

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

Volunteers For Jesus

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma



Most so-called evangelical Christians preach and practice what they erroneously call "soul winning." They can be likened to recruiters for the military service. They have a sales pitch prepared by which they try to get sinners to volunteer for salvation: whatever it takes, by hook or by crook! If these religious recruiting officers can just get sinners to make a move they can turn it in on their report. They can carve another notch on their gospel gun. A one-time prayer for salvation is all it takes with most of them. Others try to include making some kind of commitment which they often call 'making Christ Lord.' Still others have in their recruitment scheme a necessary step they call baptism. Whatever their requirements, their aim is to secure volunteers for Jesus: hence our title. They think by their methods to make disciples for Christ. They think their scheme produces genuine Christians headed for heaven.

As a boy growing up in Oklahoma I attended various "singings," community "homecomings," cemetery "decoration days" and "revival" services as well as regular church meetings. I

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Christ Despised and Rejected of Men

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



About 700 years before the birth of Christ the Prophet Isaiah wrote, **"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not"** (Isa. 53:3).

We are not at a loss to know who is referred to in these words. The New Testament indicates that the Messiah fulfilled this prophecy (John 12:38; Rom. 10:16). Students of the Scripture hold that Isaiah 53 treats of the appearance of Christ in human nature. Things are said of this character which are true of Christ alone. They cannot refer to any other being in the universe.

WHO IS DESPISED AND REJECTED?

I would answer: it is the Man of Sorrow. When He appeared on earth, men saw "no beauty in Him." Instead of being attracted to Christ, they were repelled by Him. The carnal mind saw no excellency in the Lord Jesus Christ. They abandoned and abhorred Him. He was the Stone which the builders rejected (Matt. 21:42).

This Person Who is despised and rejected

◇ (Continued on page 4)

From Our Mother's Womb

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia



"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Ps. 139:13-16).

Our God is sovereign in all things. He is in control of all of the affairs of men, just as He is in control of all of the affairs of the universe. It may seem a marvelous thing, but God has deigned to notice man, and to even take an interest in the affairs of men. I want us to consider the fates of men, and how that, even "from our mother's womb" God has determined our end.

As we proceed, I want us to notice the general condition that pervades all of humanity, and the terrible woe to which we are born. Further, I want us to notice how God has already made

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Christ is a great Saviour for great sinners.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).

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Staff: Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Kiser, Virginia Cockrell

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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.

Volunteers For

(Continued from page 1) ♦

remember singing the song "As A Volunteer." The chorus of that song goes "A volunteer for Jesus, A soldier true, Others have enlisted, Why not you? Jesus is the Captain, We will never fear, Will you be enlisted as a volunteer?" That song is probably out of fashion today as so called "gospel music" has gone through various phases in its downgrade. But the philosophy behind that song is as popular as ever. After all the Bible says "evil men and seducers shall [continue to] wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13 - brackets added). And volunteerism for Jesus is a deception! All this volunteerism, of course, is based upon the notion that sinners are capable of volunteering. We say again: volunteering for Jesus is based upon the misconception that sinners have the ability to come to Christ in a saving way without any interference from God.

Today, most of what is called "evangelical Christianity" has done away with the draft. They no longer believe that God has a conscription policy by which He selects and inducts into His service whom He pleases. Various objections as to the fairness of God's conscription program continue to be raised by those who believe individuals have the ability to volunteer for Jesus. God's answer to such as object to the way He drafts His soldiers was written by Paul in Romans 9:20-21: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one

vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" In other words, if we may paraphrase, Paul says to all those volunteers for Jesus, 'Just who do you think you are, daring to question God? God has the right to do whatever He wants with His creation.' Paul had just previously stated these words: "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. 9:14-16). But modern Christianity has espoused the idea of individuals volunteering for Jesus. They will not be divorced from that notion even by God's Word! They think the new birth comes about by an act of man's will. It matters not to them that the Bible says, "it is not of him that willeth."

Is there Scripture to substantiate our claim that God does not accept volunteers? We believe that there is. Christ's rejection of volunteers was complete. As far as the New Testament record is concerned, there is not a single instance of Christ accepting a volunteer. Let us look at four instances of volunteerism in the Gospels. In each of these the Lord Jesus spoke words - demanding words - which caused the volunteer to go away from Him. Jesus did not mistakenly say things that caused these men to give up their volunteerism. We can say that with full assurance because the Lord Jesus "needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:25). His words were direct, pointed and achieved what He intended them to accomplish.

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Berea Baptist Banner
PO Box 39
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Volunteers For

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First consider these excerpts from the meeting of the rich young ruler with Jesus. **“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?... Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions”** (Matt. 19:16, 21-22). This young man claimed to be blameless as far as the Old Testament law was concerned. (Paul made that same claim in Philippians 3:6). He was no doubt a fine young man. He was volunteering to do whatever Jesus told him to do – he thought. But the Lord Jesus, knowing his heart, told him to do that which the young man could not bear to do. Christ told him to sell all that he owned, give the proceeds to the poor and then come and follow Him. The young man’s volunteerism was short lived. The Scripture says **“he went away sorrowful.”** Christ never required any other person in the Scripture to sell all their possessions. But He pointed His words at the true love of the young man: his riches. Many professing Christians today – volunteers – are willing to follow the Lord as long as they can keep their comfortable affluent lifestyle. As long as their kind of following after Christ does not affect what they have, they are willing to volunteer for Jesus. But Christ did not accept that kind of volunteerism then and we have no reason to believe that He accepts it today.

Another instance of

volunteerism which Jesus rejected is seen in these verses: **“And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head”** (Luke 9:57-58). Here was a man who seemed quite enthusiastic. He openly declared that he would follow the Lord wherever it took him. But he seemed to think that following the Lord would eventually result in ease. Perhaps he was expecting the Lord to immediately receive His kingdom. Perhaps he thought he would be elevated to a higher position: one of power and wealth. The Lord’s pointed words about His own poverty seem intended to cause this man to reconsider and leave. The context gives us every reason to believe that this man gave up his volunteerism.

In proximity to the last two quoted verses we have another two which tell of a similar volunteer. We read: **“And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God”** (Luke 9:61-62). This man had such ties with family and friends that he was willing to put off following the Lord for a time of farewells with them. Perhaps he expected a going-away feast or party. Again we point out that the Lord Jesus knew all about this man. And based upon what He knew, He spoke pointed words of rebuke to him. It seems clear that this was the end of his volunteerism.

A fourth instance of volunteerism in which the

Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



The HOW of the New Birth?—Part 3 #7

“How can a man be born when he is old” (John 3:4)? Jesus replied, **“Except a man be born of water AND of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”** (John 3:5) (emph. NH). The word “and” is very significant! It teaches us that one must be born both of water AND of the Spirit! Jesus is speaking about a birth. In order for there to be a birth it requires two things: 1) a seed AND 2) a begetter (one who generates the offspring). The Word of God is the seed (I John 3:9); The Holy Spirit is the begetter (John 3:6; John 6:63).

As everyone knows, not every seed sown grows. Why? Because

God must give the increase (I Cor. 3:6). The same is true in the spiritual realm. Every time the Word of God is preached it does not mean sinners will be saved. The preacher, the missionary, the Sunday school teacher are all powerless to make the Word of God effective unto the regeneration of lost souls. This work is solely the work of God the Holy Spirit. Begging sinners to walk the aisle, to give their hearts to Jesus and such like will not bring about the new birth, which alone makes one fit to enter God’s kingdom. Only the Word of God AND the Spirit of God can do it. Have you been born of both the Word AND the Spirit? Ye must be born again!

words of Jesus caused would-be followers to leave Him is seen in this passage: **“But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him”** (John 6:64-66). These words of Jesus were spoken to some who were actually viewed as His disciples. They are called that. Again the supernatural knowledge of the Son of God is stated. Jesus knew not only that Judas would betray Him, but He also knew from the beginning who believed not. Some of these unbelievers were viewed

as disciples of His, but they were not true believers. No doubt they considered themselves to be followers of the Lamb. Notice the word “therefore.” The adage is “whenever you read a wherefore or a therefore ask yourself what is it there for.” The word “therefore” connects what Jesus said with what He knew in this case. In other words, it was because Jesus knew those who were unbelievers that He aimed His words at them. He knew what the results of His words would be. And He said them in light of that knowledge. And what were the results of Jesus speaking of man’s inability to volunteer to be His disciple? They left Him and never came back! Volunteers for Jesus do not stick! They are not genuine!

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Revelation 17:14 speaks of those who will be victorious over the ten kings. It says **“they that are with him [Christ] are called, and chosen, and faithful.”** (Brackets added). No volunteers in that army! God called them. God chose them. And as a result of His working in them they are steadfast! Neither do Paul’s words speak of volunteering for Jesus. He wrote in II Timothy 2:4: **“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”** No volunteering for Jesus in this army either! Paul wrote that God’s soldiers are chosen: chosen by God. To the congregation at Rome Paul wrote: **“Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ”** (Rom. 1:6). The saints at Rome had not volunteered for Jesus. They had been called! Their call had been effective – it resulted in their true discipleship. The words of assurance in the first part of Romans 8:28 are **“to them who are the called according to his purpose.”** Volunteers for Jesus have no assurance that all things work together for good to them! The words of the Lord Himself in Matthew 20:16 are these: **“So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.”** No volunteers for Jesus among those who shall be first. They are chosen! Paul himself certainly was not a volunteer for Jesus. God spoke about Paul to Ananias saying, **“Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me...”** (Acts 9:15). Anyone who reads the account of Paul’s arrest on the Damascus road cannot seriously attempt to say that Paul was a volunteer for Jesus! God told Ananias that He (God)

had chosen Paul! Furthermore there was not a single volunteer for Jesus who saw Him after His resurrection. Proof: **“Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead”** (Acts 10:40-41). All the witnesses of Christ’s resurrection were before that time chosen by God! The disciple Rufus was not a volunteer for Jesus for we read Paul’s words: **“Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine”** (Rom. 16:13). In fact, as far as both Paul and Peter are concerned, those who are saved are not volunteers for Jesus. They are all chosen ones! Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:4: **“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”** Peter’s words are similar in I Peter 2:9 where he wrote: **“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”** Jude summed it up thus in the first verse of his letter: **“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.”** Jude wrote to Christians, saying that they were set apart, preserved, and then called. No volunteers for Jesus there! God called them!

Can there be anything plainer than the words of Christ Himself in John 6:44-45? He said: **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written**

in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” A sinner can volunteer to go forward. He can voluntarily pray the sinner’s prayer. He can volunteer to be baptized. He can volunteer to preach. He can volunteer to teach, and to witness, and to pass out tracts. He can volunteer to be a missionary. He can voluntarily do a lot of things. But he cannot be a volunteer for Jesus. He might think that he can. But he cannot! Unless God draws him, he will not, and cannot come to Christ in a saving way. Only those who have heard the effectual (effective) call of God which gives life to the spiritually dead – unless he has learned of the Father – unless God has chosen to teach him – to deal with him – he will be just a volunteer for religion. He may think he has volunteered for Jesus. He may sing about it. He may go to hear preaching that tells him that he can be a volunteer. But the truth is, he cannot! Merriam Webster defines the word volunteer as “a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service.” No sinner ever did that relative to Christ! Not apart from the working of God in him. No sinner ever came in a saving way to Christ of his own accord – that is, apart from the work of God in his heart – the work of regeneration. In this thing the theologians call regeneration – the new birth – a holy disposition is given to the mind. That mind of man which by natural birth is enmity against God must be changed so as to cause the sinner to see himself as hopeless, and helpless, and to sorrow for his sins. The sinner comes to see himself as an offense

to God! That godly sorrow results in repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Rom. 8:7-8; II Cor. 7:20; Acts 20:21). So it is God who takes the initiative in those who come to Jesus. If there is any volunteerism in the new birth, it is that the triune God volunteers to save unworthy sinners.

