

# 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*

## Good Words and Fair Speeches      The Subtilty of Satan: Gotcha!

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

**"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple"** (Rom. 16:17-18).

In this last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul gives a final warning and a final



exhortation to the Roman Christians. He exhorts these men and women, that they would mark out the ones who are divisive, and the ones who teach and preach things **"contrary to the doctrine"** that the Apostle Paul had taught. He warns these Romans, that there are some who would feign allegiance to Jesus

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By Roger Reed  
of Mansfield, Ohio

There is a tremendous problem today in the Christian arena. I am so horrified by the trap many Christians have fallen into and the enormous problem Christians are having with rebukes from their pastors and the issue of being offended.

I believe it is because of "the subtilty of Satan." So I would like to bring three things for the Christian to take into consideration. 1) What "the subtilty of Satan" is; 2)



Does the pastor have the right to "rebuke"; 3) Do you have the right to be "offended"? Let us examine these three topics that are causing

havoc with Christians today and see if Christians can come to a better understanding of what God expects of us. Let me add something here, vitally important, "if you are not struggling as a Christian today, then you are not

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## "Capernaum"

By Jesse C. Hille  
of Clio, Michigan

Matthew 4:12-17; 9:1-8; 11:20-24

The city of Capernaum is of great importance in the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus Christ, during His earthly ministry, even considered it to be **"his own city."** He had come to dwell there, not out of convenience, but to fulfill prophecy (Isaiah 9:1-2).

The name "Capernaum" is believed to be Greek for the



Hebrew name of that city which meant "comfortable village." And yet, despite this name, those who dwelled there stood in need of the God of all comfort.

Most cities today are not unlike Capernaum, if not all cities. Spiritually, Capernaum and her

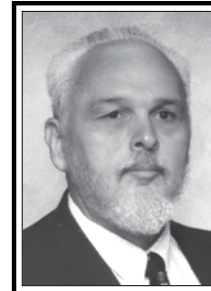
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## Well Equipped Saints

By Curtis Pugh  
of Poteau, Oklahoma

**An Exposition of  
Ephesians 4:11-16**

Since their beginnings, the Catholics and the Protestants (and some among the Restoration religious groups) have all had their clergy as opposed to what they term the laity. Usually they require education in one of their approved seminaries in order for men to qualify to teach and



lead their congregations. The majority of Baptists throughout their long history have valued education, but have realized

that God's education does not require formal schooling. To require a specially trained ministry would be to act contrary

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## All sinners are Satan's slaves.

And like many slaves, they have lost the desire for freedom, and almost the capacity for it. Only a divine power can emancipate minds enslaved by the love of sin.

**"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"** (John 8:36).

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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.

## Good Words and

(Continued from page 1) ♦

Christ, but whose service was not unto God, but unto **"their own belly,"** and unto the desires of the flesh. He further warns the Christians, that there would be some who would be eloquent and pleasing and attractive after the flesh, who would be in the forefront of these deceptions, and who would, through the means of **"good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."**

As churches of Jesus Christ, we need to heed these same warnings and these same exhortations. Even if we disregard the erroneous teachings of the world at large; even if we ignore the claims of the educational establishment; even if we turn a deaf ear to the so-called knowledge of the wise and the elite members of our society and government; even if we can resist all of these sources of evil from without – still, Christianity, itself, is sometimes a dangerous place for those who would truly follow and serve Jesus Christ. What passes for Christianity today, is full of error, ignorant claims, and knowledge and wisdom promoted by the devils.

It is our duty, as Churches of Jesus Christ, to warn the true servants of Jesus Christ against the foolishness that has conquered nearly the entirety of the religious world, and has crept into even the majority of so-called Christianity. The religious world is full of men and women who are able and gifted, after the flesh, with the abilities to attract and retain many followers, who, on the surface, may show some allegiance to Jesus Christ. But, these are wolves in sheep's clothing; these are rascals in the guise of religion; these are devils dressed up as angels. We ought to warn the simple, so that

they will not be deceived by such men and by such teachings. **"The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going"** (Prov. 14:15). We, the Churches of Jesus Christ, are the repository of the Truth. We need to share the truths of God's Word with the world. Perhaps, some will be saved from the deceit of the devils. **"To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion"** (Prov. 1:4). Perhaps, through the warnings that we sound forth, some will be snatched from the jaws of these devouring lions, and will be preserved unto the service of Jesus Christ.

Let us consider, for a little while, the manner and the means that these purveyors of "good words and fair speeches" will use to deceive the religious world.

### PLEASING THE FLESH

Let us begin by establishing this simple fact: all men are, by nature, sinners. As such, all men are prone to have an insatiable desire to please the flesh. The tactics and antics of the wicked deceivers in the world of religion, are meant to cater to this simple and inherent desire that men have to please their own flesh – a desire to satisfy the flesh. Even in Christianity, there has always been those teachers and leaders who have had, as their goal, a lifestyle conducive to the pleasures of the flesh. **"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies."** (Titus 1:10-12). How many

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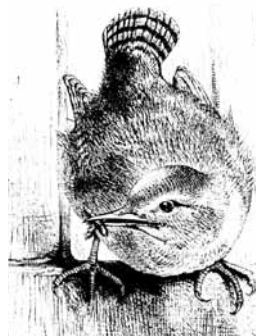
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# Good Words and

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**“vain talkers and deceivers”** are present in Christianity today? If you turn on the TV or the radio today, and you listen to some religious person, you will find fair speeches spouting some error or heresy; you will find good words which are only meant to condone or even promote some sinful characteristic or pleasure of the flesh. It is not surprising at all, to know that there are many and multitudes of such persons, especially when we consider that our society and government at large, is full of hardly anything at all, except such ludicrous and vain liars and deceivers! As a nation – indeed, as a world of men and women – we are mostly attracted to such persons who will promote within us a desire to satisfy the needs and the pleasures of the flesh. Paul had previously told the Romans, **“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace”** (Rom. 8:5-6). And yet, even Christianity has been largely reduced to a pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh.

How did such a thing come to be? How did we arrive at the place where we are now? Well, it is easy to see, as we read the New Testament epistles, that such behavior was found even in the early days of Christianity. Such behavior was common then, and has only increased and been magnified with each successive generation. Paul told the Galatians, **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to**

**his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”** (Gal. 6:7-8). In Paul’s times, and in our times, the Devil has been able to infiltrate the ranks of the servants of Jesus Christ, and he has been able to perpetrate his evil desires, to the detriment of the witness and the testimony of the Lord’s Churches and Christianity as a whole. It is apparent, from the evidence of both history and our own observations, that much of this damage has been done by using lies and deceit, dressed up in “Good Words and Fair Speeches.” We have examples of such behavior, even in Paul’s epistles: **“But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some”** (II Tim. 2:16-18).

If such error has crept into the churches of Christ; and, if such error has grown rampant in Christianity; it is safe to say that the religions of the world must be thoroughly consumed with lies, deceit, and the eloquence of devils. Men and women, with their supposed wisdom of words have deceived the masses, and have led billions into the pits of Hell. And still, these religions grow and prosper, because they appeal to the flesh. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Catholicism, these all are propped up by lies, and fill their ranks through the use of deceit and the pursuit of fleshly pleasures.

I suppose that we can safely say that much of the success found in the religious world at large is built upon the “good words and fair

speeches” of a select few. Prophets and teachers arise, who have no unction from Heaven, who will appeal to the desires of men, and whose words will be heeded and applauded. These words are proclaimed as good, which, in many cases, were formerly esteemed evil. In other words, the religions of today will seek to appeal to the masses, by catering to their sins – whatever might be the sins of the current generation. Today, these religionists, especially within the ranks of Christianity, will, very ponderously, proclaim that God must love all men, and therefore He is willing to accept men, no matter their lifestyle or condition. The prevalent religious view today is that a loving God will overlook sins and take men as they are. Or, a loving God does not see sin as sin – as long as you are comfortable with your behavior, God will accept you, and even approve of your behavior.

It seems that the world of men loves to have it so. It seems that the religions of men desire to have only words and teachings that will please the flesh, and allow men to continue in their sins. **“Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us”** (Isa. 30:8-11). Matthew Poole said, “these seducers pretend they aim at nothing but the good and benefit of those with whom they have to do: with smooth and flattering words, they praise both

the persons and doings of those whom they would ensnare.” And, in the end, the souls of the leaders and the souls of the dedicated followers will plunge into Hell.

The Lord Jesus Christ warned the Jews this way: **“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 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: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”** (Matt. 7:15-23). We need to judge the words of these prophets and teachers by the works that they perform. Their words may sound good, but do these men and women show a love for Jesus Christ? Their speeches may be fair, but do these leaders in government, society, and religion show a love for God’s Word, and a desire to see His laws and commandments obeyed?

## TICKLING THE EARS

As we have seen, the religious world is full of “good words and fair speeches” meant to ensnare men with the pleasures of this

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world. I want you to also know, that sometimes these liars and deceivers will entice followers through the means of worldly wisdom and knowledge. In other words, it is not just an attraction to the pleasures of the flesh; it is also an attraction to the mind and to the thirst for knowledge. **“For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning”** (II Pet. 2:18-20). Men love to hear and know new things. Men especially love to hear and know new things, which will also build up man, and present to men a religion whose success is based upon their own efforts or accomplishments. **“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof”** (Jer. 5:31)?

In the Acts of the Apostles, we read about a time when Paul went to Athens, and there he encountered a city and a society and even a religious culture, based upon the pursuit of new things which might tickle the ears of the hearers: **“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when**

he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing)” (Acts 17:16-21). These men were very wise (I suppose) after the flesh. These men were very eager to hear and know new things. And yet, in the end, all of their wisdom, and all of their eagerness to know and understand, would only result in eternal damnation – unless they would hear and heed the Words of God which would shortly be proclaimed in their midst by the Apostle Paul. Paul might not have been as grand and visually and audibly inspiring as other men who had spoken in their presence. But, his words would be the Words of Life. **“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the**

world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:29-31).

I believe that one of the most remarkable characteristics of the human being is the insatiable curiosity and thirst for knowledge which is inherent in mankind. I know that, left to its own, this thirst for knowledge will be inclined unto evil. And yet, is it not a marvelous and nearly incredible thing, that men have pursued knowledge and wisdom, and have produced such works and such deeds in the flesh? Is it not amazing what men are capable of in the realm of wisdom and knowledge and technology and the advancement of our understandings? I think that many of the followers of the devil have infiltrated Christianity, and have, through the means of “Tickling the Ears” of the learned and those who are thirsty for knowledge, led many into sin and error.

For the most part, the sound of these words and speeches is nice, but the meaning is useless or foul. They may have some appearance of religion; they may even bear some semblance to the truth; but, the overall meaning, and the overall intent of the progress of their words is only to compromise the truth and gain and gather new converts. Paul warned Timothy this way: **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors,**

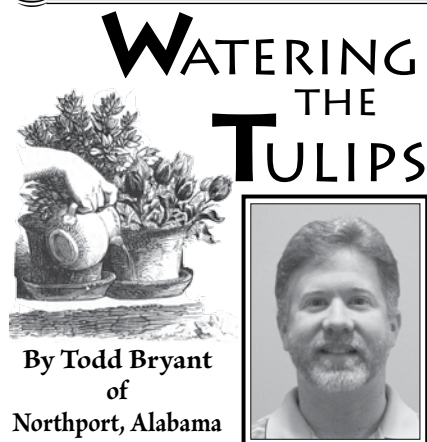
heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was” (II Tim. 3:1-9). (See also II Chron. 18:11-22.) Earthly wisdom may be appealing to the flesh – this wisdom of the world may tickle our ears. But, earthly wisdom and knowledge are ineffectual in the salvation of souls, and utterly useless in promoting godly service unto Jesus Christ.

## THE GIFT OF GAB

I remember it being said once, by a political prognosticator during some recent presidential election, that in the modern era – since the inception and the proliferation of the TV and visual media – it was now impossible to be elected to the office of the president of the United States, without a good head of hair. (Maybe this was when John McCain was running for president.) I suppose, that the same thing might have been said before, in older times, except the onus would have been on being a good speaker. Every president of the United States has probably had “the gift of gab” in some measure. In our day and age, he (or she) will need not only an eloquent tongue, but also an appearance crafted and designed to influence the minds and the

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## What Is Our Country's Real Problem?

**"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance" (Ps. 33:12).**

The verse before us today primarily speaks of the nation of Israel as **"and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."** However, one can certainly make application of the general truth as stated in the first part of the verse, **"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."** It is this portion which we wish to consider today.

