakers are spared week after week. The murderer is not instantly put into the electric chair. The tyrant is not speedily dethroned. The drunkard is not driven from society which he disgraces. The adulterer and adulteress retain social respect and escape venereal disease. The sexual pervert does not suddenly die with AIDS. The hypocrite is not exposed and expelled from the church.

Looking at the context, we can see some who appear for a time to avoid vengeance and retribution. Verse 9 mentions the tyrant who rules with a rod of iron, oppressing the poor and defenseless: **“All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one ruleth over another to his own hurt.”** It would seem as if Heaven heeded not the groanings of the innocent, yet unavenged. Hypocrisy is cited in verse 10: **“And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity.”** These dare to insult God in His own house, yet they remain in good standing in the place they have profaned.

THE WHY OF THIS

Why does God allow this to happen? The prosperity of the wicked and the delay in divine retribution is a great problem

even to God's own elect as many Scriptures prove (Ps. 73). The full reason for this we will understand better by and by.

First, the Bible teaches that God is long-suffering with the wicked: **“The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation”** (Num. 14:18). Wicked men are permitted to enjoy a large measure of God's forbearance and to escape the retribution due their sins. God waited 120 years before He sent the flood upon the world of the ungodly (1 Peter 3:20). The Moral Governor of the universe endures **“with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction”** (Rom. 9:22).

Second, God gives even the impenitent space to repent. Of the Jezebel in the New Testament it is written: **“And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not”** (Rev. 2:21). By giving the sinner time and space to repent, God leaves him without excuse for his wicked course.

A GREAT INSTANCE OF HUMAN IMPIETY

Because judgment for sin does not speedily fall upon men and women, they pervert the long-suffering of God into a privilege to sin. They are convinced that God does not concern Himself with small particulars of human existence, and that He will not therefore visit them with His penalties. Some say that God is too kind and good to punish the children of men for following the bent of their own nature. Sinners thus convince themselves they may safely go on in their evil course. **“And it came to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself**

in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst” (Deut. 29:19). He assumes that God's forbearance to punish sin is proof that He does not intend to do so. To such a person the moral government of God becomes an empty phrase.

Because of the delay in divine justice, men sin habitually. Job 15:16 says: **“How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?”** Defiant sinners love sin and are greedy of it as a thirsty man is of water. The more men sin, the more they become confirmed in this habit. Men sin until they become **“accustomed to do evil”** (Jer. 13:23).

Because there is not in all cases swift judgment on wrong doing, men sin deliberately: **“Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked”** (Prov. 2:14). It would be well if men never sinned except through ignorance, but such is not the case. Men form schemes for the accomplishment of sinful purposes. **“They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? They search out iniquities. . .”** (Ps. 64:5-6). They know their desires are sinful, yet they gratify them. **“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them”** (Rom. 1:32).

Because there is a delay in divine retribution, men sin without restraint: **“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break**

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Delay in Divine

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their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us (Ps. 2:2-3). A regard to reputation or personal interest may impose some restraints on some people. A fear of Hell prevents the gratification of some desires. But few are kept from evil, like Joseph, by the fear of God (Gen. 39:9). All men by nature are antinomians---rejecters of moral restraints. They refuse to be bound by the laws of God or society. They seek to do what is right in their own eyes (Judg. 21:25).

Because of divine forbearance, men sin without remorse: **"Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD"** (Jer. 8:12). Men stifle the conviction of conscience by bad company and worldly amusement. They have **"their conscience seared with a hot iron"** (I Tim. 4:2). They are **"past feeling"** and **"have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness"** (Eph. 4:19).

A DEPRAVED HEART

The patience of God gives the unrenowned man courage to do more evil. The text says that **"the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."** Their hearts are so wicked that they shamefully abuse the forbearance of God. Instead of being led to repentance, they are confirmed in their impenitency (Rom. 2:4-5).

People and preachers are determined to deny the doctrine of the total depravity of man in his natural state. They say that men

and women are "good hearted." But a heart fully persuaded to do evil is not a "good heart." Jeremiah 17:9 says: **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"** Proverbs 10:20 declares: **"The heart of the wicked is little worth"** (Prov. 10:20). It is written in Proverbs 28:26: **"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool."** Ecclesiastes 9:3 tells us: **"Yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead."**

The heart is the seat of thought and the prime mover of all actions (Esth. 7:5). In Proverbs 4:23 it is written: **"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."** Jesus taught on this subject: **"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things"** (Matt. 12:34-35).