If you, reader, are only a volunteer for Jesus you are yet in your sins. Cease trusting in what you have done. Your prayers, decision, religious rituals, self confidence, and all that goes along with volunteerism – cast it upon the dung-heap! The only hope of any sinner is Christ! Cast yourself upon the grace of God! Trust only in the finished work of Christ! If you are able – if you are enabled to do so – come to Christ as you are, trusting only in His finished work – it will be God working in you. Consider: **“...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”** (I Cor. 15:3-4). And may **“the Lord give thee understanding in all things”** (II Tim. 2:7).

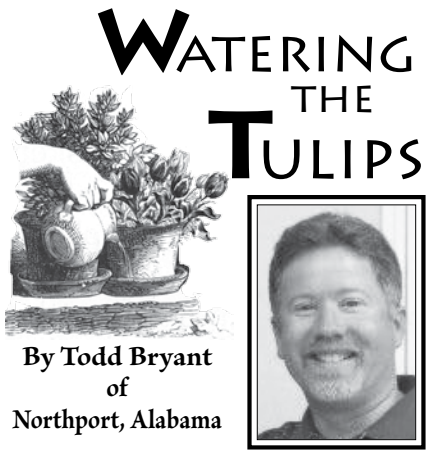


Christ Despised and

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is the Son of God. This phrase is of frequent occurrence in the Bible, especially in the Johannine writings of the New Testament. It denotes a special relation to God not shared by those who are sons of God by regeneration and adoption. The Son is denominated **“the only begotten of the Father”** (John 1:14). He is God’s own Son, the Son of the same nature with Him, begotten by Him in an inconceivable and

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By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama

I Know My Redeemer Lives

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 19:25).

Most Bible scholars believe that Job is the oldest book in the Bible. Some even affirm that Noah had a copy of the Book of Job on the ark. Who knows for sure? There is one thing we can be sure of though; Job was trusting in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. He believed that Jesus was alive and this before He was ever born. Surely, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”** (John 1:1). Jesus has always been the Savior of men.

Some believe Old Testament saints were saved by the Law while we are saved by grace. However, this is not true. The Old Testament saints merely looked forward to the coming of the Redeemer while we look back (and forward to the 2nd coming). The Law has never done anything other than condemn men. Galatians 3:10 says, **“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”** The Law condemns all – those before the

coming of Christ and those after. Looking in the mirror of the Law, we can clearly see that, **“..we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; ...”** (Isa. 64:6).

Job realized he was a sinner. He knew he was dead in his own sins (Eph. 2:1). He knew he merited eternal damnation on his own. His confidence was in a coming Redeemer. Surely, **“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us”** (Gal. 3:13).

Do you see your own sinfulness? Or, are you trying to work yourself into fellowship with God? If the Bible is true (and it is), there is not one thing you can do to earn your way into Heaven. The best you have is as **“filthy rags”** (Isa. 64:6). There is only one way into fellowship with the Creator. There is only one way to come to the Father—through the Son (John 14:6). Do you stand with Job in his trust in Christ? Do you believe the words of the old hymn, “Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow?” If you do, thanks be to God. He has saved you by His sovereign grace.



Christ Despised and

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inexpressible way. Jesus Christ is the expressed image of God’s Person, and His Son by an eternal generation. He is the Son of God in the exalted sense which implies all Divine perfections are His. In His Person dwell **“all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”** (Col. 2:9).

This despised and rejected Person is also the Son of man. This phrase denotes a human relation as certainly as the phrase, Son of God, expresses a Divine

relation. Christ is the Son of Mary, **“made of a woman”** (Gal. 4:4), a woman belonging to the human race. His assumption of our nature places Him on an equality with other men in the possession of a common nature. Here the equality ceases for as to His character He is **“separate from sinners”** (Heb. 7:26). But let us ever remember that He is all human and all Divine---the Godman.

This despised and rejected Person is the Saviour of sinners. The Son of God became the Son of man to be the Saviour of sinful men. The Mediator of the Covenant of Grace must be a man in order to die, and He must be God to die as a substitute for His people. Because He thus died He is a Saviour, the only Saviour of sinners. It is this Being Who is despised and rejected---the Son of God, the Son of man, the Saviour of sinners.

WHY IS HE REJECTED?

There are a number of reasons for His rejection given here in Isaiah 53. The first reason is unbelief as seen in verse 1: **“Who hath believed our report?”** Christ was despised and rejected during the days of His flesh. When He taught in the synagogue of His own country **“many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. . . And he marveled**

because of their unbelief” (Mark 6:2-6).

When Christ preached the doctrines of His Father unto the people of His day, they declared: **“This is a hard saying; who can hear it?”** (John 6:60). The unbelieving Jews accused Him of blasphemy and sought to stone Him because He made **“Himself equal with God”** (John 5:18). To such Jesus said on one occasion: **“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not”** (John 5:43). Again He uttered these words: **“But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not”** (John 6:36).

To prove His Deity Christ performed many miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. **“But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him”** (John 12:37). Once when He healed a blind and dumb person His critics cried: **“This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils”** (Matt. 12:24). Another time they said: **“He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?”** (John 10:20). When He would upbraid them for their unbelief, they would reply: **“Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?”** (John 8:48). Such malicious suggestions reveal a depth of human depravity unequaled in the history of our race.

Another reason for His rejection was His lowly origin and mysterious growth: **“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground”** (Isa. 53:2). Christ came into the world without much notice; He came like a little sucker out of the root of a tree. His appearance as a babe was as unpromising as a tender

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Christ Despised and

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plant which might be crushed in daylight or frostbitten at night.

The entrance of the Son of God was as a root out of dry ground. He was to be the Son of David, a family that had **“a great name, like unto the name of the great men that were in the earth”** (II Sam. 7:9). But this royal family had now been reduced to a low condition when He was born of it. His foster father was a carpenter and his mother a poor virgin in Nazareth. He had no formal education (John 7:15), and He never owned a home (Matt. 8:20). Those who believed on Him were a few fishermen, women, and harlots. He did not appear to be the great and noble Messiah they expected!

Men despised and rejected Him because of His ignominious sufferings and death. In the eyes of the multitudes He died as a common criminal who was guilty of blasphemy and treason. The Apostle said: **“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”** (Gal. 3:13). Christ was **“made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death”** (Heb. 2:9). Our Saviour **“endured the cross, despising the shame”** (Heb. 12:2). Oh, may we **“consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself”** (Heb. 12:3).

Still another reason why He was despised and rejected was His lack of beauty: **“He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him”** (Isa. 53:2). The Jews expected the Messiah to possess some uncommon beauty in His

face as possessed by Moses and David. But the Son of man was not fairer than the children of men. He was born of despicable parents, lived in a town out of which no good had come, dwelt in a poor man’s home, and worked in a carpenter’s shop. He looked and lived like any other Jew of His day. He could pass through a crowd without being noticed.

Christ was so despised and hated that they treated Him as a leper: **“We hid as it were our faces from him”** (Isa. 53:3). Men shunned Him as a person with an infectious disease (Lam. 4:15). They had an aversion to Him and scorned Him as unworthy of notice. The rulers and priests treated Him as a mean man and rejected Him as a fanatic and madman. When they met Him on the street they would turn and look the other way. Never did any man know more dishonor and disgrace than our Saviour did.

This was all to happen according to God’s eternal purpose. Jesus said: **“The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief Priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again”** (Mark 8:31).

BY WHOM IS HE DESPISED AND REJECTED?

The text says of **“men.”** Christ’s delights were with the sons of men, but these sons of men despised and rejected Him. This great sin of rejecting the Son of God can be committed by human beings only. The Devil and demons hate Christ, but they do not reject Him. To reject implies an offer which is refused. Christ is not offered as a saviour to Satan and his angels. To humans alone belong this awful sin.

The men of His day saw His mighty miracles which revealed His Deity. They heard His

wonderful sermons as they echoed over the hills and valleys of Judea. They witnessed His profound teachings in the cities and market places. They saw Him raise the dead to life again, yet they despised Him in their hearts and rejected Him in their minds. When they asked: **“Art thou the Christ? tell us”** (Luke 22:67), He replied: **“If I tell you, ye will not believe.”** There came upon these rejecters the judgment Moses spoke of: **“Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you”** (Acts 13:41).

Men have no regard for the Person and work of Jesus Christ in their natural state. They see no beauty in Him and have no desire for Him because of the blindness of their heart! By nature they reject God’s Word: **“They have rejected the work of the LORD”** (Jer. 8:9). They reject God’s law: **“And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity”** (II Kings 17:15). They despise His ordinance of baptism: **“But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him”** (Luke 7:30).

Why would a person want to reject Jesus Christ Who has a combination of Divine and human excellencies? To despise such a character and reject such a Being is a most unreasonable and wicked set. It is to despise infinite loveliness and to reject Him in Whom loveliness is exemplified. Men are responsible for their hating the Light of the Word and loving darkness rather than Light (John 3:19-20). **“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth**

not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

Christ has commissioned His church to make disciples in all nations (Matt. 28:19-20). He has sent forth His ambassadors into all the world to **“preach the gospel to every creature”** (Mark 16:15). The Christ of God has ordained **“that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations”** (Luke 24:47). By the preaching of the Word of God men come to see that **“God now commandeth all men every where to repent”** (Acts 17:30). It is the duty of those who hear the Word preached to **“repent”** and **“believe the gospel”** (Mark. 1:15). **“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ”** (I John 3:23).

But some will not believe the gospel when it is preached. Some despise and reject the Saviour it presents. They have an aversion to the ministers of reconciliation. What about these people? Christ answers: **“He that heareth you heareth me! and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me”** (Luke 10:16). Again He said: **“And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city”** (Matt. 10:14-15).

It is not our business to hunt the sheep. The Shepherd will do this. It is not our business to go around picking out God’s elect. He did

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Christ Despised and

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that in eternity past. But it is our business to see that the gospel is preached to every creature. We are to make known Christ's invitation to sinners. Referring to Himself as the source of where flows the water of salvation He says: **"If ANY MAN thirst, let him come unto me, and drink"** (John 7:37) (emph. MRC). Again referring to Himself as the way of salvation He says: **"I am the door: by me if ANY MAN enter in, he shall be saved"** (John 10:9) (emph. MRC). Still again referring to Himself as the giver of spiritual rest, He says: **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"** (Matt. 11:28). Verily the gospel is **"the power of God unto salvation to EVERY ONE that believeth"** (Rom. 1:16) (emph. MRC).

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES

RESULTING FROM THIS?

How wicked for men to despise and reject the Son of God. If the despising and the rejection are persisted in, what will follow? **"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 Pet. 4:17-18).