Presidential primary time is upon us. Jesus clearly told Pilate, **"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence"** (John 18:36). We, as followers of Christ, are to be fighting for a kingdom which is not of this world. Without a doubt, far too many believers are more interested in who the next Republican or Democratic candidate is than they are about the salvation of their neighbor. This is a great tragedy of our day. The salvation of one soul ought to be enormously more important to us than whether we have national healthcare or lower taxes. There is

not one reader of this article that would not give up any number of freedoms for the eternal salvation of their child. In reality, it should not matter whether it is a child or not. The making of disciples is the marching order of the Lord's New Testament churches. Sadly, little energy is being spent on this today. Even more sadly, it seems a political "gospel" has replaced the true one.

None of this implies that our vote does not matter. It certainly does. It matters for you and it certainly matters to God. Paul told the saints at Corinth, **"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"** (I Cor. 10:31). This mattered in the subject that he was discussing at the time (i.e. eating and drinking). However, it also mattered in **"whatsoever ye do."** Christian people are to **"do all to the glory of God."** This includes voting. The main thing to consider when you vote for a candidate is whether your vote glorifies God or not. Some may argue that the candidate which most glorifies God does not have a chance to win. To that, we say it is irrelevant. And honestly, that may be why "good candidates" are generally unelectable. Christian people are refusing to vote for the candidate which most glorifies God and are voting for the candidate which is most supported by their worldly cohorts. Since our citizenship is in Heaven (Phil. 3:20), this ought not to be the case.

Sadly, one thing seems to be lacking from all of our politicians today no matter the persuasion. Few, if any, have identified our real problem – we are a nation whose god is humanism. Our nation as a whole has no regard for the God of the Bible and His standards. We murder an average of 4000 babies daily in our nation. This is done

legally and even funded by tax money. The largest government supported group has even been selling body parts of these murdered children to the highest bidder. These actions reveal the real problem in America today. We have a heart problem. Our god is ourselves.

Child of God, seek out a candidate that will seek to change the heart of this nation. The truth is, **"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"** (Ps. 9:17). If our nation does not realize this, we are doomed. The worst part is, it appears most Christian people have not realized this either.



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hearts of men and women. The political machine to which he or she belongs, will do their best to create and project an image that is "presidential."

Though we might feature, and even demand, "the gift of gab" in our greatest politicians, we ought not fall under the sway of the sweet talkers of the religious world, and those who have attracted great followings simply because of their own "gift of gab." John Calvin said, "The preachers of the gospel have also their courtesy and their pleasing manner, but joined with honesty, so that they neither soothe men with vain praises, nor flatter their vices: but impostors allure men by flattery, and spare and indulge their vices that they may keep them attached to themselves." The politicians and the preachers of today's religion want to use flattery and other means to allure men into their cause. They also want to keep them attached to their vices and to them (as their leaders) so that

they will remain in their fold, and provide the support, the funding, and the backing for these persons to retain their position of power and authority. In such situations, truth matters hardly at all. What does matter, is the personality and the words of the leader – whether he be a politician or a religious prophet or preacher.

If the pleasures of this world – promoted as religion are not enough to ensnare the simple; if the wisdom of the world – dressed up as religion is not enough to trap the simple; then, the Devil is perfectly willing and able to utilize the simple "gift of gab" to catch up the simple, and to lure in those who are willing and ignorant. Jude prophesied of some who would come, who would be admired in the flesh, but who would speak eloquent words meant to deceive the hearts and minds of men. **"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit"** (Jude 1:16-19). In many cases, a man or a woman is given special heed just because he or she is a good speaker. In many cases, the content of their message is not as important as the manner in which the message is delivered. In this way, many souls of men have been deceived. In this way, even our Nation and other nations around the world have become

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the political playground of those who have the means (money) and the ability (gift of gab) to promote their message – no matter how silly, wrong, or hurtful their message might be. Through the “gift of gab,” Christianity has been compromised, religion has been defiled, and our nation has been ruined.

Why do we listen or pay attention to such persons? Why do we, especially as Christians, give credence to men and women, just because they are able to speak well? And yet, this is certainly the case. And, time after time, men (and women) have risen up – even in the ranks of so-called Christianity – and have led thousands (or millions) into error. The Apostle Paul spoke of such men who are the hunters of men’s souls, and who use their “Good Words and Fair Speeches” to catch men: **“And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words”** (Col. 2:4). As members of the churches of Jesus Christ, we need to stand guard against the evil teachings and the doctrines of devils. We need to be the watchtowers who warn against such sin and wicked behavior. We need to be the ones who will uncover these eloquent speakers and expose their hidden agendas.

Resist the temptation of following after the pleasures of the flesh. Resist the desire to learn and proclaim something new – just because someone told you about this new doctrine or teaching. Resist the urge to follow someone’s teachings, just because the words are eloquent and the delivery is appealing. Instead, let us focus on the Word of God, and let us focus on service unto

Jesus Christ. Let us seek to see souls saved, God’s people edified, and the Churches of Jesus Christ prepared for the soon Coming of Jesus Christ. **“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen”** (Jude 1:20-25).



## “Capernaum”

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inhabitants sat in darkness – spiritual darkness. Most cities, if not all today, and their inhabitants sit in spiritual darkness also.

Yet, for Capernaum, the light shone upon them. Jesus preached unto them the Gospel, He healed their sick, cast out demons, and many other mighty works He did in their sight. Yet, they repented not.

Capernaum stands as a warning to each and every city of this world: doom awaits those who reject the Gospel.

### CAPERNAUM, THE COMFORTABLE VILLAGE

No doubt in its time, Capernaum was considered a very modern city. It was a prosperous city. It was a city of many great privileges. Jesus even said of Capernaum, **“Thou...art exalted unto heaven...”** Capernaum was

a city greatly favored by God in many ways. Her inhabitants were in the thoughts of God, and even in His plan and eternal purpose. Some seven hundred years before, it was prophesied that light would shine upon them.

Think of our cities today. We often call them modern. We have cities in which there is great industry. We live in an age where technology has brought us a great amount of both comfort and convenience. Our cities are prosperous in many ways.

No doubt we, too, think of where we dwell as being a “comfortable village.” We are safe, for the most part, from many dangers that others live in constant fear of everyday. We of this nation, do not live in a war zone, or in great constant civil turmoil. And yet, like all cities, and every place that man dwells, there is the constant danger of sin, the flesh, and the devil.

As comfortable a village, or city, that we may dwell in, we live in a place where sin permeates and prevails. And there are many cities that are comfortable in their sins, if not boastful of their exceeding sinfulness.

### CAPERNAUM, THE SINFUL CITY

**“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matt. 4:17).

**“Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not”** (Matt. 11:20).

As prosperous, as comfortable, as civilized as Capernaum was, there was still a great need for her inhabitants to repent. Though the sins of Capernaum are not enumerated for us, it is without doubt that Capernaum’s greatest sin was the sin of unbelief.

The sin of unbelief is a universal sin, one of which every man,

woman, boy, and girl is guilty of by both birth and choice. An individual may never commit a murder, a rape, a theft, or take a sip of alcohol their entire life, and yet still die and go to hell because of the sin of unbelief.

There is a great misconception by many today, even among those who call themselves “Bible-believing Christians,” about which sin sends individuals to hell. And if they would look to the Word of God, they would see the truth that it is the sin of unbelief for which the lost sinner dies and goes to hell.

**“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”** (I Cor. 6:9-11).

Repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only difference between those that die and go to hell, and those who die and go to Heaven.

A city may never commit the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, or Tyre and Sidon, and yet be “brought down to hell” because of the sin of unbelief.

### CAPERNAUM, THE UNREPENTANT CITY

**“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which had been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you,**

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## “Capernaum”

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**That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee**” (Matt. 11:23-24).

After all the mighty works of Christ that they had been witness to, they repented not.

Capernaum found a greater condemnation than the wicked city of Sodom. Why? Because they had received a greater light and privileges than Sodom.

**“And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask more”** (Luke 12:47-48).

As detestable as the sins of Sodom were in the sight of God, had they been given the light and privileges of Capernaum, they would have repented and been spared by God. As abominable as the sins of Sodom were to God, how much the more God abhors the rejection of His Son.

**“Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him”** (Ps. 2:12).

Destruction and desolation was the condemnation that Capernaum faced. It would be worse for them in the day of judgment than for that wicked city Sodom because they repented not at the preaching of the Gospel.

**WHAT OF OUR CITIES?**

**“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every**

**where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead”** (Acts 17:30-31).

The cities of our day are faced with an even greater peril than Capernaum.

As the sin of unbelief is universal, so is the command to repent. There is not a man, woman, boy, or girl that is excused from the command to repent.

The Gospel - the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ - is a universal message also. It is issued to all, and none can be saved without hearing it and believing it.

I believe the cities of our age face an even greater condemnation than that which Capernaum did because all men have been given assurance by God in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ of their need to repent, and that God will judge the world in righteousness by Christ Jesus. Jesus Christ is one’s only hope of salvation.

I believe it will be more tolerable for Capernaum in the day of judgment than it will be for the cities of our day, for we have the full revelation of the Word of God.

It is going to be more tolerable for both Sodom and Capernaum in the day of judgment than for the cities of the church age.

**“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear”** (I Peter 4:17-18).



## The Subtilty of

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obeying the Scriptures as you should.” My first pastor asked me one Wednesday night, “How I was doing?” I replied, “Terrible;” he said, “You must be living the way you should.” I was trying to live my very best for the Lord, but was having a difficult time. If you do not hate sin, and that means hating your own sin, then you are not living the life for Him.

I believe there are two struggles in this life. The first one is that we are being chastised by God for our disobedience. The second one is we are being persecuted by the world, thus living for God in obedience. If you can say everything is “peachy keen” you are in serious trouble. I come across many Christians with big smiles upon their faces and they seem to be happy-go-lucky and always in a good mood, and I scratch my head and say, why do I not feel that way? Do not get me wrong, I feel like the song that goes, “I got the joy, joy, joy down in my heart” and the verse in Philippians 4:7, **“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”** But I hate sin and I hate doubly my own sins. When I hear Christians (?) use curse words and use the Lord’s name in vain, and use hand gestures I want to puke! And they are some of the ones that do not have a care in the world. They are also committing fornication and other sins. Satan is not concerned about them; he already has them right where he wants them.

“The subtilty of Satan.” We first see the word “subtile” in Genesis 3:1, **“Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman,**

**Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”**

The word can be found in the Bible as “subtile,” and/or “subtilty.” But the meaning is the same: guile, cunning, and craftiness. These three words mean that Satan is sly, shrewd, and scheming. Peter says of the devil, **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”** (I Peter 5:8).

But let us not give Satan all the credit here, I mean is that not who we want to blame? The saying is, “the devil made me do it”...really? No, he did not! James says this, **“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”** (James 4:7). And he also says, **“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed”** (James 1:14). And there it is! **“His own lust!”** Satan may be wise and cunning, shrewd and scheming, but we are in control. We allow him to draw us away because we are in a position for him to do so.

Look at Eve for a moment. She would have never been tempted and Satan would have never gotten the advantage of her if she would have had her eyes fixed on God and not on the tree that was forbidden her to eat. And I think many people think that Adam was off somewhere tending the garden, I do not believe that. I believe he was behind a tree or a bush watching the whole thing, and it was exciting to see all this going on. He, too, did not have his eyes focused on God. He was wrapped up in the moment and the commandment given to him by God flew right out the window. Look at Genesis 3:6, **“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree**

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# The Subtilty of

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**to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.** Now, just how far do you believe Adam was from Eve to give him the fruit? I believe he was right there the whole time and it was all exciting to them both. That is how Satan can work his "subtilty." When we submit to temptation and the lust of our flesh he cries out, "gotcha!" If we take our eyes off the Lord, Satan will be there every time to nail us.

Satan has many Christians so buffaloes with so many attractions we no longer can see the right from the wrong. I know some Christians that watch movies that have a multitude of bad language in them, including TV shows, which have really gotten bad. I even saw a commercial for buying a new car and the mom goes to say a foul word and the salesman puts earmuffs on her son that the dad is holding and she does not get the word out but covers her mouth and there is nothing left to the imagination what she said or is going to say. But anyway, I have asked many what they do when they hear the Lord's name used and they say, "Oh, I just pass it off." Really! Satan says "gotcha!" Are we guilty of this or not? We need to keep our eyes on the Lord!