What the sinner needs is for God to give him a new heart: **"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"** (Ezek. 36:26). The Lord promises in Jeremiah 24:7: **"And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD."** When God gives the sinner a heart to know Him, he will no longer have a heart fully persuaded to do evil. The worst thing that God can do for sinners is to give them **"up unto their own hearts' lust"** (Ps. 81:12).

A DECEIVED HEART

Since divine retribution is delayed the sinner thinks that God is **"altogether such an one**

as" himself (Ps. 50:21), but he is wrong. Ultimately God **"will reprove"** him and set his sins in order before the eyes of His justice (Ps. 50:22). Proverbs 2:22 tells us: **"But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it."** The wise man said: **"Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God"** (Eccl. 8:12-13).

A man is a fool, if he thinks that sin will not expose him to the irremediable vengeance as the Bible threatens. At first a sinner commits evil with a timid heart and a trembling hand. Seeing that by one evil act he is not struck dead on the spot, he doubts God will be true to His Word (Ps. 10:13; Luke 12:45). Since no judgment comes speedily, he feels safe to continue in sin. **"And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst"** (Deut. 29:19). Having tasted that sin is sweet and delightful, it becomes frequent and habitual. Then his heart is fully set in him, without reluctance or remorse, to do evil. This being the curse of God upon him: **"The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked"** (Prov. 3:33).

JUDGMENT WILL COME

God is not an unconcerned spectator of sin. He has appointed a day for the revelation of His righteous judgment. He has already pronounced the sentence against evil doers: **"The soul**

that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). But to date the Lord has not executed this sentence, but this is no proof that He never will. The penalty which God attaches to sin is not an empty threat, a vain terror held over the race. A just retribution will come at last. Divine judgment comes slowly, but it comes surely! **"Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him"** (Isa. 3:11). The sentence may not be executed "speedily," but it is passed, and it will in God's time be carried out.

The godly man must not be perplexed by the mystery of divine providence, although he may be unable to reconcile what he sees in society with his religious convictions. The Lord reigns, and it shall be well with them that fear God. Very soon it shall be ill with the wicked. This he must take by faith.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. There is a great contrast between the righteous and the wicked (Mal. 3:18). This distinction eclipses all others. The upright man does what is right from a desire to act in conformity with the will of God and to enjoy His approval. He abstains from evil because it is contrary to God's moral order, and because it is a grief to the Savior's heart. But the self-seeking, pleasure-loving man looks only to the consequences of his action. He evades painful duty and goes after carnal things. He is embolden to do evil, believing sin entails no evil consequences.

2. The abuse of divine clemency is a sadder sign of depravity than the violation of the divine commandment. To trample on God's mercy is a greater wickedness than to break His moral law.

3. Judgment delayed is not

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judgment abandoned. We want to see penalty pursue crime without any interval. We are afraid the criminal may escape, or that we will be taken from the scene by death before he is punished. God is not hurried by such considerations. He is an eternal being, and the guilty can never get beyond His reach. His long forbearance is no proof of the absence of a ruling hand over the affairs of men.

4. Men merely seem to escape divine retribution. Even when we see no outward, visible evil, there are inward spiritual evils. Sin always brings suffering and shame, and its final end is death.

5. How foolish for men to dream there is little evil in sin. This is a fatal delusion. God will soon undeceive this blind, infatuated world. Ephesians 5:6 says: **"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."**

6. How great is the folly of an emboldened sinner! A man is mad to continue in sin when eternal torment is certain in the end. When a certain measure of iniquity is filled up by a sinner, then must come wrath to the uttermost. It is written in I Thessalonians 2:16: **"Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."**

7. Tremble lest you exhaust divine patience. When you do, nothing can avert the divine vengeance. Now is the day of salvation. May it be that the long-suffering of God may result in your salvation (II Pet. 3:15).

CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

Encouragement and thoughts from a prisoner to other prisoners and readers.
"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried" (Rev. 2:10).



T. U. L. I. P.

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader! I know it has been a long time since you have heard from me, and I apologize for the hiatus. A few months ago I was transferred to a new unit. A unit unlike the unit I have been on for the last seven years. So it took me a little while to get acclimated. I am just now getting on an even keel.

I am back, however, and should be in these pages regularly for the foreseeable future. To catch you up a bit, I finally finished my Associate of Applied Science in Culinary Arts degree. I am the baker at the Regional Medical Facility at my unit and enjoy working in the air conditioned kitchen.