He who despises and rejects the Christ of the gospel remains unsaved. He is condemned already: **"He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:18). He shall never see eternal life if he remains in this condition: **"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"** (John 3:36). He shall die in

his sins. Jesus said: **"If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"** (John 8:24).

There is no way of deliverance but through Christ. If a man despises and rejects Him, there is no deliverance from the guilt of sin. All such despisers and rejecters of Christ remain unsaved. This means the unbeliever is for ever lost. This means a Christless death, a Christless coffin, a Christless funeral, and a Christless eternity!

All who die a despiser and rejecter of Jesus Christ will be damned. The Lord Himself said: **"He that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:16). **"But the fearful, and UNBELIEVING, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death"** (Rev. 21:8) (emph. MRC). Divine wrath in its severest manifestation awaits all such individuals who obey not the gospel. The Apostle Paul said that all who **"obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"** shall **"be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"** (II Thess. 8-9).

What will sinners do when God calls them to account for rejecting His Son? What answer can they give? They will stand without excuse and be responsible for their rejection of the gospel. Are you guilty of this sin? If you are, may God the Holy Spirit reveal to you the awfulness of the sin of unbelief? (John 16:8-9). May the God of all grace grant you repentance that you say, **"Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief"** (Mark 9:24).



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a difference, by setting His love upon some of us, as He sees fit. And then, finally, we will consider how God's love being bestowed upon us, grants us hope, favor, and even the opportunity to serve our God, both in this life, and in the life to come. All of this was determined before we were born. All of this is in the hands of God, from the time that we were in the wombs of our mothers, even until now. Really, these were all in the hands of God from eternity past, even into eternity future.

ALL ARE SINNERS

From the womb, all men are sinners. Without exception, all naturally born men are born into the world as sinners. Remember, Adam was created from the dust of the ground; Eve was formed from the rib of Adam; Jesus Christ was born from Mary, but His Father was in Heaven. When a child is born, we know that he is a sinner. This is an inherited trait from our father, Adam, who fell into sin, and plunged all mankind into utter and total depravity. **"Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth. The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely"** (Ps. 58:1-5).

One would think, humanly speaking, that the newborns, the infants, the young children – these must be innocent. Surely, if we can point to any who would

be sinless, and any who would be worthy of God's affection, it must be the babies and the very young. How can these be considered evil and depraved? **"Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb"** (Isa. 48:8). Instead, the Scriptures (and experience) teach us that Adam and sin have broken us. We are all sinners, even from our mother's womb. We are transgressors, and offenders of the Law of God.

I do hope, and I believe, that the unborn babies who die in the womb (including those who are purposely aborted), and the infants who die as babies, and even those who die as young children, are saved, somehow, by the miraculous grace of God. However, I believe that in order for these babies and very young children to be saved, they must still be the recipients of God's grace. In other words, they have no claim on God's blessings, nor do they stand as pure and innocent before Him, based on their own merits. Instead, somehow, God gives them the faith to repent and believe and trust in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. However, as to the matter of the souls of these very young, I will leave the eternal destination of these in the hands of God.

I do know, though, that all of mankind is born into this world as sinners. **"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good,**

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no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3:10-18). Left to our own, we will live our lives in sin, and we will forever disobey and dishonor the God Who has made us. Left to our own, we will devise wickedness, and pursue unrighteousness throughout our days here on earth.

We read an account of the state of affairs amongst men, in the book of Isaiah, **"There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up"** (Isa. 51:18). As men and women, boys and girls, we are wicked sinners, and we are liars and unrighteous before God. We have no right to God's kindness. We have no claim on His mercy. We are not entitled to His grace. From our mothers' wombs, we are all guilty and we are all sinners.

GOD LOVES HIS PEOPLE

So, we have seen that, from our mother's womb we are all sinners and false and wicked before God. We carry the curse of Adam and of sin upon us; and we have the sinful blood of Adam coursing through our veins. And yet, there is an equally astonishing (indeed, even more astonishing) fact that the Scriptures relate to us, concerning the ruined mankind of which we are a part: from the womb, God loves His people.

This is a great mystery, and a stupendous happening – that God would love sinners. We, who are the chosen of God, who are mere wicked mortal beings, have had the love of God bestowed upon us. Throughout our lives, even from our mother's womb, we are loved by God. **"Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations"** (Jer. 1:4-5).

In the salvation of the souls of the sons and daughters of God, we have displayed for us the mercy and the grace of God, in the love that He has for His undeserving people. We do not even deserve to live, and yet He brings us forth from the wombs of our mothers, and He crowns us with His perfect and unfettered love. Though we are oblivious to this love before we are saved; and though His love for us is not apparent until we repent and believe; still, that love is an ever present shield, and a protecting, preserving, and invincible force, which brings us, ultimately, to Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

The Apostle Paul is an example of a sinner who was loved by God – even from his mother's womb (similar to the words of the prophet Jeremiah): **"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood"** (Gal. 1:15-16). He was still God's despite what he did as a youth, and as an adult, in the ways and the traditions of the Pharisees. He was still a recipient of God's love despite the rebellion and the utter

hatred that He displayed for Jesus Christ, and for those who would follow after Christ. The love of God does not excuse Paul or his actions. Rather, the love of God is magnified, when cast upon the backdrop of the life and times of such a rebellious man. The love of God is shown to be powerful and all-conquering when it is shown forth in the life of such a man as Saul of Tarsus. Of course, you and I have no room to boast; you and I have no reason to point fingers at Saul of Tarsus. We were rebels, too. And, if we were deposited in the same set of circumstances as Saul of Tarsus, except God would have intervened, we would have behaved just as poorly, and just as wickedly, and just as viciously as did the man who would become the Apostle Paul.

We have also, in the Old Testament, the example of Isaiah, as a man whom the Lord loved, even from his mother's womb. **"Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name"** (Isa. 49:1). This passage may have Messianic implications, but, I believe that there can be at least an application made to the prophet Isaiah. During his lifetime, he was made to know that God had loved him from the very beginning.

Another Old Testament example of the love of God is Jacob. The Scriptures use Jacob and Esau to present to us the contrast that exists between the love of God, and the hatred of God. Jacob was loved of God; Esau was hated of God. **"And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac: And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel**

the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them" (Gen. 25:19-26). Here is an example of two children born in the same womb, at the same time, with the same father. And yet, all things (humanly speaking) being equal, God loved the one, and did not love the other. The world of religion takes great offense at the thought that we, as Baptists, present to the world – that is, that God loves some, and hates others. To me, this seems the best way to describe this contrast between Jacob and Esau, and between the elect and reprobate: God loved Jacob, and He did not love Esau. Really, these are the only two conditions in which men find themselves. Those who are loved by God, are the recipients of a love which they do not deserve, and to which they never aspired on their own. These blessed children of

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Selah! Think About It!

by Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

“Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. ... Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him” (Luke 8:35, 38-39).

What a marvelous mission Jesus Christ had when He became Emmanuel (God with us!) and **“came to seek and to save that which was lost”** (Luke 19:10). He came to **“save His people from their sins”** (Matt. 1:21). God had a plan to provide His lost sheep with a Saviour from before the foundation of the Earth. But was it God’s plan to save men, or to change men? Selah! Think about it!

I have likened the salvation of men to rescue missions, like the *Carpathia* steaming across the icy Atlantic to rescue the *Titanic* survivors. It is pictured in rescuing folks hopelessly lost in the wilderness, the forest, or as Scripture puts it in Psalm 40:2, **“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.”**

Salvation is undoubtedly a rescue operation, where our omnipotent God in sovereign

grace reaches down and redeems us from the slave block of sin. He rescues us from the horrible fate of the rich man in Luke 16:22-23, **“And it came to pass...the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments...”** If we go a step further and look into the future of those thus plucked as “burning brands from the fire” (Zech.3:2) we will see that their glorious future holds the splendor of Heaven. Salvation is portrayed from so many pulpits today as a rescue from Hell and a ticket to Heaven. And it most certainly is, but is that the plan of God? To save men? Or is His plan to change men? **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed”** (Rom. 12:1-2). The salvation that God gave the demoniac of Gadara was so much more than just a release from Hell’s destiny, or a shining ticket to Heaven, was it not. The Son of God transformed him from a savage beast-man crying and cutting himself into a sane Christian sitting docilely and lovingly at the feet of Christ. The salvation that Jesus brought transformed his very nature. He is most certainly NOT what the gathering spectators had come expecting to see. The old nature of savage carnality is GONE. It has been replaced with love, joy, peace and all the other fruits of an indwelling Holy Spirit. The new abilities of repentance and faith have been granted to this child of God. You see, salvation transformation is what EVERY child of the regeneration receives. It changes our person, our conduct and every aspect of our

life. Anything short of that is not really God’s plan of salvation for us. Selah! Think about it!

So many well-intentioned evangelists today are asking folks to make a decision for Christ and promise to hand out tickets to Heaven and absolution from Hell, but they have no authority from God to do so. What the wretched sinners of this world (you and I) need is not a dotted line of a “church card” to sign our agreement upon, but we need the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to completely renovate our lives. **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”** (II Cor.5:17).

Modern churches are full of listless, “saved” professors of religion, that need the transformation inside that only comes from God. **“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you”** (Rom. 8:6-9). May God grant our churches this saving/transforming grace. Selah! Think about it!



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God have all of the love of God bestowed upon them. Jacob is, in many ways, representative of these undeserving sinners who have been loved by God. On the other hand, Esau is representative of that other class of persons – those who are hated of God. I

believe that “hatred,” as it pertains to God’s relationship with men, is simply the total and complete lack of love. In other words, those who are loved by God are completely loved by God. Those who are not loved by God (hated by God) simply have exactly none of God’s love. Oh, how wonderful it is to have the love of God, undeservingly bestowed upon us! Oh, how awful it is to have none of God’s love, and to be the object of His disdain! These are the conditions of men. Every man will find himself in one of these two conditions. Without the grace of God, we would all of us – each and every human being who has ever been born – find ourselves in the position (condition) of God’s disdain, and the total absence of His love.

To further explore the condition of Jacob and Esau from their mother’s womb, let us read in Malachi and in the Book of Romans. **“The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.”** (Mal 1:1-3) **“And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated”** (Rom. 9:10-13). How could this be, that persons who

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are born without any redeeming qualities, are yet loved and known unto God? This simple observation should attract our attention, and our praise, and our worship! Oh, how gracious and loving our God is, in that He would notice and care for any of such a wretched and fallen humanity! But, instead, those that decry the sovereignty of God in salvation prefer to spend their time, and expend their efforts vainly attempting to cast blame on God for the undisputed fact that men are sinners; and that, left unchecked, they will continue forever in their wicked ways. Somehow they want to blame God for Adam's sin, and they want to blame God for the wickedness of men and the sinfulness that has nearly overwhelmed the earth. Men would rather blame God for the fact that He does not save all, instead of glorifying God that He has saved any. We do not deserve His love! We stand as sinners and unrighteous men and women – worthy of hellfire and brimstone – and yet we dare to label our God as an unjust God, or an unfeeling God, when not all souls are redeemed and saved. Instead, we should magnify His grace and love in the salvation of even one wretched soul. Surely, this love that we have is a product of His mercy! Surely, this love is a statement made by His grace! Or, might we rather say that this mercy and this grace are a result of His love, which He had for us before the world began?