I was watching my grandson's football team scrimmage five other schools, seven on seven, a half hour each, fifteen minutes on defense and fifteen minutes on offense. No uniforms, just helmets, and all pass plays. Everything was fine until our team was sitting down while these other two schools went face to face, and because of one kid's attitude, not one but two fights broke out and it really got

bad. One of the moms stood up and said "Get that kid off the field," and one of the kids on the side line used the foulest language to that mom that you could use and then the whole team started to use the word that is burning to my ears. And where do you think they got it from? When I was in school, well let me just say, you would have been knocked on your backside by one of the coaches. These coaches did nothing!

But anyway needless to say because of our unwillingness to obey God we get what we deserve. The lawlessness of our country has brought us down. And we can criticize everyone and everything but it all comes back to disobedience. Satan's "subtilty" has taken its toll. Christians celebrate Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day, and Halloween just to name a few. Most Christians do not even have a clue where they came from or what they mean and if they do know, my guess is they do not even care. After all "God forbid," people would make fun and not only that, they are just too fun and enjoyable to stop doing. Satan says "gotcha!" Some will say there is no harm in these holidays and I say prove it. I can prove and have proven they are harmful. I used to do them. It is not rocket science, beloved; it is the taking our eyes off of God to fulfill the lust of the flesh, and Satan is right there waiting Christian... "gotcha!"

I have learned to accept the fact that we all are not going to agree on everything. I do not like it, but have accepted it. And that is fine, just as long as we remember and understand that one of us is wrong. I hate what God hates, but if we have topics in the Bible and it is clear that God has not made a reference that it should be hated, then we should not hate it either but study it more thoroughly.

Some Christians hate the head covering and wine in the Lord's Supper. Chapter 11 of I Corinthians was put in the Bible for a reason and if we say we hate these things, I fear for us. It is one thing to disagree but to come out and blatantly say you hate it when others have shown the truth about these matters is to me very scary. We can disagree; I do not have a problem with that. But be careful at what we say we hate because Satan will be right there to say, "gotcha!"

Here is what Satan's "subtilty" is; he tells us there is nothing wrong with doing the things just mentioned. **"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil"** (Gen. 3:4-5). Now what are we going to say to that, Christian?

I would like to show one more "subtilty" of Satan. I detest the fighting Baptists have done over the years about certain issues and the disrespect one Baptist preacher has for another. One area of this actually happened to me. I received an email from a dear fellow pastor on a Sunday morning and he just laid me out. He never called; he never sought to hear my side of the story, and never talked to me face to face. He just dropped me an email and let me have it. First, Sunday morning is no time to upset someone, second, if you have something to chew me out about, either visit me or at least call, but not on Sunday morning when I am ready to preach and go to the house of God to worship. That is totally disrespectful in my book. This is where Satan has his fun. Are we that ignorant not to see that? Preacher brethren, Satan says, "gotcha again!"

The second question I would like to comment on is, "Does the pastor have the right to 'rebuke?'" It seems this is another "subtilty" of Satan. Here is what we hear: "How dare him 'rebuke' me?" Some others would say, "If my pastor ever did that to me I would leave and never come back." Christian, let me help you to the door. It is apparent this is not the place for you to worship God in spirit and in truth. By the way, did you just hear Satan say "gotcha?" I will not spend too much time on this because the Scripture is very plain.

**"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him"** (Luke 17:3).

**"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear"** (I Tim. 5:20).

**"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine"** (II Tim. 4:2).

**"This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith"** (Titus 1:13).

**"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee"** (Titus 2:15).

I believe these are sufficient, and Christian if you have a problem with "rebuke," you have a serious problem, Satan says, "gotcha!" It is very simple- obey God and no "rebuke" will come your way. Those who get upset with being "rebuked" usually have a problem with authority to begin with and think they have done nothing wrong which usually means they are guilty and trying to justify their sins. If you are in the wrong, admit it, take the "rebuke" and start serving God the way He

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## The Work Needs Men, Not Methods

By Mike Stuart

God has given the church one tool to use to convert the world, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Men down through the years, and in the present day, refuse to believe that method will work. They are continually looking for ways to improve their teachings and practices to better attract people. New buildings, professional musicians, and popular speakers are brought in to attract a crowd. These often work, but they attract a crowd to themselves, not to Jesus Christ. . .

When God prepared the way for the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, He sent John the Baptist. John the Baptist would have been at the bottom of the list for a pulpit committee. He was plain and outspoken. He did not go to a charisma class. He did not go to speech therapy to learn the proper cadence. He simply stood, filled with the Spirit of God, and preached in the wilderness. The preaching done by the power of God works. It drew people to John, and it will draw people today.

When Jesus ascended and left the church to work, He did not leave them a ten step plan for furthering the gospel. There was only one step, to go into all the world and preach the gospel. He did not choose the great scholar of the day, or the folks who were accustomed to speaking in public.

The great revival that began on the day of Pentecost began with a fisherman preaching about Jesus Christ. He stood, along with the other disciples, in the power of the Holy Spirit and preached Jesus Christ. There were no movies, no audience participation, no slide shows, no other books or teaching aids used. . .

Now we are in 2015. Some feel that we need more, that preaching is not enough. We need some way to get the attention of men and women, and our young people. Churches are constantly trying new things, some of which are sin themselves. . . Committees are formed, churches are divided over methods, new things are tried and discarded, all in a search for something that works. What worked for John the Baptist, and Peter will work today. There is nothing wrong with encouraging people, especially young people. What we need today is strong men, not better methods. We need some men who will stand in the power of God and preach hellfire and salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. We need some women who will lead our young ladies by setting the right example, and teaching and praying for them. We need Dads and Moms who will set the example at home, and require children to attend church with them. God uses strong people, not different methods. . .

The warning of Hell, and the salvation provided by Jesus Christ preached together has worked countless times to lead people to salvation. It will still work, with the power of God.

Look for ways to be stronger in God, not smarter in methodology. (*The Voice of Faith*, Sept. 2015, p. 4)



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wants to be served.

Pastors have been placed in the church as an under-shepherd and have a duty and are commanded to "rebuke," whether an individual likes it or not. If I love God's people, then I care for their wellbeing just as God does, **"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent"** (Rev. 3:19). Do not expect me to pat you on the back and say "that is alright, we all sin." How does that help? That just is giving someone the okay to go out and sin more, what kind of love would that be? Can you hear, dear reader, Satan in the background saying, "gotcha!" Maybe the church member will think twice, when the pastor sends a "rebuke" their way.

Now we come to the last one; "Do you have the right to be "offended?" The last conference I attended I heard other preachers, say, "I am so tired of hearing God's people complain about being offended." These are my thoughts exactly. If we are using the Word of God how does that "offend?" I believe "rebuke" and "offenses" go hand in hand. Here is what the Word of God has to say about being "offended":

**"A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle"** (Prov. 18:19).

**"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me"** (Luke 7:23).

**"These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended"** (John 16:1).

**"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them"** (Ps. 119:165).

In my opinion if a church member can not take a "rebuke" and/or gets "offended" they have

a serious problem, Satan says once again "gotcha!" Plus they are guilty of sin before **"the only wise God our Saviour."** When any Christian tries to justify his sin, he has already proven his guilt, why lie about it? It is better to repent and move on than to get "offended." My advice, Christian, is to get over yourself because you are doing more harm than good. Take the "rebuke," repent, learn from your mistake, or hear that dreaded word from "old subtle Satan," "Gotcha!" **"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices"** (II Cor. 2:11). **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"** (I Peter 5:8).

May we have **"great peace"** (Ps. 119:165). Let us learn "the subtilty of Satan" and fight him and not each other. Let us learn the true meaning of **"brotherly love."**

**"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another"** (Rom. 12:10).

**"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another"** (I Thess. 4:9).

**"Let brotherly love continue"** (Heb. 13:1).

I will preach this until I am removed from this earth. Do not let Satan take away and rob you of your joy. With all his "subtilties" he will pluck the very joy from our life if we let him. How will you deal with Satan today O Christian? Will you hear him utter the word "gotcha," or will you utter these words to him **"the LORD rebuke thee, O Satan"** (Zech. 3:2 and Jude 1:9)? May it be the latter! God Bless!



# Well Equipped

(Continued from page 1) ♦

to New Testament examples and principles, but some are always ready to throw aside both New Testament principles and patterns. Thus they render the Word of God of no effect in their lives and practice. Of all the first century God-called men, we know that Paul and the physician Luke had what we might call higher education. Probably Apollos, also. But the modern trend among most Baptists is for their pastors to be seminary trained. Along with this has come the idea of a professionalism in the ministry. Far too often the average church member says to himself: "Well, now we have hired a seminary trained preacher. We can sit back and let him do the work of the ministry." Far too often this idea has saturated Baptist ranks of all sorts. This idea may not be spoken aloud, but it has seeped throughout the thinking of church members. We contend that "the work of the ministry" in our text does not mean the preacher doing his job! Please read on!

A clear understanding of our text absolutely contradicts the notion that pastors are to do the work of the ministry! As God gives grace, we hope that the reader will come to understand just what the primary work of the pastor is – and what the work of the members of each body of Christ is to be. Here is our text: **"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect**

**man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love"** (Eph. 4:11-16).

First of all notice that certain men were given to the churches. They are listed as apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. While some would insist that there are five gifts listed, both the English construction, as well as the Greek (the scholars say), lists only four. We have **"And he gave some, apostles," "and some, prophets," "and some evangelists," "and some, pastors and teachers."** We do not have the phrase 'and some pastors and some teachers.' In the phrase, **"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;"** we have the little word **"and"** five times. The first word **"and"** and the last **"and"** are the same Greek word **"kai."** The other three times **"and"** is used it is the Greek word **"de."** The word **"kai"** which is used in the phrase **"pastors and teachers"** can be, and one-hundred-eight times is translated **"even."** So we agree with old John Gill who wrote of the phrase **"pastors and teachers,"** *"though I rather think they intend one and the same office, and that the word 'teachers' is only explanative*

*of the figurative word "pastors" or "shepherds."* Yea and amen!

Regardless of whether there are four or five gifts (men) who have been given to the churches, these are all teaching gifts. They all have to do with teaching the Word of God. The first two, apostles and prophets, in the strict sense, were temporary gifts. God-called apostles and prophets do not exist today. The need for their kind of work was finished when the New Testament revelation was completed. But the kind of work done by **"evangelists,"** (better **"missionaries"**) and **"pastor-teachers"** is still greatly needed today. Truth, it has been said, is only one generation from being lost. It must be continually taught to others. Paul instructed his co-worker Timothy to teach with this goal in mind: **"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"** (II Tim. 2:2). Those who teach the Word of God are to multiply and continue their work through other men who learn from them.

But back to our text: upon first consideration of the next phrase it seems that Paul lists three things that the teaching men are to do. Many people understand this work as being, (1) **"the perfecting of the saints,"** (2) **"the work of the ministry,"** (3) **"the edifying of the body of Christ:"** three things. This misunderstanding has contributed to the present situation: a professional ministry in which the pastor-teacher is to perform all the work while the church members for the most part merely warm the pews. While the Greek bears out the same thing, let us leave the Greek alone since most of us are not educated in that ancient language. Rather

let us stay with the English. The first or primary definition of the little word **"for"** according to the Online Merriam Webster dictionary is as follows: **"used as a function word to indicate purpose."** The example, **"a grant for studying medicine,"** is given. The second definition is, **"used as a function word to indicate an intended goal."** The examples, **"left for home,"** and **"acted for the best"** are given. So the meaning of **"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,"** can be more clearly understood if we understand it this way: God gave teaching-gifts to the churches for the purpose of equipping the church members for the purpose of the work of serving for the purpose or for the goal of building up the local congregations. We say this because the word **"perfecting"** means complete furnishing or equipping; the word **"ministry"** (**"diakonia"** from whence our word **"deacon"**) means simply and primarily service; and of course the word **"edifying"** is **"okodome"** which is akin the word used by the Lord Jesus when He said, **"I will build my church"** (Matt. 16:18). Both of these words carry with them the idea to build or to build up or to finish building, i.e., to complete. So then, the primary job of the pastor-teacher here is to equip the saints. It is the job of the saints to serve with the goal of building up the congregation. Revolutionary thoughts? We contend they are Biblical and thus involve every member in serving the Lord – in building on that foundation which is Christ in the congregation as Paul wrote in I Corinthians 3:12, etc.