I left off in the middle of a series on the Doctrines of Grace and will pick up where I left off. So without further delay I will be talking about Irresistible Grace this month:

Irresistible Grace, also called by some, Effectual Calling, is the call whereby God brings the elect to Himself through an experience of grace. All who are called will come to the Lord.

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. . ." (Ps. 110:3).

"All that the Father giveth me (Jesus) shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while,

make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:10).

"And you hath he (God) quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" Eph. 2:5).

The call is of God the Father:

"No man can come to me (Jesus), except the Father which hath sent me draw him. . ." (John 6:44).

"For we are his (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

The call is of God the Son:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25).

"And when he (Jesus) thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth. . ." (John 11:43-44).

The call is of God the Spirit:

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I (Jesus) speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

So as we can see, the entire

Godhead is involved in the calling of lost sinners to salvation. But just who are the called?

We are told in the Scriptures to preach to the entire world. But this preaching is only effective for God's elect, whom He chose in Himself before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).

We are told to preach to "all" because we do not know who the elect are. But God uses the foolishness of preaching to effectually call the elect to Himself. He who has ears to hear let him hear.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us" (Rom. 8:28-31)?

Now that we know what the call is, who does the calling, and who are the called---what is the evidence of the call?

1. A sense of sin: **"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4).**

2. A hunger and thirst: **"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (John 5:6).**

3. Becomes a believer: **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life"**

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Cellblock to

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(John 5:24).

4. Display the fruits of the Spirit: **"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"** (Gal. 5:22-23).

This, dear reader, is by no means an exhaustive study of irresistible grace, or the effectual calling. And any errors of judgment or thought are wholly my own.

If any of my "free-world" readers wish to correspond you can write me at: David G. Hoffman, #809805, 264 FM 3478, Huntsville, TX 77320.

Until next time, dear reader, may the God of all grace keep you and bless you above and beyond your wildest imaginations.



The Christian and Tattoos

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

Fads come and go in our modern American society. Styles of clothing, shoes, hair, etc. often change. Even medical ideas come and go. The same is true with religious fads among professing Christians. There was a time when sermons were printed and sold and read by most people. They were discussed in homes, in business places, and even in drinking establishments. Evidence: the Penny Pulpit publications of yesteryear. Today most Americans seldom hear a sermon and their British counterparts even more seldom.

Right now tattoos are a fad. And just like clothing fads, some professing Christians are running after the tattoo fad. And in this day of "feel good religion" success-oriented preachers dare not risk offending people by taking a stand on any subject. As followers of the Lamb, what attitude should God's born-again people take toward the subject of tattoos?

The Bible is not silent on the matter of disfigurement of the human body. In the Old Testament God prohibited the Israelites from doing such things. He said, **"Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD"** (Lev. 19:28). Young's literal translation translates "for the dead" with the words "for the soul." Most commentators agree that the cuttings made were indeed signs of mourning among the pagans in the midst of whom Israel dwelt. It may be that at least some of the tattoos or printed "marks" were also related to this practice. They most certainly were pagan. Some pagans probably tattooed themselves in memory of loved ones – either living or dead – while others were tattooed to demonstrate their devotion to a particular pagan god or goddess. Pagan soldiers sometimes marked themselves with tattoos identifying the general under whom they served. But God's national people, Israel, was prohibited from such practices. That is abundantly clear! The New Testament also prohibits anything connected with idols. John wrote: **"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen"** (I John 5:21). If keeping ourselves from idols is not important to God, why did the Holy Spirit guide John to write these words?

Aside from the danger of diseases being spread by tattoos

and the unknown long-term medical effects of tattoo inks in the body, the question arises: is it right for a follower of the Lamb to mark his or her bodies with tattoos? (Both aids and hepatitis have been traced to contaminated tattoo ink and needles. One statistic indicates that tattooed persons are 9 times more likely to get hepatitis than those not tattooed. Some have suggested that all tattooed persons should be immediately tested for hepatitis.) But aside from medical concerns, are there other considerations for those who claim to be children of God? We answer yes! After all, the Bible clearly teaches that the body of each of God's true children is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Paul wrote: **"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"** (I Cor. 6:19-20). It is true that the children of God today are not subject to the Old Testament or Mosaic law, but how can any right thinking person conclude that a believer in Christ is glorifying God by tattooing his or her body? Purity of life, modesty of dress, cleanness of speech, simplicity of lifestyle, deeds of kindness, the assembling together with believers and separation from the world are to be the outward "marks" of those indwelt by the Holy Ghost. One old preacher said that Christians ought to look like Christians, talk like Christians, live like Christians and even smell like Christians. We agree! Glorification of God in all things pertaining to ourselves and our lives is to be the hallmark of the child of God. Marking of the body with tattoos cannot be rightly thought to glorify God

since it was prohibited in the Old Testament!