I suppose that it is safe to say that if the Lord loves us now, He must have loved us forever. After all, our God cannot change. **“For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are**

not consumed” (Mal. 3:6). We generally use this verse to teach that, despite our own failings, God will not cease in His love toward us. However, we could also use this verse to teach that God, Who cannot change, if He loves us now, must have loved us forever in the past. He is changeless, unwavering, and without any variation in His Person and in His characteristics. **“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever”** (Heb. 13:8). He gives His love to His people, not just in a total and all-encompassing manner, but also in an eternal and everlasting way.

We have many examples in Scripture of the enduring and lasting love that God has for His people – we have noticed just a few. We cannot put a beginning on God – how can we put a beginning on His love? We cannot put an end to God – how can we imagine an end to His love? **“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me”** (Isa. 49:15-16). Here there is an allusion to the verses at the beginning of the chapter, where we are told that the Lord knew us and loved us from the womb of our mothers. Now, the Lord is reminding us that those same mothers, may, on occasion, forget their children. But, He will not cease to love us.

HIS PEOPLE HAVE HOPE

Finally, I want you to know that from the womb, the people of God have a sure hope. As we are born into this world, we are not immediately aware of this hope – just as we may live many years unaware of the love that God has for us in His Son Jesus

Christ. But, the hope will one day become our assurance, and the basis of our service and worship of God. Indeed, as we consider this love and knowledge that God has for us, we, who are His children, must admit that the hope that the children of God have, is a remarkable and satisfying and enduring hope.

Since there are persons whom the Lord loves from the womb, these persons are blessed with a hope and with a strength that others do not have. From the beginning of our lives, we have a certainty to our destiny. As I have said, we surely do not know these things from the beginning of our lives; but, the Lord has taken us to Him. We are bound to Him now with cords and bands of love. The Lord has bestowed hope upon us. At some point in our lives we will taste of this hope, and our lives will be forever changed. From that time of our salvation, we will eagerly anticipate the fulfillment of our salvation – we will eagerly anticipate the coming of the Lord. From that time of our salvation, we will hope in the Lord, we will pursue His righteousness, and we will be forever inclined to the Heavenly, rather than the earthly and mortal. David said, **“But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly”** (Ps. 22:9-10). Later on, the Psalmist said, **“Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall**

be continually of thee” (Ps. 71:4-6). As these verses in the book of the Psalms teach us, the hope that we have should inspire us to praise and service.

The world can be a frightening place. And yet, equipped with a knowledge of the blessed fact that God loves us; and fitted with the hope that God has bestowed upon us; you and I – and each of the children of God – can live our lives trusting and hoping in Him Who has saved us, and finding relief from the fears which consume so many in this life. **“Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen”** (Isa. 44:1-2). The hope that we have in Jesus Christ is able to conquer our fears. The love of God and the accompanying hope and trust that is delivered to us, will inspire us and enable us to live above and beyond the troubles, trials, and fears of this life.

As children of God, we have an opportunity, a privilege, and an obligation to worship and serve our Saviour and the One Who has loved us from our mother's womb. **“And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength”** (Isa. 49:5). The hope that we have should lead us to worship Him, and to assign to Him all the glory. His strength is ours; our worship should be His. We were loved by God from our mother's womb – and the Lord God intended for us to serve Him. He did not just love us and save us to live unto

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ourselves; He always intended for us to be a reflection of His love and grace in this world of men.

I know that this world can be a place that will bring about despair, sadness, and terrible travails. And yet, as we consider God's unfailing love for us; and as we consider the hope that is set before us; and as we rejoice in the strength and the succor that is ours from God; we should be the happiest and the most joyful persons on the face of the earth! **"And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God"** (Luke 1:14-16). I know I have lifted this passage a little out of context; but, here, at the prophesying of the birth of John the Baptist, the Lord God promises joy and gladness for those who are happy to see His will being accomplished on the face of the earth. Surely, this world is a wicked place, and we, too often, waste our time and effort lamenting the fact that the world is growing more and more wicked. Instead, we should rejoice that the will of God is being accomplished! Sure, there are times of sorrow. Sure, there are days and nights of weeping and sadness. But, these should not detract from, nor diminish, the joy and the gladness that we have in the salvation that God has accomplished for us! We should sing praises unto God as we see the signs of the coming of the Lord being fulfilled! In our lives, we, as chosen and blessed children of God, should show

forth joy and gladness. Despite the wickedness which surrounds us, we should rejoice in the service and in the worship of our God, Who has loved us, and protected us from our mother's womb, until now, and even into Heaven.



Signs of A Dying Age

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

(MATT. 24:7-12)

I want to speak today on the subject, "Signs of a Dying Age," and I want to read from the 24th chapter of Matthew, beginning with verse 7, **"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."**

Now I want to use for a text that 8th verse, **"All these are but the beginning of sorrows."** My text does not have an adequate rendering in our King James version. Here it says, **"All these are but the beginning of sorrows,"** but in the Greek, of which this is



but the translation, it says, **"All of these are but the beginning of birth pangs."** The picture drawn here in this passage is the picture of an old age dying and a new age being born, and it says that the things that are mentioned here as to take place are to be to us not only signs of a passing age, but the birth pangs of a new age that is to come into existence.

Now, God has divided time, all time, into orderly ages. We speak of the end of time, but I do not find anything of that kind mentioned here in the Bible. It is true that we have such a thing mentioned once in a very bad translation, mistranslation, I might say, in the Book of Revelation, but when you look on the margin of the Bible and get the marginal rendering, you'll find that it is not the end of time that is referred to at all. So far as I know, and so far as the Bible discloses, duration may be measured in terms of time forever and ever. The longest period of duration that the Bible speaks of is "ages rolled upon top of ages." And let me repeat that God has divided time into ages.

There was the age of innocency back there in the Garden, there was the age of the Law, and we're now living in the Age of Grace, but this age was predicted by the Lord Jesus Himself to come to an end. He said to His Disciples, and He was speaking to them in organized capacity as His church, **"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."** That signified that the age begun back at the cross would one day come to a conclusion, and that conclusion is to be at the return of Christ to this earth.

Now God's purpose and plan for this age in which we live is for His people to spread the Gospel throughout the world. This is the age of out-calling, during which

God is calling out of the world a people for His name, who will live with Him and rule the earth in the age to come. And the next age that is to come we might call the Kingdom age. It will be earth's Golden Age of perfect peace and contentment and plenty, during which this old world will be restored to what the Lord wants it to be, and Jesus foretells here in this Scripture the signs that would accompany the end of the age.

I read something a few months ago, to the effect that the age might be illustrated by the body of a man, first, strong and stalwart and youthful, but declining until finally a condition of decrepitude is reached. This age started out strong and vigorous, Christianity in a short time had penetrated to the length and breadth of the great Roman Empire, and during this age, we have had great governments to rise and great things to take place, but the age has grown old, and it looks as if we have just about reached the twilight, the period of decline and decay. I believe that we are living in a fast-dying age. I believe that we are swiftly coming to the closing days of this dispensation, and to the dawn of a new day for this old world. And my belief is based upon the correspondence between the signs that are mentioned here in the Bible, and the things that I see taking place out here in the world about me.

Now let us go to the Scriptures and let us note some of the signs of the end of the age. The first thing that I mention is wars. In Matthew 24:7, we read, **"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."** But someone immediately points out that we have had wars all along down through the centuries, and that's quite true, and that's exactly

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. In I Corinthians 11:10 we read, **“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.”** What is the meaning of the verse and the significance or meaning of **“because of the angels?”** – Kentucky

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH
45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH
45619



Elect angels are present in the worship services of the Lord's churches (Psa. 138:1; I Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10; I Tim. 5:21; Heb. 1:13-14). Because the woman is from the man (11:8-9) and because elect angels observe our worship services and take a keen interest in our faith, practice, and order (I Pet. 1:12-16). As such, the woman is to have her head covered or veiled. Would Paul tell a woman she ought to have hair on her head because of the angels? I seriously doubt it since long hair on women has always been the accepted norm in almost every society as a means of distinguishing them from men. Paul is plainly stating under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that a woman should have the symbol of submission, the artificial head covering on her head because of the angels. By so doing she is declaring her agreement with the teaching that she is to be in submission to the man. When the Word of God plainly states that you ought to wear a head covering, you ought to do it cheerfully and in humble obedience. The desire of the heart should be loving obedience to God's commands no matter how unpopular or unfashionable it may be in the eyes of men.

I like the comment of John Gill, the Baptist expositor and theologian:

“The generality of interpreters, by power, understand the veil, or covering on the woman's head, as a sign of the man's power over her, and her subjection to him... The Greek word *exousia* more properly signifies the power she had of putting on and off her covering as she pleased, according as times, places and persons make it necessary” (Vol. 8, pg. 685).

TOM ROSS

Matthew Stepp
286 Big Creek Road
Wayne, WV 25570

Pastor
Big Creek
Baptist Church
286 Big Creek Road
Wayne, WV 25570



If any Bible student wants to know what the woman's headcovering is for, they have come to the right verse. By the simple prepositional phrase initiating this verse of paramount importance, we can indeed know the cause of women having “power/exousia” or a “sign of authority” upon their head. Regardless of what we mere mortals might think the “covering” might be, or any speculation on extra-scriptural customs or usage, this verse boldly proclaims the Scripture's highest authority by defining this doctrine itself **“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head.”** Always let the Bible interpret itself. If we do not get anything else, let us listen to this verse. If your

cause for wearing or not wearing (preaching/not preaching) the covering is found anywhere else, please rein in your observations to the merits of this verse. **“For this cause...”** says the Apostle writing with the authority of the Holy Spirit. Selah! Think about it!

So what does it say? What is the cause? **“For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord”** (I Cor. 11:7-11). This striking verse is saturated in a pitting contrast between men and women. Before and after this polarizing verse it is stated that men are to have short hair and women to have long hair. Men are to be uncovered and women are to be covered, because of the headship order of God. Women are to have a sign upon their head, and the angels are watching to see how diligently our worship services are kept.

Despite claims of “modern” Christians that the veiled woman of Corinth was in contrast to the world's women, the Apostle Paul never uses that argument. It is always in contrast with the genders that he makes his points and drives them home. The man (not woman) was created first. The man (not woman) is to avoid long hair. The man (not woman) is to pray uncovered. The man (not woman) is the image of God. And for this cause, the woman is to have a sign of authority upon her head in public worship services.

Selah! Think about it!

A couple of quotes from the past (that can be multiplied by 100!) to commentate on this verse. First, the thoughts of Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) on the subject: “Do you think you and I have sufficiently considered that we are always looked upon by angels, and that they desire to learn by us the wisdom of God? The reason why our sisters appear in the House of God with their heads covered is ‘because of the angels.’ The apostle says that a woman is to have a covering upon her head, because of the angels, since the angels are present in the assembly and they mark every act of indecorum, and therefore everything is to be conducted with decency and order in the presence of the angelic spirits.” Also William Greenhill (1581-1671), a member of the Westminster Assembly remarks: “They (the angels) reverence the greatness and majesty of Christ. Though they be high and glorious, yet they see so vast a distance between Christ and themselves, that they cover their faces, Isa. 6 and their bodies, here; they come not into his presence rudely, but with great respect and reverence. ...Women are to be veiled in the assemblies, because of the angels, 1 Cor. 11:10, to show their reverence and subjection to them being present; and angels are covered, to show their reverence and subjection to Christ. It is an honour to the angels, that in reverence to them the women are to be veiled; and it is a great honour to Christ, that angels reverence and adore him.”