Young's Literal Translation renders verses 11 and 12 this way: **"and He gave some as apostles,**

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# Well Equipped

(Continued from page 10) ♦

and some as prophets, and some as proclaimers of good news, and some as shepherds and teachers, unto the perfecting of the saints, for a work of ministration, for a building up of the body of the Christ." Weymouth has them, "And He Himself appointed some to be Apostles, some to be Prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, in order fully to equip His people for the work of serving — for the building up of Christ's body." The Mounce Reverse-Interlinear New Testament translates these two verses thus: "And it was he who gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry to build up the body of Christ." Old John Wycliffe saw these truths and translated these two verses in these words, - modern English spelling - "And he gave some apostles, some prophets, others evangelists, others shepherds and teachers, to the full ending of saints, into the work of ministry, into [the] edification of Christ's body." We cite these several translations, new and old, as evidence supporting the meaning of our exposition of these two verses. In no way are these quotations meant to endorse these translations in their entirety nor the texts these translators may have used.

In summary we say, do not dump the work of serving or the building up of the congregation on the pastor! It is not his primary job, though as a well-equipped saint he will have a part in this work. His primary job is to equip the members of the congregation so that they are able to properly serve and by their service build up the congregation. Dear reader,

if you are content to do nothing — if you will not serve by being instant and constant in prayer, by supporting your congregation, by holding up the hands of your pastor-teacher, by witnessing to your family and friends, by living a consistent and holy life before the world, by using whatever gift you have been given, then you are not doing the work of serving and are not contributing to the building up of the congregation of which you are a member. Perhaps you have not been properly equipped. That is another matter, but the pastor-teacher's job is to equip you, not to do all the work involved in the congregation.

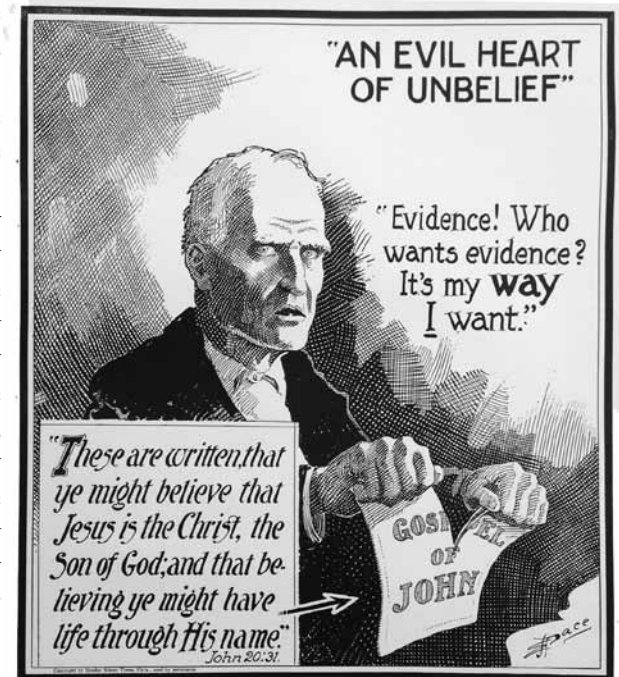
The next portion of our text deals with the duration of this working of God through His teaching men. We read, **"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."** Spiritual maturity, conformity to Christ, doctrinal stability, speaking the truth in love — this kind of growing up in Christ — this is the proper fruit of pastor-teachers equipping the saints so they are able to serve and through their service build up the congregation. These things are clear. And so we pass on.

Finally we come to the end of our text: **"From whom [Christ] the whole body fitly [closely] joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the**

**effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."** [Brackets added]. The **"whole body"** or as we say the membership of each church is closely joined together not around some popular or great teacher of the truth, but rather **"by that which every joint supplieth."** It is as each part or member works or serves together according to each one's ability and gift that the congregation is built up by itself — i.e. by its own members working together, loving one another and serving one another. Down with the idea of professionalism in the office of pastor-teachers. Away with the idea that **"the work of the ministry"** is the job of the pastor-teacher! The work of the ministry or of serving is the job of the saints. The primary job of the pastor-teacher is to equip the members so they can serve so that the congregation will be built up.

To the carnal mind these ideas are not popular. Carnal or unsaved church members often do not want to be bothered with real service although they may want the starring roles in performance oriented congregations. To those who have assumed that the work of the Lord is to be carried on by the pastor and a few special folk, we urge you to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider what we have written — and more importantly what the Scripture teaches. Every member — every saved member — of the Lord's congregations has a

job to do and a gift to use in doing that job. The Bible says of spiritual gifts, **"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally [individually] as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ"** (I Cor. 12:11-12 — brackets added). If God has added you to one of His churches, you are a member of that one body. You are one of those included in the statement, **"by that which every joint supplieth."** Which **"joint"** are you? Whether hand, foot, ear, eye, or the most insignificant member, God has put you in the body — the congregation — where He wants you. It is the job of the pastor-teacher to equip you, but it is your job to serve God in your place — in your congregation — for her up-building. The will of God is pastor-teachers laboring together with well-equipped saints building up each of Christ's congregations.





# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Does the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins require that a believer in Jesus Christ be able to recall a day in which his salvation occurred, or is a general faith sufficient? -Idaho

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General or common faith, is not enough. Salvation is an experience that happens to a sinner and turns them into a saint. The analogy is quite appropriate, where the fellow staggered in and said he had been hit by a bicycle. Everybody gave him the proper sympathy, until the next fellow strolled in and said that he had been hit by a tractor-trailer truck. With nary a scratch on his body, nobody believed that he had been struck by such a large vehicle. If God truly is the almighty sovereign creating fearsome Judge of the universe, do you not imagine that He would leave an impact on a lost soul headed for Hell, that He is translated into the kingdom of His dear Son? Selah! Think about it!

Let me put it simply, beloved reader. NO ONE was EVER saved by faith. A general faith can NEVER be sufficient. **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that (faith) not of yourselves: it is the gift (grace) of God"** (Eph. 2:8). Every salvation from the torments of Hell unto the glories of Heaven, is accomplished by GRACE ALONE. Jesus Christ is the Saviour and He saves us by the effectual power of His atoning blood shed on Calvary's cross and

by the imputed righteousness of His impeccable life. **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"** (II Cor. 5:21). **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"** (Eph. 2:10).

So many modernists preach a salvation by faith that has no "God experience" involved. Just a decision made in "a convenient season" by someone pressured by an evangelist or soul-winner. No wonder these "easy-believers" spend most of their time trying to convince their converts that an eternal change has been made, when there has been no "grace experience," but only a "works experience." **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty"** (Matt. 23:15-18).

Faith is a gift of God. It is NOT the pivot point that encapsulates

any person's salvation. Man cannot be cajoled, reasoned or persuaded to exercise some common faith that they do not have. Arminians have come to worship the gift of faith, as if it were the saving grace, that ONLY the blood and person of Jesus Christ can be. Faith is merely an outworking of the gifted life of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. **"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins"** (Eph. 2:1). John 3:7- **"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."** **"Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. ...and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed"** (Acts 11:18, 13:48). Salvation is instituted and brought to pass by God almighty, and like the rushing, mighty wind (or semi-truck) the Holy Spirit's impact will be evidenced in the lives of the saved.

**"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. ...Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace"** (Rom. 4:2-5, 16). Through faith? Yeah, faith is important, but salvation is ALWAYS BY GRACE. It is a gift of God! **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"** (John 3:16). **"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins"** (Matt.

1:21). **"And from Jesus Christ, ... him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"** (Rev. 1:5). Salvation is not a plan that can be misunderstood or misapprehended, beloved reader; it is the PERSON of Jesus Christ. Selah! Think about it!

One exception might be when a younger child is saved. Not that there would be any less grace (even more picturesque would be the gift of faith to such a youngster). But if a child were saved before she could remember events, it would not be appropriate to write off such a marvelous salvation, just because they were too young to recall. John the Baptist is an excellent example of such a display of grace. Saved in his mother's womb (he leapt with knowledgeable JOY), he would hardly be able to recall such a salvation experience. But they WOULD have the peace and joy of salvation present in their regenerated soul. That can never be changed, nor denied. Selah! Think about it!

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Saving faith is a gift of God that is exercised immediately following the work of regeneration by the life giving power of the Holy Spirit. Saving faith is coupled with the gift of repentance to constitute the human response to the new birth. As soon as someone is **"born of God"** (John 1:13), **"born of the Spirit"** or **"born again"** (John 3:3-8) they always repent of their sins and believe the Gospel of Christ. At that very

◊ (Continued on page 14)



# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Why was Jacob's son Dan left out of the tribes listed in Revelation 7:5-8 and why was Joseph's son Manasses added? Does this have anything to do with I Kings 12:29? -Maine

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You certainly are on the right track about the tribe of Dan. The tribe of Dan were idolaters and mentioned unfavorably by God (Amos 8:11-14, I Kings 12:29, Judges 17:1-18:31). Idolaters will not receive any special protection or favor from God.

Notice that Ephraim is not mentioned, but His father Joseph. A little bit of digging and we find it is for the same thing, in fact both are mentioned together in Judges 17:1-18:31. Once again, God has left idolaters alone. **"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone"** (Hosea 4:17).

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**"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth"** (Ex. 20:4).

**"Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear**

**you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God"** (Lev. 26:1).

**"Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female"** (Deut. 4:16).

If God cuts somebody out (leaves out) it is usually because of the sin of disobedience. And God hates idolatry. He has warned His people over and over of His displeasure of it. Solomon is a good example, read I Kings 9:4-9. God promised Solomon wisdom and long life if he would do as his father David did but the day Solomon went after strange god's, God would cut him off. Sad to say Solomon later in life did exactly what God told him not to do, and God was true to His word.

So Yes, Dan was left out, I believe, because of what happened in I Kings 12:28-33. They did the very thing God told them not to do in Deuteronomy 29:18-20. I believe E. G. Cook in his book *Let's Study Revelation* explains it much better than I ever could about Dan in Revelation 7:5-8. Here is what he has to say: "Here we see 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes, and it is interesting to note the difference here as to the names of the tribes. By checking the names here with that in Numbers 1 you will find that Dan and Ephraim are left out and the names of Joseph and Levi have taken their places. In Deuteronomy 29:18-20 we learn

that the person or tribe that goes after other gods, and serves them shall have their name blotted out. And in I Kings 12:28-29 we find that Jeroboam made two calves of gold for the people to worship. One of them he put in Dan, the other in Bethel. Dan was a city in the extreme northern part of the country which had been built by the Danites after they had conquered this territory. Bethel was originally in the land assigned to Benjamin, but by the time of Jeroboam it had become a part of Ephraim's territory. So we see Dan and Ephraim furnishing a place for the idol gods which Jeroboam set up. As a result of this, no doubt, we see their names left out of this list. Another striking thing about this list is the fact that Judah is mentioned first even though Reuben was the eldest son. Here we see God's sovereign grace on display. If you examine Judah's moral character in Genesis 38:1-5, 15-16 you will have to admit that only the sovereign grace of God could put him first. But since our Lord was to be "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" God put Judah first and then Reuben the first born. But, in the coming day when the tribes are assigned their portion of the land during the thousand year reign of our Lord, Dan is mentioned first, Ezekiel 48:1, and in verse 5 we see Ephraim getting his portion. The grace of our God is something we shall never be able to fathom in this life."

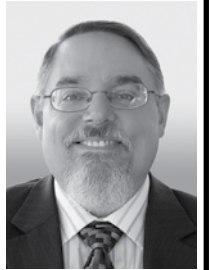
To comment on Brother Cook's last statement, "The grace of our God is something we shall never be able to fathom in this life." If you read Revelation 21:12 we see twelve gates and on those gates are written twelve names, all twelve tribes of Israel, Dan being one of the twelve. Oh the grace of God how marvelous! If only man

would obey the God of Heaven how many blessings would we behold?—probably more than the stars in the sky. Let us fall to our knees and repent of our sins of idolatry. God Bless!

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E.G. Cook in his book *Let's Study Revelation* made the following observation that relates to the question:

"By checking the names here with that in Numbers 1 you will find that Dan and Ephraim are left out and the names of Joseph and Levi have taken their places. In Deut. 29:18-20 we learn that the person or tribe that goes after other gods, and serves them shall have their name blotted out. And in I Kings 12:28-29 we find that Jeroboam made two calves of gold for the people to worship. One of them he put in Dan, the other in Bethel. Dan was a city in the extreme northern part of the country which had been built by the Danites after they had conquered this territory. So we see Dan and Ephraim furnishing a place for the idol gods which Jeroboam set up. As a result of this, no doubt, we see their names left out of this list." (p. 82)

Clarence Larkin and Henry Morris made similar observations in their commentaries on Revelation. I agree with their assessment. I also found it interesting to note that the tribes of Israel are not lost to God. He still has a specific purpose for His chosen nation. There is coming

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# Forum #1

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moment, as far as God's elect are concerned, they experience and become partakers of everlasting life (John 3:16).