Let us consider the relationship of tattoos with nudity. We live in a day and age when it is obvious that most professing Christians give little thought to the idea of dressing modestly. Visit the average church or notice how people are dressed in the restaurants on Sunday after church services if you doubt that statement. Even most preachers and their wives wear shorts, tight-fitting clothes, sleeveless and see-through garments and clothing made of clinging textiles. Short skirts and tight pants are the norm for women in most religious groups. Of course they have their flimsy excuses: the weather is too hot or too cold, etc., ad nauseam. Concerned pastors have heard them all. The law of Christ – the law of love toward Christ and the brethren – is this: **"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law"** (Rom. 3:10). Paul stated this more clearly with these words: **"...that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way"** (Rom. 14:13). No professed Christian loves Christ or his or her brother in Christ if they dress or behave in such a way as to cause a brother or sister to sin in thought, word or deed. There is a very real sense in which we are our brother's keeper! And suggestive or immodest dress (they are the same thing) causes a multitude of evil thoughts to flourish in those who cannot help but see such things. The mentality of the world is one of showing much flesh either actually or suggestively. (Sometimes the suggestion or illusion of nudity is more alluring to the sin nature than actual nudity). What does the current unconcern of professing Christians with their

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own nudity have to do with tattoos? Just this: both involve exhibitionism. The motive for all kinds of exhibitionism springs from a wicked and prideful heart. The desire to dress provocatively is akin to the desire to display tattoos on the body. Both call attention to the person's body. That is the purpose of both. Persons who get tattoos most often display them rather than hide them. Men and women who dress to show off their bodies in an alluring or prideful way are doing the same kind of thing as those who display their tattoos. And vice-versa. Modest clothing is clothing that is designed to conceal not to reveal. There is no such thing as a modest yet revealing piece of clothing. And in no way can the display of tattoos said to be modest because they are obtained for showmanship reasons. Read what God has to say about nakedness in the Old Testament if you think modesty is a thing of indifference to God. There it is revealed that your nakedness belongs to your husband or your wife. It is not yours to prostitute to the world in sinful displays. The whole idea of such exhibitionism is one of display, or nakedness. This is also a part of the reason people get tattoos: to display and call attention to their bodies and thus themselves. In a sense, tattoos do not evidence modesty. Say what you will, Holy Ghost regenerated people want to live holy and righteous lives. Holy living is separated living. You will convince no one that you are a true child of God if you look like the world: tattoos included!

As a practical matter we cannot but think of the words of poet John Keats: "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever: Its loveliness

increases..." By Keats' standard, tattoos are most certainly not "a thing of beauty." They are not "a joy forever!" It has been estimated that as many as 50% of those people who get tattoos live to regret their action. Mature consideration does not regard tattoos as "a thing of beauty" and thus the impetuous action of a moment in youth often leads to years of regret. Many people do in fact regret having gotten such marks on their bodies and spend time and money trying to have them removed. Tattoo removal is a growing business in the United States. After time and gravity have their devastating effects on the body, sagging skin often contributes to huge increases in the ugliness of old tattoos obtained in youth. It cannot be said of tattoos that their "loveliness increases!"

Besides their pagan origins, tattoos have, until recently, been associated with a dissipated lifestyle. The acceptance of tattoos in today's society is an acceptance of a dissipated lifestyle. Drunkards, drug abusers, whore-mongers, promiscuous women and such like were the people who obtained tattoos until the present-day fad came along. Today's tattoo fad is directly related to the present immorality of our society. What was once looked down upon as trashy living is now acceptable to most people. Prison tattoos along with men wearing sagging pants have migrated from the cell to the streets and the schools. This is to be expected as a consequence of taking the Bible out of schools. Sociologists are concerned that Americans lack morals. Teenage murderers are common today. Why not? Schools teach evolution. They are generally forbidden to teach the Bible. The consequence of evolution is that humans are no

different than dogs or worms. Killing one of them is a matter of no real consequence if you can get away with it: this is the common idea. Marriage is looked upon as unimportant: couples shack up and society and most churches take no stand against such actions. As morality slides ever more rapidly downward, all kinds of things formerly regarded as sinful or pagan are now acceptable. So it is with tattoos. It is of interest to note that we have known some tattooed people who later in life professed a good profession. Without exception they regretted having been tattooed in their younger years. These people, after professing faith in Christ, were careful to dress so as to hide the tattoos obtained in their early years of sinful living. This ought to speak volumes to anyone considering getting a tattoo!