Even if the reference to **“angels”** was a Greek “angelos/messenger” reference to the pastor of the local church (such as Rev. 1:20/2:1), it would not change the meaning of the passage, because the pastor,

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What similarities or comparisons can be seen between a church service and Heaven? Mississippi

Roger Reed
20 Ledgewood Dr.
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

Missionary of
West Jefferson
Missionary Baptist
Mission
90 E. Main St.
West Jefferson, Ohio
43162



The question is, "What similarities or comparisons can be seen between a church service and Heaven?" Sorry to say, not many! And the reason is, we are depraved creatures still having that old sin nature. In Heaven we will be perfect and be as He is. This vile body will be changed in the twinkling of an eye and we will be like Jesus. **"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:52-57).**

One of my pet peeves is that when a child or baby is doing something cute or even fussing, all eyes go to that child, there

goes the sermon, we may as well pack up and go home because the distraction has killed the Holy Spirit and anything that was just said is lost and not heard. I could go on but most know that we are not as reverent in the house of God as we will be in Heaven, mainly because we will have new bodies in Heaven. There will not be any distractions in Heaven!

On the other hand if there are any similarities or comparisons they would be the worshiping of God (Revelation 7:11-12). As God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are with us in the church services now when we come into the house of worship, they will always be present with us in Heaven. The singing that we do, **"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:3).**

I wish I could say there are more similarities or comparisons, but in reality you can not compare the church services we have now with Heaven. I see huge differences. It should not be that way but sadly it is (in my opinion). Paul said, **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).** Praise God for His grace and mercy, I can not wait to get to Heaven. God Bless!

ROGER REED

Mike DeWitt Sr.
PO Box 950
Springfield, OR
97477

Pastor
Parkway Landmark
Baptist Church
PO Box 950
Springfield, OR
97477



Where is Christ? He is seated on the right hand of the throne of God. Where are the elect of God? Enthroned with Christ in the heavenly places. How did the elect come to be in such a position? By the resurrection of Christ. He raised us from the dead.

Where are the similarities? Singing, worshipping.

MIKE DEWITT

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH
45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH
45619



I think Revelation 5:9-12 may give us a glimpse of the glory of heavenly worship: **"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."**

There are several similarities between the heavenly scene described above and what ought to be present in our church services:

1. The central focus of worship is around the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ who shed His precious blood in order to redeem the elect. The saints in Heaven are directing all of their praise to the Lamb that was slain. Their hearts are filled to overflowing with love and praise for the only Person qualified and able to save their unworthy souls. They had exalted thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ as they worshipped and adored Him. Their minds were not distracted by the world, the flesh, the devil, politics, money, personal prestige, or peer pressure. They were completely focused on glorying in the Lord Jesus. This ought to be the central focus in every church service, to exalt and worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The saints in Heaven understand completely how and why they are in glory. They did not attribute ordinances, good works, or religious ceremonies as the means of saving them or keeping them saved. They understood there was no power in those things to change them from wicked, unworthy sinners to priests and kings. They acknowledged that there is only power in the blood of Jesus Christ to redeem poor sinners. They were acknowledging His merits, His justifying righteousness, and His sacrifice as the only means whereby they are able to stand in the presence of a Holy God! When we worship God in our church services we must do so in Spirit and in truth! There ought to be no room for spurious teaching or false doctrine in our services. All

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Forum #1

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just like the heavenly angels, will be watching to see that God's order of veiled women is carried out, for the cause of headship and familial order. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

Roger Reed
20 Ledgewood Dr.
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

Missionary of
West Jefferson
Missionary Baptist
Mission
90 E. Main St.
West Jefferson, Ohio
43162



The word **“power”** here is the symbol of **“authority”** on her head. And it symbolizes that the woman is under the authority of the (man) and her husband as God has ordained to be so. **“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God”** (I Cor. 11:3).

At this point is when I hear many women say, I am not under the authority of my husband, and many women are not, that is a fact (I believe because they do not want to mess up their hair or fool with a covering). But I do not care, do it anyway; if a woman does not want to be in subjection to their own husband then take that up with God. But that is not what the verse says **“the head of the woman is the man.”** **“For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of**

the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.” (I Cor. 11:6-9).

Quoting the late Elder Milburn Cockrell, “God has placed the woman in the position of subordination. Her head must be covered.”

We have two sisters in our congregation that are widows; they have no husband to be under subjection too, but they wear the head covering none the less. We have two other sisters that their husbands are not members and do not come to the services. So to show subjection to their husbands in the assembly would not make any sense. So I think that for this cause, what cause? (vv. 7-9). **“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels”** (I Cor. 11:10).

So by having a cover on she is showing she is under the **“power”** (“authority”) of man and in the position God has placed her.

To quote Elder Doyal Thomas, “Woman is to be covered (veiled) in the assembly to demonstrate that she is under the power (authority) of her husband, in order that the angels who meet with the saints may be taught that the church is subject to Christ in all things. The angels are actually met in body with the saints. What kind of teaching does the church provide for them? Do they see a submissive church? Do they see an unfaithful, rebellious church?”

John Gill has this to say of angels, “because of the angels; who attend the assemblies of the saints, and observe the air and behaviour of the worshippers wherefore women should cover their heads with respect to them, and not give offence to those

pure spirits, by an indecent appearance: it is agreeable to the notions of the Jews, that angels attend public prayers, and at the expounding of the word; they often speak of an angel.”

Angels then are in our worship services and are ever learning and are paying very close attention to our reverence and subordination in the house of God.

These words are taken from *What The Bible Teaches* and I quote, “They too cover themselves in the presence of God, **“Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly”** (Isa. 6:2). They too are engaged in carrying out the will of God; they too are guardians of the divine order in the sphere of their administration; they were present at creation and observed the divine order as to the sexes; they are learning the manifold wisdom of God in the whole church, **“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God”** (Eph. 3:10), so are also interested in its local manifestation; they are the representative of the elect angels that kept their order of subordination, in contrast to the angels that sinned in leaving their own estate, **“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day”** (Jude 1:6).

Just remember Christ was in subjection in all things to the Father, and He is our perfect example, should we not do the same? God Bless!

ROGER REED

Mike DeWitt Sr.
PO Box 950
Springfield, OR
97477



Pastor
Parkway Landmark
Baptist Church
PO Box 950
Springfield, OR
97477

I will say that an honest search of this verse will conclude to one fact, it refers to the veil that ought to be worn by females who prophesy or pray. Why is the word power used? Honestly, I do not know. Context is always the best method to understand what is being said by the author.

The veil is a sign of authority man has over the woman. The beginning of the chapter clearly establishes this fact.

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb 1:14)? Jesus is present when His churches meet together to worship the Father, why would it be any surprise at all if the angels be present? The significance is this, respect God's order, do not be offensive to the angels who cover their faces in the presence of God.

MIKE DEWITT



Quotes
from
Brother
Ritechus
N.
Dignation
by Joseph Harris

It seems folks are always searching and searching for truth, yet constantly reject it when found, usually because it is inconvenient or doesn't fit their agenda. Rather than trying to find new truth, we just need the people who already know the truth to stand on it without compromise.

Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

the participants in real worship ought to be saints who have been miraculously saved by sovereign grace and know it!

3. The saints in Heaven were in harmony as they worshipped the Lord. There is no hint of division, dissension, or derision in their worship. They are glad to be in the company of the redeemed! Oh, how this kind of harmony and unity of purpose ought to be evident in our church services! Every desire for the praise of men, self promotion and a mean spirit should have no place in our worship.

4. Godly singing, praise, and rejoicing according to the truth as it is in Jesus characterizes the worship of Heaven. May it be said of our worship services that we sing songs that exalt our Lord and are according to truth! May our song services be free of any fleshly desires and irreverent tones.

5. Interestingly enough the glorified saints who had been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb were looking forward to the day when they would leave the portals of Heaven to reign with Christ the King on earth. They looked forward to the millennial glory that would be revealed. As we worship the Lord our hearts should be encouraged by the glories that are yet to be fulfilled. We ought to anticipate with great joy the coming of the Lord and our reign with Him.

6. The saints in Heaven also recognized that there are a great number who are redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. God's elect are scattered all over the world. They are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb according to His good pleasure and purpose

without regard for race, culture, government, or language. Oh that we would worship the Lord with a desire to take the Gospel to sinners the world over regardless of race, culture, or political creed. How I long for the day when the shackles of my depraved nature will be completely and forever cast off and I am able to see the Lord Jesus in all His glory and worship Him with the praise He alone is worthy of!

TOM ROSS



“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. 12:22-23).

The Lord's church (ekklesia) is a called-out assembly of saints to worship God. Our regularly scheduled services are to be filled with singing, praying, teaching, learning, preaching, glorying and reading of God's Word. From the glimpses we see into the halls of Heaven, that is what is going on up there, too! (Luke 2:16, Isa. 6:65-66, Rev. 4-5, Ezek. 1, etc.) Selah! Think about it!

Similar structures of sedate order and worship, similar goals of glorifying and praising God, and similar commandments to abase ourselves will make Heaven seem like an extension of our greatest hours spent on

Earth in Holy Spirit-filled church services and Bible conferences. I have often heard it said that our time on Earth is spent preparing ourselves for eternity and we are just practicing for Heaven.

But as we Selah, think about it, that is really what we need to see that we are doing, practicing for Heaven and our God. My youngest daughter, Abigail is having practice after school today for Middle School volleyball. As she works so very hard at it, she still makes many mistakes, and even as the team assembles on the floor there is often confusion, and the other team gets just as many points per game (it seems) from our costly errors, as from their own perfection of their “volleyball” skills. The High School girls smile condescendingly at these younger girls practicing to someday make the varsity squad.

The picture I have in my mind after this, is that perhaps there is more comparison of (even) our Baptist church services and worship in Heaven by contrast, rather than similarities I am sure as the heavenly angels (varsity) watch our services, there are many times that they might smile condescendingly at our feeble efforts, obtuse blunders and misguided enthusiasm. But how many more times will they hide their faces in shame as we allow heresy, uncovered women, catholic holy days, apathy, schismatic jealousy, and outright irreverence to invade and pervade our sanctified church services. Selah! Think about it!

I think we forget that the shekinah glory of God chased out Moses (Ex. 40:35) and the priests (I Kings 8:11) from the Tabernacle and Temple by the sheer HOLINESS of Elohim God Almighty. Sure, the Apostle John leaned his head upon the Saviour's

breast at the Lord's Supper, but when Jesus Christ was revealed in His Heavenly glory, where was John? Falling at His feet, as one that was dead (Matt. 17:6, Rev. 1:17). I realize that then, we, too, will have our glorified bodies, and we shall see Him with sinless eyes and raise glorified hearts and tongues to His Glory, but I wonder how much of eternity will be spent on our knees and faces?!?! Selah! Think about it!

I go past a church in town that advertises a contemporary service as “Java, Jeans and Jesus,” where they serve coffee and doughnuts to the 9 a.m. worshippers. They also have a “traditional” service afterwards. I wonder if this push for casual worship is directed more for God's glory, or to encourage and patronize worldly members into coming to church? I can turn on my TV and see Bible conferences where the preachers wear “polo shirts” and the church and pastor try to emphasize a casual, comfortable atmosphere for “visitors” and invited guests. I can not help but wonder what the varsity squad (of visitors/guests) would think of such perversions of worship services to be transformed into so-called praise services where the adulation of singers and preachers seem to be the norm?