For years I have shared my testimony about the day that I was translated from darkness to light, into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). I will never forget the day when I was delivered from the bondage of sin and the blindness of Satan to have the knowledge of Christ crucified, buried, and risen again revealed to my darkened heart (II Cor. 4:4-6). That day, for the first time in my life, I experienced the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). My life completely and forever changed the day the Spirit gave me life, then enabled me to repent and believe the glorious Gospel of Christ (II Cor. 5:17). That very day I immediately began to witness to friends and family about the saving power of Christ. I wanted others to know how the power of the living Christ had changed my life (Rom. 10:9-13). I remember that it was on a Sunday afternoon, following Thanksgiving in 1980. For years I gave my testimony, not knowing the exact date. I finally got around to researching the exact day (11-30-1980). The point is that I may have not remembered the exact day but I remembered the power of God changing my life forever! The fact that I did not know the exact day did not in any way lessen the power of forgiveness I experienced when the Gospel of Christ was revealed to me. The key is knowing that the power of God has changed your life and that you have experienced the grace of forgiveness. If you have never been changed by the power

of God you have never been saved. Examine your heart and determine whether there was ever a time when you repented of your sins and expressed saving faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Are you trusting Christ and His Gospel right now (I Cor. 15:1-4)?

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To first answer the second part of the question, the answer is absolutely not, a general faith is not sufficient.

One must have some sort of knowledge that he or she has seen a dramatic change in their life. At the point of this change, one must recognize they are a sinner and feel horribly grieved before a Holy, Sovereign God. A noticeable difference must be felt, **"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others"** (Eph. 2:1-3). I believe one must experience this quickening.

This is why James explains faith and works. **"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him"** (James 2:26)? **"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so**

**faith without works is dead also"** (James 2:14). **"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works"** (James 2:17-18).

Just because you say you have faith and believe in God does not make you saved. There must be seen in a person a real change in their life. That is the problem with Christianity today; too many folks running around out there with some kind of faith but have no idea how a true child of God should act. I see professing Christians that swear, use the Lord's name in vain, and do not go to His Church that He shed His blood for. How? Why? The reason is; they never experienced true salvation. That is not in every case, but I believe it is in the majority.

I know of some that have told of the state, city, building, time, date, and their exact account of their salvation, quickening, and the change that came over their life and they never were the same again. It was that important to them.

I experienced a change, I knew without a doubt something had just changed my life. In fact I knew it was God that did it! I had not a shadow of doubt, none, can the reader or questioner say that? I will grant you that you do not have to remember all the minute details like some have. But I do remember it was in the morning at my home, I think I know the year, and I think the time of year, but that is it.

If there are any scoffers out there that want to argue this fact then I would encourage all to read Saul's (Paul) account of his salvation because he repeats it

three times in the Book of Acts, I would say that is something that should be considered. Luke gives us the first account in Acts 9:3-9; the second account Acts 22:6-11; and thirdly Acts 26:12-20. The last account was given before King Agrippa, I get chills every time I read Paul's accounts of his salvation, especially the last one.

Every man, woman, and child that has ever been saved has had a similar experience, anything short of that, there can be no true salvation. So the answer is "yes," the believer must recall, maybe not the exact day, but a day that their salvation occurred. God Bless!

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I do not understand the question, I am a little dense most of the time. If someone is telling you, you are not saved, because you can not remember when the very day your salvation occurred, then they have a false doctrine. Hey, better yet, give them this answer that your salvation was secured on the cross by Jesus Christ over 2000 years ago. Better yet how about, **"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"** (II Thess. 2:13).

To tell you the truth, I have no idea what a general faith is, who comes up with this stuff anyway? Extra Biblical restrictions and

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## Forum #1

(Continued from page 14) ♦

phrases do not feed the flock!

Bottom line, do you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour? If you do then serve Him with fear and trembling and put on the Lord Jesus.

MIKE DEWITT



## Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

a grand Millennial day when even Dan will be converted and numbered among the elect in Israel (Ezek. 48:1 cf. Romans 11:25-29).

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The twelve tribes of Israel are always an interesting study. In the seven or eight diverse listings of the sons (tribes) of Jacob in blessing, cursing and prophecy, there are several variations that are intimated. In the blessings of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, the tribe of Simeon is left out. In the Millennial portions outlined in Ezekiel 48, the tribe of Levi is left out, although he is given some possessions, versus the other tribes' portions. And in the Revelation 7 sealing of the 144,000, there are 12,000 from each tribe, except Dan.

Typically, when any tribe is left out, it is because Joseph is given a double portion. This blessing of the firstborn was given by Jacob in Genesis 48:5, **"And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh,**

**which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine."** So, with the count, technically at THIRTEEN sons, the 12 divisions become problematic for us at times (although never for God and His divine purposes). Typically, as in the allotting of the promised land, Levi never counts, because the Lord reserved them for the priesthood and as mentioned in the Millennial reign, they will not have any land promises. Therefore, all land promises will omit Levi, as a tribe and Joseph's double portion will be represented by his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

So, in the context of the sealing of the 144,000, as the beloved questioner asks, Manasseh is not ADDED, but Ephraim (as Jacob's blessed firstborn) is distinguished as Joseph- both included, as Joseph's double portion. The difficult part, is why is Dan the tribe that is excluded here? Selah! Think about it!

Simeon or Levi would be much likelier culprits. In bearing responsibility for their ringleader status in the genocide of Shechem, Jacob pronounces a curse upon them. **"Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel"** (Gen. 49:5-7). As already mentioned, God validates this curse by scattering Levi throughout the twelve tribes in their mandated role as priests (God's grace in

action, even in a curse. Praise God!). Simeon, as previously noted, is not given a blessing by Moses either, and is seemingly consolidated into the larger tribes of Judah and Benjamin as time goes on, never really standing on its own during David's reign nor the divided kingdoms.

There are good things that happen to the tribe of Dan (and individual Danites) throughout the Old Testament. Dan is typically one of the larger and more blessed tribes (Numbers 1:26) and even has a leadership place of honor in Numbers 2:25-31. The blessings of Jacob and Moses upon the tribe of Dan are both prestigious and promising in Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33. Samson the judge came from the stock of Dan, as did Aholiab, one of the two main craftsmen in the construction of the Tabernacle in Exodus 31:6.

The only reason that I can really come up with for the omission of Dan in any listing is the curse given in Deuteronomy 29:18-21, **"Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; ...The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law."** Selah! Think about it!

The first tribe to depart into idolatry (as a tribe) was Dan in Judges 18:29-31 when Micah's gods and false priest was taken

by the tribe in their northern migration. Then perhaps strike two comes along in I Kings 12:28-30, when Jeroboam sets up the golden calves in Dan and Bethel. The curse of Deuteronomy 29 does not invoke complete destruction on such a tribe. But it does harmonize with a withdrawal of protection during a time of great evil, such as the time of Jacob's Trouble—The Great Tribulation. **"The LORD will not spare him"** and **"the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel."** And that's what the Revelation 7 listing of the tribes is about: protection during the Great Tribulation by the sealing of the 144,000.

Dan WILL be there. In fact, when Ezekiel lists the names of the 12 gates of New Jerusalem, also mentioned in Revelation 21, Dan is listed harmoniously along with his eleven brothers. No extra gate for Joseph, Levi and Simeon will also be there. 12 sons, 12 tribes. A long history, and none of them perfect, until they reach Glory, just like you and I. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



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## You Can Not Lead Goats

By Rodney Dunlap

It is a fact. They are just not interested.

No matter how lush and green you make their pasture, they have no desire to feed there. They much prefer to feed on the weeds

♦ (Continued on page 16)



# Gleanings

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and thorns on the other side of the fence - and the dirty laundry of their fellow church members (or the clean laundry that they have imagined to be dirty in their unregenerate minds).

I am tempted to say that instead of having a desire to feed in the pasture, they have a desire to feed on the pastor. I guess I was so tempted that I went ahead and said it.

No matter how soothingly you hold your hand out to them, they just will not follow. Instead, they prefer to eye you suspiciously and then head-butt you when you turn to lead the way.

They can not be persuaded to mingle with the sheep. They would much rather mess with them. They love chasing them around, and even better than that chasing them off. They are keen on staking their claim on certain territories in the church and doing their best to keep any true sheep out of them.

Never mind that they have no intention of doing anything with them. The important thing in their eyes is that those positions are theirs forever and ever, for better or for worse (for the record, there is no "better" in this equation), 'til death do they part.

I could go on, but I do not have to. We have all experienced goats in the sheepfold before. I know why we have goats in the church, it is a work of the devil. Matthew 13:25 makes that clear. They are called tares there, but it is the same critter. What bothers me is how we cooperate with the devil in his goat-manufacturing enterprise. Often, we are the ones actively inviting goats into our congregations.

So, what exactly are we doing

to wave the goat boat into our harbors? I am so glad you asked, and I could wax eloquently if I had the space, but since I do not, let me give you what I see as the two main entry points that are bringing in the goats.

## WE ARE BRINGING IN THE GOATS THROUGH BOGUS EVANGELISM.

The goal of much evangelism is to somehow, some way - it does not matter how - get someone to pray the "sinner's prayer." I have read the entirety of the Scriptures through more than once, and I have yet to find where the "sinner's prayer" saves. Actually, I have yet to even find that ever-popular "sinner's prayer" anywhere in the Word.

It is true that prayer is involved in salvation, but that is only an outward wording of our inward experience. **"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"** (Rom. 10:10). The Biblical math is straightforward: a mouth prayer minus a heart change equals a false profession.

The key that is missing in so much evangelism is the work of the Spirit. Heart change is driven by Holy Spirit conviction (John 6:44), accomplished through Holy Spirit conversion (Titus 3:5), and assured in the new convert through Holy Spirit confirmation (Rom. 8:16).

Yet, we tolerate empty, bogus, void of the Spirit evangelism. We take our kids to camp where some evangelist goes into the standard line "If you have never prayed to receive Christ, just raise your hand/stand up/come forward right now."

Then he goes through the 1-2-3 repeat after me routine and proclaims to all those who raised their hands/stood/came forward that they are now saved. We call

evangelists into our own pulpits and tolerate the same thing. We send our kids to a Vacation Bible School and tolerate the same thing.

Sometimes it is even worse. I have had many more than I can count make professions under my ministry who had formerly made professions and the past "evangelism" they experienced is mind-boggling. I have heard stories of pastors praying, asking a group if they believe what he has just prayed, and then telling them they are saved.

I once had a pastor tell me concerning someone he had just "led" to the Lord, "She did not understand it, but she prayed the prayer and so she is all right." No, my friend, she is not all right and that kind of thinking is wrong!

## WE ARE BRINGING IN GOATS BY NOT DEMANDING TRUE PROFESSIONS BEFORE WELCOMING SOMEONE INTO OUR MEMBERSHIP.

When my wife and I got engaged, she joined the church where I was pastoring. She told me at the time that in all of her years of joining various churches - her family generally had moved every 4 or 5 years and had always moved their membership to a church in their new location, and she had transferred her membership a few times in her adult life as well - she had never before been asked to give her testimony of salvation before joining a church.

I was blown away. Am I the only one who thinks something is terribly askew when we are not even asking the people who want to join our church whether or not they are saved?

Sometimes, though, when we do ask, we are not doing so in such a way as to hear whether or not someone is truly saved. Generally

- again, IF they are asked - people will be asked, "Are you saved?" They will answer, "Yes." All God's people will say, "Amen," and that is that.

I have asked multitudes of people over the years, "Are you saved?" A multitude of times I have been given an affirmative answer. That question has to be followed up with, "Tell me how it happened." It is a fact that many people's concept of salvation has nothing to do with true, Biblical conversion.

Many of those who would say, "Yes, I am saved," are basing their salvation upon being raised in church, a baptism, an experience of tongues (so-called), simply coming to a point of believing Jesus is who He says He is. They may genuinely believe they are sheep, but that does not change the reality that they are goats, and our neglect in requiring a true testimony just continues to open the floodgates of goats onto our rolls. We are cooperating with the devil.

I have sometimes been present in a church where someone has been accepted for membership on the profession of "Yes" in response to the question of "Are you saved?" I have thought to myself that surely that pastor knows there are all kinds of false concepts of salvation out there, and so why is he not requiring a true profession? For that matter, why is the congregation not requiring a true profession? After all, they are the ones voting to receive the member based on that profession.

The cynic in me - as much as I hate to admit it - is afraid it is because we just do not want to upset the proverbial apple cart. We have someone who says he wants to be a part of us, and we sure do not want to mess that up.