What can we expect regarding the future of tattoos? A kindred question is this: What surprises await God's elect in this present age of apostasy? Are today's professed Christians at all concerned with the pagan origin of tattoos? Not at all! Popular "Christianity" is saturated with paganism. Most professing Christians celebrate pagan holidays such as Christmas and Easter, etc., with not a thought or concern for what they are really doing. These are all part and parcel of the same thing. Today's "Christians" care not that practicing pagans and occultists among whom they dwell laugh at them for their worshiping of idols. Pagans know that by these "Christianized" observances professing believers actually honor the pagan gods whose days they are. So it is that the pagan origin of tattoos is of no concern to them.

As stated above, most professing Christians have also thrown out

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BЕРЕА BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 8-1-2014 to 8-31-2014

Beginning Balance	\$7,130.57
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary Ind. B. C., Everson, WA	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
.....	625.00
TOTAL	7,755.57
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	363.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	363.98
.....	7,391.59
Interest06
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,391.65



BЕРЕА BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 8-1-2014 to 8-31-2014

Beginning Balance	\$1,069.86
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Carol Willitt, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Elder Jerry Dodson, Denham Springs, LA ...	5.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	30.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	163.03
Anonymous	2,210.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$4,653.98
TOTAL	\$5,723.84
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	660.87
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Supplies	81.32
Total Expenditures	\$3,858.15
.....	1,865.69
Bank charge	-13.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,852.69

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS and Pastor Nathaniel Hille, would like to announce their annual Bible Conference. The conference will take place Friday, October 31 - Sunday, November 2. The subject theme "The Cross of Jesus Christ."

Scheduled speakers are Elders Jerry Dodson, Jesse Hille, Timothy B. Hille, Timothy J. Hille, Larry Lafferty, Jimmy Nelson, and Larry Wilson. For any information please visit: www.sgbccaldwell.org or contact Pastor Hille: nhille@gmail.com. All are welcome to attend.

Sister Betty Crow (Elder Wayne Crow's widow) of Tampa, FL, is in need of a roommate for about two months or so.

Sister Betty fell in March 2014 and broke both legs. She is beginning therapy soon and needs someone to help. This person must be able to drive and strong enough to help her in and out of bed. If interested call her at (813) 309-8686.

The Big Creek Baptist Church of Wayne, WV will be having revival services Thursday, October 30 - Saturday, November 1. Scheduled speaker is Elder Bill James. Services start at 7:30 p.m. nightly. Also the monthly Area Fellowship will be Saturday. The church will provided a Fellowship Dinner following the evening service.

For further information concerning service times or directions to the church house, please contact Pastor Matthew Stepp at: (304) 807-5063(M) or (304) 522-1261(H), or by Email at mnbstepp@suddenlink.net. All are invited to attend.

The Community Missionary Baptist Church of Mansfield, LA is in need of a pastor. The church believes and preaches the Doctrines of Grace and church truth. Any interested elder should contact Bro. Ray Darden at (318) 567-3961 or (318) 364-6302 or former pastor Elder Garthel L. Burr at (318) 872-3742.

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 jamijoe@wowway.com.

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

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

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 for more information.

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.

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any real concern for modesty so it should not surprise us when these people follow after the current fad of marking their bodies. They think it is of no consequence that they obey their sinful and prideful desires to be noticed and approved by the world. Perhaps the current fad shall fade away in time if the Lord allows much more time to pass, but to many that is doubtful. Perhaps this present tattoo fad is a part of the subtle work of Satan to get people accustomed to receiving and observing marks in people's bodies. After all, there is coming a time when a mark in the forehead or in the hand will be necessary to survive according to the Book of Revelation.

This preacher is convinced that God's true children should have nothing to do with the current recurrence of the pagan fad of tattooing. In no way can tattooing glorify God. The desire for tattoos springs from a sinful heart filled with selfish longing for attention just as all exhibitionism does. In short, those who desire tattoos are motivated by sinful pride. The facts remain: tattoos are pagan in their origin. They were forbidden to God's ancient people. And they do not evidence that holiness or separation that is to be the mark of God's true children. The aged John summed it up this way: **"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"** (I John 2:15-16). What more needs to be said?

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