There should be similarities between Heaven and our Baptist church services. Right now, I might just make a joyful noise (Ps. 100:1), but when I get there, we will all hit the right notes every time. There will be no physical hindrances of disease, weariness and carnal lusts. It will be impossible for us to be distracted by the clock, rambunctious pewmates, boring preachers, or carnal thoughts. I think it is good for us to compare and see how far

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Forum #2

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short we are falling, while we are practicing for glory. At best, we might say. And let us close with that emphasis: it is the best and closest we will get to Heaven on Earth—right here in our church pews at our local Baptist church! Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



Signs of A Dying

(Continued from page 11) ♦

what Jesus predicted as the whole course of this age to the very end. In the last three centuries, there have been 286 wars in Europe, from the year 1500 B. C. to 1860 A.D. more than 8,000 treaties of peace have been signed, and these were supposed to be forever, and yet they remained in force for an average of two years. It's just foolish nonsense for men today to talk of having permanent, universal peace. People are babbling that sort of stuff today in the light of the fact that over 8,000 peace treaties have been in vain. When people talk about the world abolishing war, and having permanent peace by human means, they are not only going contrary to what the Bible says, but contrary to reason; to reason, and I might add, experience and plain common sense. No, there will never be permanent peace until the Prince of Peace comes and takes charge. Leaving behind the many wars of times gone by, let us come down to the climactic wars of our day.

The four years of war from 1914 through 1918, cost approximately four hundred billion dollars. That's simply more than our little brains can take in unless we compute it in terms to make it more concrete.

We'll have to be like my children when they were very small, and they came to realize that a nickel would buy an ice cream cone, and an ice cream cone became their standard of measurement in value. When we got to talking about the worth of money, they couldn't understand unless I translated it into ice cream cones. If I spoke about a dollar, they'd say, "How much is that, Daddy?" "Well, children, it's worth twenty ice cream cones." Then they could understand. And now let's see what four hundred billion dollars would do. That would build a house worth \$2,500.00, equip it with \$1,000.00 worth of furniture, and place it on five acres of land worth \$100.00 an acre, for every family in eleven countries, I'd say, of the leading countries of the world. Not only that, but there would be enough left over to present every city in these countries of twenty thousand or more population, with a five million dollar library and a ten million dollar university. Think of that, will you? That first World War cost enough to put every family in the leading nations of the world in good financial condition. What folly, what Devilish folly is war, when it saps the wealth of the world and reduces people to poverty and utter want! And World War I didn't cost anything compared to World War II, and didn't stop with that. Since the war, we've poured billions and billions of dollars into Europe, and now we're embarking on the business of seeking to finance a good portion of the world. Personally, I just don't see how this country can stand up under it. We have already the biggest national debt that any country has ever had in human history.

But now, the second sign of the dying of this age is earthquakes.

Verse 7 says, "earthquakes in divers places." We've surely had these through this age, and as the age has run along towards its close, I believe the number of these has greatly increased. I believe that while the signs mentioned here are to characterize this whole Gospel age, or age of Grace, they are to increase in size and proportion, and are to find their climax as the age comes to an end. I have here a table that gives the increase in earthquakes since the 14th century. Let me read it. In the 14th century, 137 earthquakes; 15th century, 174; 16th century 253; 17th century 378; 18th century 640; 19th century 2,119.

But now reading on down into the 24th chapter of Matthew, we find other signs of the end of the age. One of these signs is, conditions such as existed in Noah's day. We know that these conditions must have been bad indeed, for God sent the flood and swept corrupt humanity from the face of the earth. What are some of the conditions that exist today that serve to give us the characteristics of Noah's day?

One thing, I am sure, is drunkenness. We can see the wreckage caused by drink all around us all the time. Now in the light of this, people can be found that justify the sale of liquor is more than I can possibly understand. Judge Joseph Kitali, of Boston Municipal Court, made the statement back some time ago that for every dollar taken in for liquor, we have to spend \$8.00 to take care of what liquor does for those who drink it. In other words, when a dealer sells a dollar's worth of liquor, the rest of us who compose society are taxed \$8.00 to take care of the wreckage caused by that one dollar's worth of drink, because in the final analysis, it's the general public that pays, always.

What conditions existed in Noah's day, I ask again? And I answer by saying, widespread crime. The Bible tells us that back there violence filled the earth. Do we have anything like that now? The answer is found in the fact that in the past thirty years, crime has increased 500%, and it's claimed that 40% of the crime is caused by drink. How can we expect anything different when we have turned our dollars into foreign aids? The last time I saw any statistics back several years ago, there were 440,000 American girls in Colleges, and 1,350,000 tending bars, selling liquor, and you can look in the want ads in our city papers and you can find that liquor places openly advertise for bar maids. As it was in the days of Noah!

What else characterized the days of Noah that's common today? Well, I'm sure that immorality was one of the things. Dr. William Carey, a noted physical who specializes in women's diseases, made the statement sometime ago that girls are becoming less chaste than men, and alcohol is largely responsible for increased feminine immorality.

As in the days of Noah, says the Scriptures. What were they doing back there? Well, it says, they were marrying and giving in marriage until the day that God swept them away with the flood. And I dare say that along with the marrying, went divorce, and today that's one of the evils that's sweeping our nation to ruin. This loose idea of marriage and divorce results in people having no constancy, no trueness to anybody.

I recall the account that appeared in the newspapers back during the last war. I read about a young woman who was on the way to Tampa to marry a young

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Signs of A Dying

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lieutenant, and she met another soldier on the train, and when she got to Tampa, she married this fellow instead. Some friends coming down on the train from Tennessee told me about seeing a young woman who'd been to an army camp to see her husband, and she was returning, and while on the train, she got into conversation with a soldier and soon they were drinking whiskey and beer together, and she was half drunk, and there she was kissing that man whom she'd never met until a few hours before, sleeping on his shoulder. There you have two illustrations of what I'm talking about, exactly. We are in a time when marriage doesn't mean anything to many people, and this means the whole structure of society is undermined.

Let me give you some statistics on the divorce question. In 1870, there was one divorce to every 32 marriages; in 1900, one divorce to every twelve marriages; in 1928, one divorce to every six marriages; in 1935, one divorce to every five marriages, and now the divorce rate is about one to every four marriages. Excuse me for being plain---somebody needs to be plain right here. In addition to these conditions which I've just mentioned, we have this to think about. Every year, 65,000 or more girls are swept into the red light districts of our cities. Institutions report 50,000 unmarried mothers. As it was in the days of Noah! All of this means that society has rotted. The termites of sin and wickedness are eating down the structure. These things are all symptoms of a dying age.

In our nation, we are coming more and more under dictatorship, you all know that, and soon we'll be

almost as completely dominated as were the countries of Europe back several years ago. In trying to save democracy, we shall give up democracy and go to dictatorship ourselves. Whether this is necessary or not, I'm not taking the time now to say, but the thing that I'm pointing out is that we're getting into such a condition that it will make possible for Antichrist to come and to completely dominate and dictate everything, until none can do anything without his mark. This earth is going to go on becoming more and more putrid. The evil things that have been in existence throughout all this age will wax worse and worse in their manifestation until when the cup of iniquity is full, the God of Heaven will take a hand. He will send back His Son, who when He was here before, was despised and rejected, and that Son will completely smash and overthrow the governments of men and the order of society that they've built, and will begin His own reign. Read in the Book of Daniel the story of the smiting stone, and if you want to picture this, read the 19th chapter of the Revelation. God has written it, and it's as certain to come to pass as that God lives.

The great question is, what are we going to do about all this? We are living in a dying age, we are living in a time when sin and wickedness is reaching a climax, we are living in a time when it is the popular thing to drink and carouse and revel and curse God and belittle religion, and go to the Devil generally. Are we going to join the procession? Honestly, people are more interested in most anything today than they are in eternal life. The things of the body have taken the place of that which is for the welfare of the soul. I say, are we joining in that procession? Listen, there are two things that

everyone of us need to do. What are they?

First, we need to make sure of the salvation of our own souls. We are living in a dying age that will soon be over, we are living in a body that shall soon be in the grave, soon Hell shall dawn for every soul out of Christ. What about your condition? Do you know that you're a Christian, do you know you're saved? In these times of dread uncertainty, you can't afford to fail to know that you're a Christian. How can you know it? You can know it by turning to Christ, by committing the welfare and future of your soul into His hands, such that you can say at any moment, "I know that Christ is my Savior, and that He is my Sinbearer, for I have all of my trust and faith in Him." You can't know all the time that you're a Christian by your feelings, you can't know that you're a Christian all the time by this or that sign, but you *can* know by knowing in Whom your trust is reposed. Oh, if today, you're not a Christian, you need the Lord so badly, and I want to urge you to receive Him. Don't let anything hold you back from becoming a Christian, for if you fail, that spells your doom.

But I've said there are two things that we need to do, and I've mentioned the first one. What is the second? It's this. Every one of us ought to separate ourselves from this world of sin and madness. We're in the world, but that doesn't mean that we're to be of the world. The sponge diver is down there in the water, but he's not of the water, for he gets oxygen that he breathes through the tube that comes down into the water from above. He literally breathes the atmosphere that comes from above, and that's how it ought to be with every one of us. We while here in the world, can be sustained by the atmosphere

of Heaven that God gives.

Listen, we're living in a dying age, but let it die! God has a bright, glorious, new age ahead for His people. Did you ever see a day filled with gloom, covered over with dark clouds? As the evening approached, the clouds seemed to get thicker. A thick fog crept in over the landscape and twilight came dismal and dull, but the next morning when you awoke, it was to behold a new world entirely. In the night time the clouds had cleared away, the fog had been dispelled, and when the golden sun broke over the horizon, it was a sky that was perfect. Now, the clouds are gathering thick. The fog is around us, the twilight of this age is creeping in upon us, but if we are Christians, we can know that when God's tomorrow dawns, the sky will be cloudless, and our very hearts will sing for joy.

Folks, I want you to have a share in God's great tomorrow. I want you to be there when the sun rises, I want you to live in that morning without clouds. There isn't any such future for you apart from Christ, who makes such possible. Therefore, I am pointing you to Him. That's what I want to be throughout life, a sign-post to point men and women to Christ. Oh, let me point you to Him. Let me point you to Him, and say, "There's the one who can make you live forever." Let me point you to Him and say, "There's the One who will rule our world in the age to come." Let me point you to Him and say, "There's One who can save you and give your life meaning and purpose if you'll but receive Him." Will you let me point you to Him? Not to myself, but to Him! Forget me, but please, for the good of your own soul, see Christ, and give your soul into His keeping.





From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



Christ's Ability To Save

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

The seventh chapter of Hebrews contains an impressive contrast between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The general theme of the chapter is the superiority of Christ's priesthood.

There is under the New Covenant a change in the priesthood. There is a change as to the tribe officiating---formerly Levi, now Judah. There is a change as to the manner of consecration to the office, not by carnal commandment, but by an oath. There is a change as to the moral qualifications for office. The sons of Aaron were men of infirmity; Christ is holy, harmless, undefiled. There is a change as to the duration of the priesthood. Levitical priests were removed by physical death, but Christ continueth for ever.