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# Gleanings

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It is not always easy finding those who want to join our number, and maybe he will tithe, maybe he will end up being a Sunday School teacher, maybe he will bring others he knows in. So in our euphoria to have one more warm body, we neglect ascertaining things that I think in our hearts we know we ought to ascertain.

Then things just do not go as we had hoped. He can not be led. He can be pushed for a while, but it is a tiring job and a temporary victory. He is at odds with other members, and he is at odds with what is being preached from the pulpit. The offerings do not seem to have increased, and he will not even come to Sunday School, much less agree to being a teacher. He has not brought anyone in, but he has run a family off. We wonder what happened. We sigh. We cry. What happened is we cooperated with the devil in welcoming a goat into the sheepfold, and it is just a fact that we do not get

Heaven-sent results from devilled members.

I know we cannot entirely filter the goats out of our memberships. Matthew 13 makes it clear they WILL be there. I once had a lady approach me 4 different times about joining, each of the first 3 times giving a completely bogus testimony. I am convinced the 4th time she had simply learned what she had to say in order to get in.

In spite of our best efforts, there will be goats. However, so much of the time we are our own worst enemy. We can at least not leave the door wide open. We can refuse to take our people into meetings with bogus evangelism. We can refuse to bring bogus evangelism into our own pulpits. We can stop it if it does find its way in (I have done that before). We can require a true testimony before bestowing membership. Those things are not only Biblical, they are also best, because it is still a fact that you can not lead goats, they are just not interested.



**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.

### JUDGE'S IMPARTIALITY QUESTIONED IN ABORTION VIDEO CASE

(WNS)--A judge's decision in a case about investigative videos by the pro-life Center for Medical Progress (CMP) has raised questions of ethics because of his political background and family connections. CMP has so far released five videos showing employees of abortion provider

Planned Parenthood negotiating prices for aborted babies' body parts. The center is getting strong pushback not only from Planned Parenthood, but also from tissue suppliers and from abortion-provider membership groups. One such group, the National Abortion Federation, sued to prevent the release of footage shot at its national convention. Judge William Orrick, an appointee of

President Barack Obama, granted a temporary injunction barring the videos' release. More legal proceedings will follow to determine whether the injunction will be permanent. Orrick raised more than \$200,000 for Obama during his 2008 campaign for president. He also donated \$30,000 to various Obama committees. Orrick's wife is an avid abortion-rights advocate.

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### MISSOURI SCHOOL DISTRICT TO OPEN RESTROOMS TO OPPOSITE SEX

(WNS)--A Missouri school district's decision to open restrooms to the opposite sex is drawing a sharp reaction. "And so the ACLU is just pushing a very radical agenda here and schools should take a strong stance in defending every student's rights to dignity, and privacy, and safety," said Matt Sharp of Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF). ADF sent a letter to the Hillsboro, Mo., R-3 school district board this week, explaining that current law does not require unisex bathrooms or locker rooms. The American Civil Liberties Union sent an earlier letter to the district advising that Title IX's prohibition against sex discrimination meant boys who identify as girls and vice-versa must be allowed to use the restrooms of their choice. The school district so far has not responded to a request for comment.

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### SAVING THE PRIZE ORGAN—AN ABORTED BABY'S BRAIN

(WNS)--The Center for Medical Progress (CMP) released its seventh undercover video Aug. 19, featuring Planned Parenthood personnel and a former StemExpress technician describing strategies calculated to preserve the prize organ—an aborted baby's brain. Their descriptions suggest many babies are born alive and then killed, a violation of the

federal Born Alive Infant Protection Act signed into law in 2002. One witness also describes seeing a baby whose heart was still beating after the abortion and recalls watching an abortionist cut through a dead baby's face to obtain his brain. Deborah Nucatola, senior director of medical services for Planned Parenthood Federation of America, returns in this latest video, talking about how some of her workdays begin with figuring out what baby parts are most needed by the labs Planned Parenthood partners with.

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### OHIO PRO-LIFERS EXPECT DOWN SYNDROME ABORTION BAN TO PASS

(WNS)--Pro-life advocates in Ohio have worked since the spring to pass legislation banning abortion for babies diagnosed with Down syndrome. The bill passed out of the state House committee in June and likely will garner majority support this fall, said Katie Franklin, a spokeswoman for Ohio Right to Life (ORTL). The bill bans abortionists from killing unborn babies diagnosed with Down syndrome. About 90 percent of babies with the diagnosis are aborted. The bill holds the abortionists, not the mother, accountable for violating the law. Violations are punishable by six to 18 months in prison and the revocation of the abortionist's medical license. Ohio's House of Representatives will vote on the bill once it returns to session in September. The state legislature is strongly pro-life, and Franklin expects the Senate to pass the bill as well.

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### DENVER DISCRIMINATES AGAINST CHICK-FIL-A OVER CEO'S MARRIAGE BELIEFS

(WNS)--Several Denver City Council members want to stop Chick-fil-A from opening at Denver International Airport (DIA),

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## Bible & the Newspaper

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claiming the fast food chain CEO's support of "biblical marriage" would hurt the city's reputation. Chick-fil-A, along with several other potential vendors, applied for a seven-year concession lease at DIA's Concourse B food court to replace the exiting Steak Escape. DIA concession officials chose Chick-fil-A to fill the spot because travelers gave the chicken sandwich chain the second highest number of votes in a 2013 survey about potential eatery options. Chipotle ranked first but did not apply for the lease, *The Denver Post* reported.

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### EVIDENCE MOUNTS FOR VIABILITY OF BABIES NOT CONSIDERED LEGALLY "HUMAN"

(WNS)--A new study published Sept. 8 found that more infants born before 28 weeks gestation are surviving without disease or other complications compared to 20 years ago. The findings cast further doubt on the adequacy of the viability standard for protecting the unborn. The study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, examined 35,000 premature births between 1993 and 2012 at 26 U.S. centers participating in the Neonatal Research Network. It broadens a previous study published in May that found an increased survival rate for infants born at 22 weeks. The May study examined 5,000 infants born at 27 weeks or earlier between 2006 and 2011.

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### NAVY STANDS BEHIND CHAPLAIN WHO SHARED CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

(WNS)--The Navy has exonerated a highly decorated and respected chaplain, denying a formal request by his commanding officer to dismiss him from the military based

on statements he made to sailors during private counseling sessions. Chaplain Wesley Modder's former commander, Capt. John Fahs, commanding officer of the Navy Nuclear Power Training Command (NNPTC) in Goose Creek, S.C., had sought to remove Modder because he expressed his Christian beliefs on issues of sexuality, marriage, and homosexuality during counseling sessions with sailors. But after reviewing the evidence, the Navy disapproved Fahs' request. The decision by the Navy's Personnel Command also overrules a March 16 letter by Fahs in which he denied Modder's formal request for religious accommodation under Navy regulations.

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### INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS KENYA MOVES FORWARD WITH STRICT NEW CHURCH REGULATIONS

(WNS)--The Kenyan government is cracking down on churches in the country, using two high-profile incidents of misconduct to help justify the new regulations. In mid-August, Deputy President William Ruto said the government will tighten regulations on the registration of religious organizations and their leaders in an attempt to tame rogue pastors. Speaking during a conference for Full Gospel Churches of Kenya in Embu, central Kenya, Ruto said he regretted the church had been invaded by unscrupulous preachers who were defrauding gullible followers.

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### U.K. GIVES AID TO COUNTRIES THAT

### PERSECUTE CHRISTIANS

(WNS)--British taxpayers are helping fund persecution of Christians overseas, according to a recent investigation into the country's foreign aid contributions. Government officials defend the donations as anti-poverty efforts.

But critics say the U.K. and other Western nations should use aid efforts to help promote religious liberty, not trample it. John Bingham, religious affairs correspondent for *The Telegraph*, reported last week that the U.K. gives 2.7 billion pounds (\$4.2 billion) a year to countries where Christians face extreme persecution, including Somalia, Iraq, and Pakistan. "Britain's commitment to aid is praiseworthy but we must make sure that it is directed properly to the right people in the right way," Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, the former Bishop of Rochester. Nazir-Ali also called on the British government to spend money assisting persecuted Christians forced to flee places like Iraq and Syria.

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### BELARUS CRACKS DOWN ON EVANGELICAL CHURCHES WITH RECENT RAIDS

(WNS)--Authorities in Belarus

targeted multiple Christian churches with raids in recent months and may file criminal charges against one pastor for worshipping without permission. Belarusian police and a riot squad raided a May 31 Sunday service at the Reformed Orthodox Transfiguration Church in Gomel, claiming the meeting was unauthorized, Forum 18 reported. On Aug. 16, BosNewsLife reported the church's pastor, Sergei Nikolaenko, may face criminal charges. Officials fined Nikolaenko in June for the "unapproved religious meeting," BosNewsLife reported. Weeks earlier, authorities also raided a Council of Churches Baptist congregation in Svetlogorsk and fined a member there. According to Forum 18, that church meets without permission.



## From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)



### The Eternity of God

**"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God"** (Ps. 90:2).

Moses, the writer of this Psalm, in these words gives God the glory of His eternity. He discloses how he serves an eternal God Who existed when nothing else did. Mountains to God, though white with the snows of ages, are young things whose birth was but yesterday. Before the universe and angels were created God existed in all His glory. All creation is mere novelties of time. Our God is without beginning of days, or

end of life, or change of time.

Angels and the spirits of men are immortal and without end. But all of these did have a beginning. They were created by the everlasting God. The world is to abide for ever (Eccl. 1:4), yet it was created by God. It may be truly said that God is the only absolute and eternal Being in all the universe. He has an attribute of eternity which is not shared by any of His creatures.

### ETERNITY DEFINED

What do we mean when we say that God is eternal? We mean

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# Eternity of God

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that the infinitude of God relative to duration is eternal. The Creator is exalted above all the limitations of time. With Him there is no distinction between the present, past, and future; but all things are equally and always present to Him. God's nature is free from all succession of time and contains in itself the cause of time. The eternal Being is conscious, not in time, but of time. God is not in time, but time is in God. Although there is logical succession in God's thoughts, there is no chronological succession.

Men mark time and write histories, but God does not. To Him the past, the present, and the future are one eternal now. There is no succession in the Divine mind; therefore, no new operation takes place. All the Divine acts are from eternity. The effects of the Divine acts do indeed take place in time and by succession, but these have no bearing on the nature of God, for He is the originator of time. He is free to act in relation to time, and He is equally free to act outside of its limitations.

## ETERNITY DECLARED

The eternity of God belongs to His infinity. It is many times declared in the Word of God. Abraham called the Lord **"the everlasting God"** (Gen. 21:33). The Prophet Isaiah made reference to **"the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth"** (Isa. 40:28). The Prophet Jeremiah speaks of Him as **"the living God"** and **"an everlasting King"** (Jer. 10:10). The Apostle Paul called attention to **"the commandment of the everlasting God"** (Rom. 16:26). To Timothy Paul wrote of **"the King eternal, immortal,**

**invisible, the only wise God"** (I Tim. 1:17).

One of the titles of God is **"Eternity."** The correct rendering of I Samuel 15:29 says: "The Eternity of Israel shall not lie."

In the Bible God is said to inhabit eternity: **"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabited eternity, whose name is Holy. . ."** (Isa. 57:15). The eternal God dwelt where time was unknown in a sphere where succession was not marked. There He abode before the seemingless endless interminable duration was broken in upon by the revolutions of years and days. He says: **"Yea, before the day was I am he"** (Isa. 43:13). God is not up in years, but He is more ancient than all the days of time (Dan. 7:13).

God is from eternity to eternity. He inhabits one undivided, uninterrupted eternity to which all time is but a brief moment. The Prophet Isaiah believed Christ to be **"the Father of eternity"** (Isa. 9:6 improved translation). The everlasting God has been active from **"the days of eternity"** (Micah 5:2 margin).

## ETERNITY DISTRIBUTED

Eternity is an attribute of the Godhead. When I say God has this perfection, I mean all three of the Divine Persons. God the Father has the attribute of eternity. He is called **"the eternal God"** (Deut. 33:27). The Son has this quality. Proverbs 8:23 tells us that Christ as the Wisdom of God was **"set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."** The same is true of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 9:14 mentions **"the eternal Spirit."**

## ETERNITY DEMANDED

The very nature of God demands the eternity of the Supreme Being. There was never a time when God did not exist. It cannot be said that God passed from non-existence

into existence. He declares: **"I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me"** (Isa. 43:10). This can read: "Before me, God was not formed." Hence the God of the Bible had a being from eternity. He is self-existent and self-sufficient. Men form idol gods, but no man formed Jehovah. The gods which men form are false gods unworthy of worship and service.

God is the first cause of all things, and therefore, must be eternal. If God is the first cause, then He is without cause. The Bible speaks of Him as **"the first and the last,"** a phrase expressive of eternity (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12). This phrase is applied to Christ in Revelation 1:17 and 22:13. God existed before any other beings. He is the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable Governor of the world from of old. His kingdom is from everlasting to everlasting.

In Deuteronomy 32:40 God says: **"For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever."** To lift up the hand to the Jewish mind meant to swear a solemn oath. Angels are said to swear by the eternal God (Rev. 10:6). Men are said to swear by saying as **"the LORD liveth"** (Jer. 4:2). But when the Lord swears, He swears by His own life because He can swear by no greater. His form of swearing is **"as truly as I live, saith the LORD"** (Num. 14:21, 28). God is said to swear by His own life which is for ever.

Creatures die because of their age. Plants die due to the passing of time. Even the mountains and plains change with the course of nature. But time has no effect upon our eternal God. **"Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall**

**wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end"** (Ps. 102:25-27; Heb. 1:10-12).

Time impairs all things which God made. The fashion of the world becomes obsolete and passes away like the morning dew. The visible creation as the garment of the invisible God is waxing old and wearing out. Yet our God lives on in eternal youth; no decay happens to Him; no destruction overtakes our Eternity. All the perfections of God's nature are without any variation from eternity to eternity.

In Exodus 3:14 it is written: **"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM."** Here God declares Himself to be the Being of beings. The sense is not only I am what I am at present, but I am what I have been, and I am what I shall be, and shall be what I am. This expression could only come from an eternal and invariable Being. The best any man can do is to say, **"By the grace of God I am what I am"** (I Cor. 15:10). But God can say more than any creature. He can say, **"I AM THAT I AM."** He can say such because He is an absolute eternal Being.

## ETERNITY DESCRIBED

Several of the Divine attributes are said to be from everlasting. All of these attest the eternity of our God. Romans 1:20 informs us that God has **"eternal power."** The creation of the universe displayed this attribute of power, but it did not mark its beginning in God. God's almighty power existed from eternity. If God's power is eternal, then he must be an eternal Being.

The mercy of God is said to be **"from everlasting to everlasting"** (Ps. 103:17). From old eternity

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# Eternity of God

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God viewed His people as objects of mercy by eternal election. The vessels of mercy will be the objects of it unto the new eternity. Thus God's mercy is without beginning or end. If His mercy is such, then God has the attribute of eternity.

The love of God extends back beyond the creation of the universe. To Israel the Lord said: **"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love"** (Jer. 31:3). The Bible says that **"God is love"** (I John 4:8) in His very essence. Therefore if God's love is of old, then God has existed from everlasting.

The psalmist said that God **"keepeth truth for ever"** (Ps. 146:6). God is truth and is always true to His own nature. He is true to His covenant, to His Word, and to His Son. If God keeps truth for ever, then He must exist for ever.

God is said to possess **"everlasting kindness"** (Isa. 54:8). His kindness continues in and through all states and conditions that the elect pass through. Each one of God's own are the objects of the unchanging affection and everlasting favor. If God's kindness is eternal, then God is eternal.

## ETERNITY DISPLAYED

The eternity of God can be seen in the purposes, plans, promises, counsels, and decrees of God. All of these are traceable to eternity past and will last unto eternity future. The psalmist wrote: **"The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations"** (Ps. 33:11). God's plan is carried out from age to age, His design runs on from century to century. He never changes His purpose. His decree is not frustrated. His program to fulfill His purpose is not diminished by

the lapse of years.

Isaiah tells us: **"O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth"** (Isa. 25:1). The decrees of God are from eternity, and they are all faithfully performed. Being fixed in the eternal mind, they are punctually and exactly brought about in time. When these are done in time they display to man what God planned from eternity past.

The Lord does not form new plans in time which were not in His mind before the world was. The undisturbed mind of God exists in unbroken serenity, producing ordained results with unerring certainty. His operations in providence are according to **"the eternal purpose"** (Eph. 3:11). All such purposes and plans were in His mind from the counsel halls of eternity.

The choice of some men to grace and glory was made **"before the foundation of the world"** (Eph. 1:4). Christ **"was foreordained before the foundation of the world"** (I Pet. 1:20) to be their Redeemer. The elect were loved in Christ their covenant Head **"before the foundation of the world"** (John 17:23-24). God's people were given grace in Christ **"before the world began"** (II Tim. 1:9). These selected ones were promised eternal life **"before the world began"** (Tit. 1:2). The whole scheme of their salvation was **"the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world"** (I Cor. 2:7). These eternal acts of the sovereign Being display His eternity.

## ETERNITY DISCLOSED

There are some hints of God's eternity to be discovered in a number of things. It may be inferred from His **"everlasting**

**covenant"** (II Sam. 23:5; Heb. 13:20). The Covenant of Grace was made by the Trinity from everlasting and it will last to everlasting. This covenant will endure immovable and unalterable because its source is the eternal God. This covenant is the eternal plan of the Divine Mind. This covenant assures the elect of eternal happiness.

The eternal God can be seen in the fact that He is blessed for ever. Paul addressed Him as **"the Creator, who is blessed for ever"** (Rom. 1:25). Writing to Timothy, he says the **"only wise God"** is to have **"honour and glory for ever and ever"** (I Tim. 1:17). God is glorified and will be glorified to eternity. Since God is an everlasting Being He alone is worthy to be eternally served and adorned.

The attribute of eternity can be gleaned from the statements **"the LORD is King for ever"** (Ps. 10:16) and **"the LORD sitteth King for ever"** (Ps. 29:10). Daniel wrote: **"His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation"** (Dan. 4:3). There can be no everlasting kingdom unless it is ruled by an everlasting God Who is the Supreme King.

God cannot be measured by space or time. Psalm 90:4 declares: **"For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."** II Peter 3:8 says: **"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."**

To the eternal God a thousand years is like one day or even three hours of a night. A millennium is a long period to man who is a creature of time. In this period nations can rise and fall, dynasties can come and go, elaborate systems of philosophy can begin

and end, generations of men can be born and die. But all such things and events are nothing to the eternal God. To our God a thousand years of human history, whether past or to come, are as present to Him as that done in the last hour.

## ETERNITY DEDUCED

The practical lessons which we can gather from a discussion of this subject are worthy of consideration. First, the doctrine of God's attribute of eternity causes us to realize we serve an **"incorruptible God"** (Rom. 1:23). His infinity, His eternity, His spirituality, His immateriality, and His majesty distinguish Him from all creatures. He is **"immortal"** (I Tim. 1:17) and has **"immortality"** (I Tim. 6:16). All the wicked men and evil angels in the world cannot destroy Him; yea, not even Satan and all his demons. To even suppose such a thing as a dead God is the height of infidelity. Eternity cannot cease to be. Our God is **"alive for evermore"** (Rev. 1:18).

Second, this truth should increase our faith in God's promises. If our God shall never die, then we dare not doubt His promise to us of **"eternal glory"** (I Pet. 5:10) and **"eternal life"** (Tit. 1:2). When we suffer afflictions we can justly expect the everlasting God to grant unto us an **"eternal weight of glory"** (II Cor. 4:17). When this mortal life ends the immortal God will take us to a home **"eternal in the heavens"** (II Cor. 5:1). As surely as the Lord lives, each believer can expect to **"receive the promise of eternal inheritance"** (Heb. 9:15).

Third, this attribute of God should inspire us to a higher plane of Christian living. What a privilege to serve an eternal God! When our strength fails we

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# Eternity of God

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always find **“the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength”** (Isa. 26:4). When we are fearful of our path in this world of sorrow, we can say: **“Lead me in the way everlasting”** (Ps. 139:24). When darkness reigns in these terrestrial realms, we find in our God **“an everlasting light”** (Isa. 60:19-20). Come what may in either life or death, the infallible Word assures us: **“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms”** (Deut. 33:27).

Fourth, this teaching should awaken in sinners the reality of **“everlasting punishment”** (Matt. 25:46) and **“everlasting fire”** (Matt. 25:41). The eternal God has promised **“the vengeance of eternal fire”** (Jude 7) to all unbelievers. Their suffering will run parallel with the line of eternity. Their punishment will have a beginning but no end. Their torment is for ever and ever (Rev. 14:11) since it proceeds from the God of eternity. Lost men would do well to consider that they live on the verge of **“eternal damnation”** (Mark 3:29).

One has well warned sinners of an eternity without Christ by saying: “How long sometimes a day appears. . . And weeks how long are they. . . Months move as if the years. . . Would never pass away. . . But days and weeks are passing by. . . And soon must all be gone. . . For day by day the moments fly. . . Eternity comes on. . . Days, months, and years must have an end. . . Eternity has none. . . It will always be as long to spend. . . As when it first begun.”

Fifth, it is good news to those awakened by the Spirit. The God of the Bible saved **“with an everlasting salvation”** (Isa. 45:17). Jesus said: **“He that**

**believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”** (John 3:36). Those who believe on the eternal Son have **“everlasting life”** and **“everlasting consolation”** (II Thess. 2:16). They discover that Christ is **“the author of eternal salvation”** (Heb. 5:9). Heaven be praised! Our eternal God saves with an eternal salvation!

Sixth, this fact about God shows the great gulf between God and man. Mere mortals can never understand to perfection the eternity of God. Eternity begins where human computation ends. If you were to take a man possessed of the greatest mind that the world has ever known, and let him think backward or forward until his mind would break, then you would have the beginning of eternity. There is no beginning to God; there is no end to the One Who inhabited eternity.

*Eternity stands always fronting God;*

*A stern colossal image with blind eyes,  
And grand, dim lips, that murmur evermore  
God, God, God!*



## How Did They Get That Way?

**By Roy Mason  
(1894 - 1978)**



CHRISTIANS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TIMES were strong believers in the greatness and sovereignty of God, and consequently in the doctrines of election and predestination. Paul, for instance, was a most unlikely man to become a Christian. Only a sovereign and all-powerful God could have turned him, but this God had chosen and planned Paul's

conversion before He created the earth. Paul tells us so in Ephesians 1:4, where he says, **“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.”** It is to be noted that Paul included the Ephesian Christians to whom he wrote. This verse, together with the ones that follow, should be enough to settle the election question for anyone who believes them to be the inspired Word of God.

CHRISTIANS OF THE EARLY CENTURIES were strong believers in the elective power and grace of God. It was probably this faith in a mighty God who works all things after the counsel of His own will, that caused them to be willing to bear all things for His sake---even death by martyrdom. A namby-pamby freewillism that has a limited and restricted God, does not fit people for martyrdom.

Predestination is a little understood doctrine in this day, and it is a very unpopular doctrine in the sight of many clergymen. One reason for this has been the extremes to which the so-called “Hardshell Baptists” have carried their predestination views. We refer especially to those who are anti-missionary and non-evangelistic. When one is known to believe in predestination, it is just assumed by many that he is against missions and against personal effort in seeking to win the lost. This is not true.

The truth is some of the greatest soul-winning preachers of the past, have been staunch predestinarians. A good example is Charles H. Spurgeon, perhaps the greatest preacher since the days of Paul.

Likewise it is true that the great theologians of history were staunch predestinarians. We name Augustine, Wycliffe, Calvin, Luther, Zwingli, Whitefield, Kuyper, and in more recent times,

Strong, Broadus, Boyce, Hodges.

On the other hand, Arminianism (Freewillism) existed for centuries, as someone has put it, “Only as a heresy on the outskirts of true religion, and was not championed by an organized Christian Church until the year 1784, at which time it was incorporated into the system of doctrine of the Methodist Church in England.”

What a misfortune that the doctrine which was regarded as heresy by the various denominations should be held as true by most denominations of this day!

The Puritans in England and those who settled America, as well as the Covenanters in Scotland and Huguenots in France, were predestinarians. Most of the creeds of historic Christendom have expressed the doctrine of election and predestination.

A Presbyterian theologian writes as follows: “The official standards of the various branches of Presbyterians and Reformed Churches of Europe and America are thoroughly Calvinistic. The great Free Church of Holland, and almost all the Churches of Scotland, are Calvinistic. The Established Church of England and her daughter, the Episcopal Church of America, have a Calvinistic creed in the thirty-nine articles. The Whitefield Methodists in Wales to this day bear the name of “Calvinistic Methodists.”

Despite the truth of all this, there is perhaps no doctrine more disliked by most Church people than that of predestination. One Presbyterian writer has said, “The tendency of our enlightened age, is to look upon Calvinism as a worn-out and obsolete creed.” Another Presbyterian writes, “It seems to be tacitly assumed by a large number

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# How Did They Get

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of people in the Presbyterian Church that Calvinism has been outgrown in religious circles. In fact, the average Church member, or even Minister of the Gospel is inclined to look upon a person who declares that he believes in predestination with a glance of amused tolerance. . . As for seriously examining the arguments of Calvinism, the idea never enters their heads.