Our text contains five truths. First, there is the Savior---"**He**." Second, the salvation---"**is able to save**." Third, the security---"**save them to the uttermost**." Fourth, the saved---"**that come unto God by him**." Fifth, the sustentation---"**seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them**."

THE SAVIOR

The only Savior of sinners is the Lord Jesus Christ. The very name "Jesus" means "savior" or "Deliverer." His foster father was told before His birth: "**Thou shalt**

call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). An angel said to the shepherds when He was born in Bethlehem: "**For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"** (Luke 2:11).

Of His own mission into the world, Christ said: "**For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"** (Luke 19:10). After His ascension, Peter declared: "**Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Priest and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins"** (Acts 5:31). At Antioch Paul preached on "**a Saviour, Jesus"** (Acts 13:23). When He returns to this world, He will come as "**the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"** (Tit. 2:13).

Outside of Jesus Christ there is no Savior. Jehovah in the Old Testament said: "**I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour"** (Isa. 43:11). The same sound is heard in the New Testament: "**Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12).

The only hope of the world is Jesus Christ. Saving favor is ours solely upon account of Christ and for His sake alone. We cannot save ourselves, we "**must be saved**" by One greater than we are. Under Heaven among men there is no

Savior but Jesus Christ.

Religionists speak of multitudes of ways of salvation. Water dogs believe water saves the soul. Work-mongers hold that good morals can redeem a man's soul. Law-workers contend for salvation by keeping the law. Baptists are in agreement with the Scriptures which predicate salvation entirely upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE SALVATION

The text said: "**He is able also to save them**." The general theme of both testaments is: "**salvation is of the LORD"** (Jonah 2:9). Psalms 3:8 declares: "**Salvation belongeth unto the LORD**." Psalms 37:39 reads: "**But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD**."

Man is unable to save himself. When the Lord asked: "**Who then can be saved**," He replied, "**With men it is impossible**" (Mark 10:26-27). No man can forgive his own sins. Forgiveness must come from God. It is written in Psalms 86:5: "**For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee**."

The Bible denies that man can save himself in any way from the guilt and penalty of sin. We are told in Ephesians 2:8-9 these words: "**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**."

If one could be saved by baptism or church membership, then salvation would be of man, not of the Lord. This would contradict the teaching of the Scriptures.

Someone says: "Paul spoke of law works in Ephesians 2:8-9." No, he did not. He did use the expression, "**the works of the law**" at other times in his writings, but he made no such limitation to the word "**works**" in Ephesians

2:8-9. Arminians say salvation is not of law works, but by Divine inspiration. Paul said: "**Not of works**," meaning not of any kind of works which man may perform.

Still some other objector cries: "But faith is a work." No, it is not. Faith works as seen in Hebrews 11, but faith is not a work. Galatians 5:6 speaks of "**faith which worketh by love**."

The objector continues: "But faith is called a work in John 6:29 which reads: "**This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent**." Notice the verse actually said: "**This is the work of God that ye believe**," it did not say, "This is the work of man that ye believe." Faith is a God-given ability: "**For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake**" (Phil. 1:29). Since God gives the sinner faith, salvation is entirely of the Lord as the Bible says.

What saving ability our Lord Jesus Christ possesses! Our text says: "**He is able to save!**" Hebrews 2:18 declares: "**He is able to succour them that are tempted**." Philippians 3:21 reads: "**He is able even to subdue all things unto himself**." Of Christ Jude writes: "**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**" (Jude 24). To the Ephesians Paul said: "**Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us**" (Eph. 3:20).

While on earth Christ demonstrated His ability to save sinners by removing all legal obstructions out of the way. By legal obstructions I mean the hindrances imposed by the law

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of God. Man had broken the law and incurred its penalty. The law demanded either the execution of its penalty which is death, or the adoption of some measure that would be recognized by God as an equivalent. Such a measure was the obedience and death of Christ.

The death of Christ satisfied the justice of God for the believer. His death, by reason of the dignity of His person, honored the law infinitely more than the punishment of sinners. The atonement of Christ obviates every legal difficulty in the way of the salvation of sinners.

Jesus Christ also removed the moral obstruction out of the way of sinners. These obstructions were the depravity of the heart and its opposition to God and holiness. Man's heart is "**desperately wicked**" (Jer. 17:9) and "**the carnal mind is enmity against God**" (Rom. 8:7).

Unless these are removed they would have prevented the salvation of sinners. In the providence of God and on the basis of Christ's atonement, the Holy Spirit removes these moral obstacles. This life-giving work of the Spirit is indispensable. What He does in renewing the heart is referred to as a creation and a resurrection. Such things as these are only possible to Divine power.

Christ's ability to save can be seen in the myriads who are the subjects of His saving grace. There were countless multitudes saved by Him before His incarnation. Numberless millions since that time have an interest in His cleansing blood. Old Testament saints were saved by a prospective Christ; New Testament saints by a retrospective Christ.

The cross saved sinners of all classes---the young, the middle aged, the old, the wise, the ignorant, the amiable, and the repulsive. How many are the subjects of His saving grace on earth? How greatly will the number increase before the end of the age? What myriads will be added even to these in the Millennium when He pours out His Spirit on all flesh!

THE SECURITY

The text said that Jesus Christ is able to save "**unto the uttermost.**" This means perfectly, so that nothing should be wanting afterward for ever. Christ is able to keep on saving. He is able to save at all times and in all cases all who come to Him.

Christ's salvation is a complete salvation. Through His perpetual life and eternal priesthood, He can carry it through to the uttermost. Being perfect Himself, He can bring to perfection all His followers, pardoning, sanctifying, justifying, glorifying.

The Lord Jesus will never cast away one of those who comes to Him. He said in John 6:37: "**Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**" In John 6:39 He continued this thought by declaring: "**And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.**"

Some critic says: "I know a man who was saved and then fell from grace." No, you do not. None of those who come to Christ for salvation will perish. He said: "**Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none**" (John 18:9). Some Arminian clinging to his human creed or church manual may say that some who come to Christ perish in Hell. But do not believe such lies. Our Savior said

concerning His sheep: "**And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand**" (John 10:28).

THE SAVED

Who is it that Jesus Christ saves unto the uttermost? He who signs a decision card? He who is baptized? He who joins the church on Sunday morning? He who prays through on the mourner's bench? Ten thousands times no! The Bible never says Christ saves such people!

Then who does He save? The text answers: "**Them that come to God by Him.**" This implies repentance. Those who come to God come because they are tired of sin. In coming to God their hearts are broken with sorrow that they have sinned against God.

Christ saves just those who come in repentance. If He saved those who do not come to God by Him, there would be a virtual encouragement to impenitence. But encouragement to sin in any form would be in antagonism with the character of Christ.

Coming to God is to have faith in Him. Jesus disclosed this in John 6:35 by saying: "**I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst**" (John 6:35). To come to Christ is to admit the record that God has given in the gospel concerning His Son is worthy of all acceptance. There is no way of salvation but by Christ, and no other way of our being saved by Christ than by coming to Him in repentance and faith.

Christ will never thwart the gospel plan of saving sinners. To save those who do not come to God by Him would be to make His own mediation of no effect. It would deny the necessity of His

death and make the cross needless.

Coming to God by a priest through a sacrifice under the law was typical of coming to God by Christ. This coming is a movement of the soul, not of the body. The Father must be approached through the Son, for Christ said: "**No man cometh unto the Father but by me**" (John 14:6).

You can come to Christ on your baptism, and you will die and go to Hell. You can come on your church membership, and you will never see the kingdom of God. You can come on any works which you may perform, and you will perish in your sins. Christ saves only those who come to God on His merits and atonement---No more and no less.

THE SUSTENTATION

What a wonderful sustentation the verse concludes with. Divinely given, it reads: "**Seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.**" The idea is not so much intercession as intervention. It includes every form of Christ's identifying Himself with the interest of all the elect.

His atonement is the basis of His intercession. He lives to carry into full accomplishment the objects contemplated in His death. He lives to preside over the interests confided to His charge. His priesthood passes not away, but aides unchangeable amid the mutations of time. "**For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life**" (Rom. 5:10).

There was but the one offering on earth once for all, but His intercession for us in Heaven is ever continuing. No charge of sin can be laid to the elect because Christ "**maketh intercession for**

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us" (Rom. 8:33-34). Since we have an advocate with the Father, we cannot be separated by any thing from the love of Christ.

Christ intercedes, not for the unbelieving world, but for those who come unto God through Him. In His priestly prayer our Savior said: **"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine"** (John 17:9).

CONCLUSION

This text contains comfort for Christians. How wonderful to know our great High Priest is able to save unto the uttermost each tempted believer. How sweet to meditate upon daily intercession for us. We need not fear banishment from God. We can not lose our salvation until Christ's blood loses its saving power. We will never forfeit eternal life unless our High Priest dies. Those things can never be, for the foundation of God standeth sure. Thus we have an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast.

Hebrews 7:25 is an eye opener to those convicted of sin. What good news this is to the ears of guilty sinners who cry: **"What must I do to be saved?"** The answer is come to God in repentance and faith on the basis of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Tremble impenitent soul. Do you not know that Christ is able to destroy all who do not come to God by Him? **"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).

The Holy Scriptures

By Willard Willis

We are in complete agreement with the apostles Paul and Peter when they said, **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the name of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"** (II Tim. 3:16-17). **"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"** (II Peter 1:20-21).

The following are some of the statements made by our presidents relative to the Holy Scriptures.

"The first and almost only book deserving of universal attention is the Bible. I speak as a man of the world, and I say to you, 'Search the Scriptures.' The earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hopes that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society" (John Quincy Adams).

"It is the rock on which our Republic rests" (Andrew Jackson).

"Almost every man who has by his life-work added to the sum of human achievement of which the race is proud, of which are people proud, almost every such man has based his life-work largely upon the teachings of the Bible" (Theodore Roosevelt).



In other words, those who know their Bibles will receive the benefits as recorded in the following passages of the Holy Scriptures.

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away" (Ps. 1:2-4).

A person can live and die without any knowledge of English, arithmetic, history, geography, etc., but one cannot afford to live and die without knowing something about the Holy Scriptures, especially knowing the Christ Jesus of the Bible and His work in our behalf.

Men have searched and are still searching relative to the source of our being, but if they would consult the Holy Scriptures, their search would end.

All other books are in constant need of being changed, or updated, but the Holy Scriptures, as is true of their author, are the same, yesterday, today and forever.

Other books appear and then disappear from life's scene, but the Holy Scriptures have not lost their message or their flavor. One can chew chewing gum for a few moments and its flavor is gone, but the flavor of the Holy Scriptures increases as one chews, or meditates upon them. In fact, our Lord has said, **"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"** (Matt. 24:35). We also read from Psalm 119:89 that **"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."**

The machines built by man eventually lose their power. Worn pistons result in the loss of compression, but the power of the Holy Scriptures is always the

same. In fact, we have read and will always read that **"...the Gospel of Christ. . .is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . ."** (Rom. 1:16).

The Bible, through the Holy Spirit, has the power to make the drunk sober, the harlot pure, the liar truthful, the thief honest, the proud and self-righteous humble and the covetous and greedy, generous.