Those Presbyterians, just quoted, express not only the attitude of their own people, they express the attitude of many Baptists. Baptists have been predestinarians down through the centuries, from the days of Christ, for they have existed for all that time, a claim that cannot be successfully made by any other religious group. While they are not a people bound by a creed, they have issued many articles of faith designed to make clear their beliefs. We recall that when we were a student at the Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville, we had as Prof. of Church history, Dr. McGlothlin. He collected all the Baptist Confessions of faith known to exist, in a good sized volume. These Confessions of faith predominately had strong articles on predestination and election. We do not recall a single one that failed to have a vigorous expression of belief along these lines.

What about present-day beliefs among Baptists? Northern Baptists as a group, have become loose as regards most of their theology. Southern Baptists are busy traveling the same way. Modernistic teachings in the Seminaries is back behind much of this. The liberalistic trend of the Northern and Southern Baptists has caused widespread rebellion among Baptists who are strict

believers in the truth and accuracy of the Bible. This has led many Churches to withdraw affiliation from the denominations. It has also led to the formation of hundreds of independent Baptist Churches. Some of these Churches are wholly independent, while others have affiliation with "Fellowships" and organization of various names. These have found the need of schools and colleges especially for the training of young ministers.

Here is the astonishing thing! These independents repudiate the liberalism of the denominational groups. They call people back to Bible teachings such as our old time Baptists believed and practiced. That is, they do as regards most of the great Bible teachings. But when it comes to the foundational doctrine of election and predestination, most of them are just as heretical as those of the denominations they deplore. This is partly because of the influence of their schools. We were surprised several years ago when we received a letter from a couple of young men who were students in one of these schools. They affirmed that predestination was a subject that was completely banned from classroom discussion. Another person spoke to us, concerning another very reputable Baptist School, and said the subject of predestination was also banned there.

Why is there such a dislike and fear concerning election and predestination in independent Baptist institutions? We believe it is because these Bible doctrines are not studied and understood. Rather they are misunderstood. The idea of "Hard-shellism" repels, as does the notion that electionists are opposed to evangelism and missionary endeavors.

Besides this, the term Calvinism

repels them. The word Calvinism is something they respond to, very much as a bull responds to a red rag when it is waved in his face. We recall an article we had published in a magazine, in which we spoke favorably of one of the six points of Calvinism. In response, we had a violent letter of rebuke from an elderly dyed-in-the-wool Baptist. He wanted to know how we could identify ourselves with Calvin, when he believed in sprinkling babies and other things contrary to the Bible. In answering him, we tried to make plain that we had not adopted the whole category of beliefs held by John Calvin, but only his beliefs concerning predestination and election.

Due to the names of the two opposing individuals, in the predestination and freewill controversies of the past, the two systems of belief, Freewillism and Predestination have come to be known as Arminianism and Calvinism. People today are usually either designated Arminians or Calvinists, according to their freewillism or their belief in election and predestination. We have had some to say, "I am not an Arminian, I believe in election!" Subsequent conversation, however, revealed that the kind of election they believed in was farcical and ridiculous and a valid ticket to admission in anybody's Arminian camp.

Whether a person wants to be labeled Calvinistic or Arminian or not, there is no way in which they can avoid it. The two terms are fixed and established. Those who minimize the sovereignty and might of God - those who deny predetermination, election, predestination and those who virtually make man his own Savior, belong in the Arminian group. On the other hand, those who believe in the sovereign grace of God

- those who really believe that "Salvation is of the Lord" - those who believe that all who are in the eternal plan of God - those who believe that every person who is elected of God to eternal salvation, will show up among the redeemed of the Lord, without the loss of one, belongs in the Calvinistic group.

We go back and remind you that the Bible is a predestinarian Book, and we shall presently present some Scriptures that prove this beyond question. We remind you that the great mass of early Christians were strong believers in the sovereignty and elective power of God. Only the grossly heretical groups, such as Pelagians, were freewillites. And a study of Pelagianism will reveal that they really believed in self-salvation, a belief that really characterized the followers of Arminius of a later date.

Baptists who continued to exist down through the centuries were characteristically predestinarians. With the advent of Protestantism, the various Protestant groups adopted articles of faith vehemently predestinarian. Their leaders such as Calvin and Luther were what we today would call "hard-boiled" predestinarians. Calvin was so vehement and so explicitly an electionist, that his name has come to stand for the whole electionist system of belief. Protestant articles of faith and Baptist expressions of belief make clear the common stand on these questions. Denominations still retain their articles of faith, but admit they don't believe what the articles declare on election. Independent Baptists criticize denominational Baptists for departure from their time-honored beliefs, but when it comes to election and predestination, many of them are as weak as

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# How Did They Get

(Continued from page 22) ♦

denominational Baptists. What's the matter? How did they get that way?

The answer, in large part, is that it has come from FOLLOWING THE TREND OF THE TIMES. So many people of today want to be doing what is considered the "IN" thing. The "Hippies" started wearing long hair, and they created a trend. Now we have young men the nation over, going around with dirty, stringy long hair, and so effeminate in appearance that one must look carefully to ascertain which sex they belong to. Some older men voice their disapproval of these ridiculous long hairs, but just take a look at these critics, and you will see their hair lopping over their collars and with sideburns clear down their faces. They just can't resist the urge to keep up with the times.

People are the same as regards spiritual things. We are in a society that is less religious than in days gone by. Many don't believe in a personal God, and those who do, don't believe in the kind of God revealed in the Bible. He is altogether too strict and authoritative to suit them, and the idea of a God who determines men's destiny and who sends Christ-rejecting sinners to hell, arouses their ire. They are like the big English bishop who wrote a book degrading the Old Testament and the God Jehovah. He said, "The God of the Old Testament is a big bully!" Religious modernists in general don't approve of the God of the Old Testament. They can't accept the idea that God actually burned up Sodom and Gomorrah! The great sin of these cities was homo-sexualism, and some modernistic churches of this day have ministers who are

homo-sexuals, and homo-sexuals are welcome and compose part of their congregations. There is a vast difference between the God who rained fire and brimstone upon homo-sexual Sodom and Gomorrah, and the god of the church that welcomes homo-sexuals to its membership, and has a homo-sexual for its pastor.

Yes, the trend of the times has produced gods quite different from the God of the Bible. Not all who are influenced by the times, are as bad as those we have been writing about, but they are tremendously influenced by the loose ideas that are afloat. We are reminded of the couple we read about recently who were discussing a certain Bible teaching. One held very liberal views, and his friend said, "But God plainly says the contrary right here in the Bible," and he proceeded to read. His liberal friend replied, "I don't care if it does say it - I just can't agree with God on that!"

Religious liberalism has changed God's image and caused people to back away from the strong teachings concerning election, such as characterized almost the whole Christian world during the centuries past. the heretical views of Arminius seemed so unscriptural and wrong that the religious groups for long years, refused to embrace his teachings, until, as we have pointed out, the Methodist Church of England in 1784, finally incorporated his views on election into their creed.

But today, Arminianism has seeped into seminaries and churches, until it is the popular belief. Baptists have largely succumbed to this heresy - and as we have pointed out, even independent Baptists, in large numbers. Truly, the "trend of the times" is a strong influence!



## The Short Pews



Brief  
Articles  
by Curtis  
Pugh

### THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF CHRIST ON THE TREE With Apologies to John Owen

What did Christ accomplish by His death? Christ said that He came, **"...to give his life a ransom for many"** (Mark 10:45). In John 10:15 He said, **"...I lay down my life for the sheep."** Joseph, the supposed father of Jesus, was told, **"...thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins"** (Matt. 1:21). So it is evident that Jesus came to accomplish a specific thing for a specific people.

Christ could have died for all the sins of all men. If He died for all men, then all men are saved. Or Christ could have died for only some of the sins of all men. If Christ had died only for some of the sins of all men, then all men are lost because all men have some sins for which they must be judged and punished. Or Christ could have died for all the sins of some men. If that is the case, then only some men are saved. And that is the truth. That is the case for all men are not saved, but only some men are.

Someone says, "Christ died for all men, it is their unbelief that keeps them from being saved." "Well, we answer, is their unbelief a sin or is it not?" "Yes, it is a sin." "Ah, then Christ died for it." If as some say, Christ died for all the sins of all men, then He died for their unbelief. If He died for all the sins

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### BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 8-1-2015 to 8-31-2015

Beginning Balance .....	\$7,672.55
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	100.00
TOTAL .....	325.00
TOTAL .....	7,997.55
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	
WFTA .....	203.98
WCTT .....	160.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	363.98
.....	7,633.57
Interest .....	+ .07
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$7,633.64



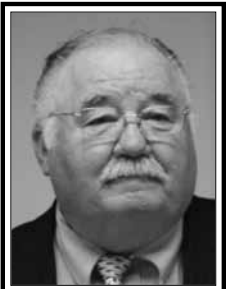
### BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 8-1-2015 to 8-31-2015

Beginning Balance .....	\$1,193.13
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX .....	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL .....	25.00
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 Willett, 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., 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
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., Plumersville, AR .....	50.00
Roy Wonnacott, Sheridan, IL .....	19.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL .....	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	16.00
Anonymous .....	1,225.00
Dividing checks .....	150.00
Sub Total .....	\$3,380.95
TOTAL .....	\$4,574.08
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	490.00
Postage .....	738.07
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.96
Dividing checks .....	150.00
Bank Charge .....	13.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,867.03
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$707.05



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder Larry J. Killion, pastor of the Lord's Baptist Church of Tacoma, WA, departed this life in early September while on vacation with his family in Hawaii.



Bro. Larry was pastor of the church from its organization in 1980 until his death.

Please be in prayer for his family and the church.

**"...And thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty"** (I Sam. 20:18).

\*\*\*\*\*

The Big Creek Baptist Church of Wayne, WV and pastor Matthew Stepp, would like to announce revival services October 29<sup>th</sup> thru November 1<sup>st</sup>. The scheduled speaker will be Elder John Lybrook.

For further information concerning service times or directions to church house, please contact Pastor Matthew Stepp at: 304-807-5063 (M) or 304-522-1261 (H) or Email:bigcreek@frontier.com

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The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS and pastor Nathaniel Hille, would like to announce their 2015 Bible Conference October 30<sup>th</sup> thru November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Speakers are Elders Mark Minney, Timothy B. Hille, and Timothy J. Hille.

For more information please contact Pastor Hille at nhille@gmail.com or at (620) 845-4183.

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A new mission work has begun. The Providence Baptist Church located at 1115 Jones Mill Road, Cartersville, GA 30120, is an outreach of the Tibet Baptist Church

of Ludowici, GA. Service times are Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., Morning Worship at 10:45 a.m., and Evening Worship at 5:00 p.m.

For more information please contact Bro. Bruce Allen (502) 468-6563, Email: providencebc30120@gmail.com or on Facebook under Providence Baptist.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Landmark Baptist Church of Moncks Corner, SC, is in need of a pastor and are prayerfully seeking qualified candidates. Any interested Brother possessing the qualifications found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 should contact Bro. Andrew Cook at 843-873-6945.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Windsor Baptist Church of Windsor, IL is seeking a qualified candidate for pastor. They are small in number but rich in truth. Candidate should meet the qualification in I Timothy 3. For more information please contact Brother John Gregory at (217) 728-9966 or Email windsorbaptist.grace@gmail.com.

\*\*\*\*\*

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.

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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](mailto:Elohimfirst@gmail.com) for more information.

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The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS is seeking a pastor. Any interested brother

may call at (662) 282-7794 or Email:bbchurch@nexband.com for a pastoral questionnaire.

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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. We also welcome any upcoming meeting or conference announcements.

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## The Short Pews

*(Continued from page 23) ◊*

of all men, then no man has any sins for which He must answer. If Christ died for all the sins of all men, then He died for the sins of Judas the betrayer and Judas has no sins for which he must be judged. If no man has sins unpaid for by Christ, then God unfairly sends men to eternal punishment for all their sin debt was paid.

Someone says, but men must repent or pray the sinner's prayer or some other such work in order to be saved. We ask just where in the Bible does it say that salvation comes as a result of man's work? Paul wrote, **"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). Will you believe God's Word or the ideas of mere men? Will you admit that God never told us in His Word that a man could do something and bring about his new birth? Consider the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: **"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). All men are shut up to this: **"...it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy"** (Rom. 9:16).



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