The Holy Scriptures, through the Spirit, also have the power to strengthen weak believers who apply themselves to the reading of them. Especially do the Holy Scriptures have the power to comfort those who have lost those that they dearly love.

The Old and New Testaments of the Holy Scriptures mean, "covenant." The Old being written by Moses and the prophets while the new has been written by Christ and His apostles. The Old was given to Israel while the New is addressed to the Lord's churches.

The Pentateuch makes up the first five books of the old Testament and contains laws and precepts (rules of action). There are twelve historical books which give the history of God's chosen people Israel. There are five poetical books which are books of principles. There are seventeen prophetic books which cover the teachings and predictions of future events.

As is true of the Old Testament, the New Testament also has a fourfold division. These divisions are made up of the four accounts of the Gospel, Acts, the Epistles and Revelation.

The accounts of the Gospel are books of precepts while the Acts is a book of practice. The Epistles are books of principles while Revelation is the book of prophecy.

These facts show that the Old and the New Testaments are in

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the same order as that of human life. First, as children, we learn precepts. Later, we put the precepts into practice which result into principles by which we govern our lives. At the close of our lives, we become prospective, that is, we look to the future.

These facts clearly show that the Bible is a book of unity. In other words, it has come to us as a well defined plan. The Bible's plan of development can be clearly seen from the beginning of Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21. The beginning books are germs of truth. The later books develop these germs of truth into well developed systems of truth. These facts show very clearly that Holy Scriptures are not the contrivance of man's brain, but are of Divine origin (II Peter 1:21).

On numerous occasions Satan has tried to remove the Holy Scriptures from the face of the earth, but they are still with us today. In fact, the very letter of the Scriptures has been preserved even to the point of the preservation of the jots and tittles.

Our Lord Jesus believed the Holy Scriptures to have been preserved in their original tongue. He proved such to be true when He admonished the Jews to "**Search the Scriptures.**"

The matter which is contained within the Holy Scriptures also shows that they are from God rather than being the contrivance of the brains of men. For example, no man or angel could have known that He who thunders in the heavens would one day cry in a cradle. Men or angels could not have known that the Prince of Life would die and that after being dead for three days and nights, He would be raised from the dead. In

fact, there are numerous proofs set forth in the Bible which confirm the fact that it has come to us from God.

Since the Holy Scriptures have come to us from God, we can rest assured that it is pure. "**The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times**" (Ps. 12:6). "**Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it**" (Ps. 119:140).

The Bible is so pure that it acts as a means of purification to all whose eyes the Spirit opens to the understanding of it. In fact, we read: "**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth**" (John 17:17).

The numerous fulfilled prophecies predicted in the Holy Scriptures also confirm the fact that they are from God.

Proof that the Holy Scriptures have come to us from God is also proven by the impartiality of the men who wrote them. For example, what man who writes history would condemn himself by writing about events that stain his own reputation? Yet this is exactly what the writers of the Bible did. For example, David has informed us of his adultery and his shedding of innocent blood. Jonah informs us of his own passions. Those who were inspired to write the Holy Scriptures did not sweep under the carpet those things that would stain their reputation. As is man's nature, he would have hidden his blemishes if he had originated the Bible.

The power which the Holy Scriptures have over the lives of people is also a definite evidence that they have come to us from God himself. For example, one can be warned by reading books written by men and women, but the Holy Scriptures go beyond the point of warning to that of transforming

those who read them. When relating to this matter, Paul said, "**And be ye not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God**" (Rom. 12:2).

Unlike other books, the Holy Scriptures are a means of great comfort to the weary, the sick, the dying and to those who have lost loved ones. In fact, I Thessalonians 4:18 says, "**Wherefore comfort one another with these words.**"

Let us go a step further and note that the miracles recorded in the Holy Scriptures also confirm that they are of God. In fact, God enabled Moses, Elijah and numerous others to perform feats beyond the capability of men. Consider the many miracles performed by our Lord Jesus Christ. All of these miracles show that God has set His special seal upon the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Scriptures are correct relative to science when saying, "**The life of the flesh is in the blood**" (Lev. 17:11). They are also correct when advising us that the earth is round rather than flat (Isa. 40:22). They are also correct when advising us that the earth is suspended in space (Job 26:7). They are also correct when advising us that the earth rotates (Luke 17:34-36). These passages of Scripture in essence, inform us that in some parts of the world it will be night while in other parts it will be day. They also inform us relative to the laws of nature (Gen. 1:24). For example, who ever heard of a cow giving birth to a pig, or a stalk of corn producing beans? The Holy Scriptures are also correct when advising us that all people, without exception, die (Heb. 9:27). Well did Patrick Henry say: "The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been published."

Without any apology to anyone, we may all boldly declare that the Holy Scriptures are the one solid foundation upon which we can rest our hopes and our dreams for tomorrow. This is because the Bible, as is true of the earth, rests upon nothing that is human. It is the voice of God which waits for no defense, or endorsement. It simply states, "**He that believeth not shall be damned.**"

Since the Holy Scriptures are from God, they are, as is true of the sun, self-evident. For example, the sun simply shines what it is and who would dare deny its existence? In like manner, God has said, "**The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. . .**" (Ps. 14:1).

Proof that the Holy Scriptures are from God is evident from the fact that they meet our most supreme needs. They do so by dealing with three infinities, namely, infinite holiness, infinite guilt and infinite atonement.

How can we who are infinitely sinful be reconciled to our God who is infinitely holy? The following Holy Scriptures provide us with the answer. "**And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation**" (II Cor. 5:18-19).

The blood of Jesus Christ has provided an infinite atonement for all who believe on Him as their Savior from the infinite penalty of their sins.

Adam lies dead in his grave and we are all dead in him, or because of him. On the other hand, Jesus Christ, the second Adam, stands on resurrection ground after

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The Holy Scripture

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having represented us in his death, burial and resurrection. In other words, we are alive because He is alive.

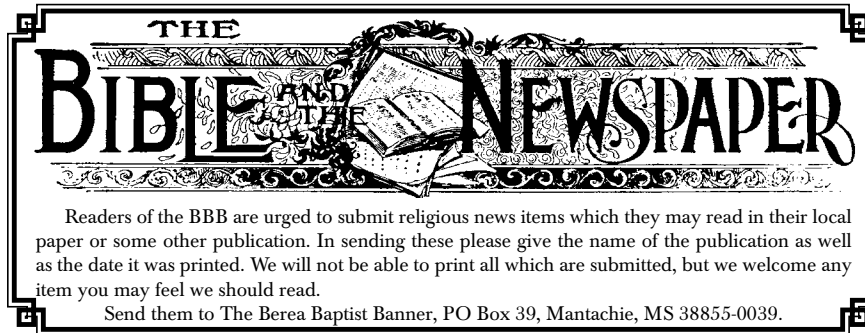
The positive approach of the Holy Scriptures also makes it evident that they are from God. The literature of the world is pessimistic in that virtue (moral goodness) suffers and is always struggling. Circumstances and fate eventually overcome, or defeat her. On the other hand, the Holy Scriptures teach that evil will not prevail; that Satan will eventually be cast down. They inform us that David, while fleeing into the mountains, was actually on his way to the throne. They inform us that unutterable triumph awaited our suffering Savior. In other words, the Holy Scriptures make the future of those who trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, a glorious and shining way that **"shineth more and more."**

The Holy Scriptures informs us that **"weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."** They inform us that God will wipe all tears from our eyes; that He will bring light out of darkness, meat out of the eater and water out of the rock.

May we all say with all our hearts, "O Divine book, O precious revelation!"

Those who have set themselves up to judge the Holy Scriptures, will one day find that they will be judged by them.

We believe we should study the Holy Scriptures so as to show ourselves approved unto God. **"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Tim. 2:15).



CHRISTIAN COLLEGES RELIEVED BY CALIFORNIA COMMITTEE VOTE

(WNS)--A dark cloud that has been hanging over California's faith-based higher education institutions has lifted—for now. The California Assembly Appropriations Committee voted Aug. 11 to pass a Senate bill regulating faith-based colleges with last-minute modifications designed to address concerns over religious liberty. The bill will move on for a vote to the Assembly floor.

Right up to two days before the vote, the previous version of Senate Bill 1146 held serious implications for the freedom of religion of the state's faith-based colleges. The way it was written before, SB 1146 had threatened to take away religious colleges' exemption from California's non-discrimination law, which would have left schools vulnerable to non-discrimination lawsuits. The bill also would have affected religious colleges' freedom to determine admissions, housing and restroom facilities, student codes of conduct, and employment based on their religious tenets.

MILITARY'S HIGHEST COURT DENIES MARINE'S RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CLAIM

(WNS)--In a decision likely to influence how the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) applies to military service members, the military's highest court upheld the conviction of a U.S. Marine court-martialed for disobeying an order to remove three Bible passages

she posted around her workplace. In an opinion released on Aug. 10, the five civilian judges on the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces (CAAF) decided 4-to-1 to uphold a lower court ruling against Lance Cpl. Monifa J. Sterling. The lower court found Sterling failed to inform her superiors that the posting of the signs was "religiously motivated" and failed "to establish that the orders to remove the signs constituted a substantial burden on her exercise of religion" under RFRA. The signs, a personalization of Isaiah 54:17, read, "No weapon formed against me shall prosper."

CHICAGO JUDGE CONSIDERS MEANING OF MALE AND FEMALE

(WNS)--As the new school year began Aug. 15 for students in Palatine, Ill., attorneys gathered in a Chicago federal courtroom to argue whether a male student will be allowed to use the restrooms and locker rooms designated for his female classmates in Township High School District 211. The lawsuit, Students and Parents for Privacy v. U.S. Department of Education, is one of several cases across the country calling on the courts, not medical experts or scientists, to define the meaning of male and female. Magistrate Judge Jeffrey Gilbert heard arguments from attorneys representing 51 families who filed a lawsuit in May demanding an end to the district policy that allows a boy who presents himself as a girl to use the girls' changing facilities. The

school district established the policy last year after the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) declared the district in violation of Title IX's prohibition against discrimination based on sex.

CHRISTIAN FUNERAL HOME OWNER WINS BIAS SUIT

(WNS)--A federal court in Michigan sided with a Christian business owner last week, ruling the family-owned funeral home did not violate federal law when it fired a male employee who decided to start dressing like a woman. Anthony Stephens worked at R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes as a director and embalmer for seven years before telling his co-workers he'd been "living a lie" and planned to transition into a woman. Thomas Rost, Stephens' employer, said allowing him to interact with grieving families while dressed as a woman wouldn't work and decided to let him go. Stephens complained to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and the agency decided to sue Rost for wrongful termination based on an employee's sex, a protected class under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. But U.S. District Judge Sean F. Cox ruled in a 56-page opinion that forcing Rost to accommodate transgender employees tramples his right to conduct business in accordance with his sincerely held religious beliefs under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).

STUDY: SCIENCE DOESN'T BACK POPULAR VIEWS OF SEXUALITY

(WNS)--Over half the people in the United States believe gays and lesbians are born that way, according to a 2015 Gallup poll. It can be professionally dangerous to believe otherwise, as former presidential hopeful Dr. Ben Carson discovered last year when he said homosexuality was

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a choice and was later pressured into apologizing. But, Lawrence Mayer, a biostatistician, and Paul McHugh, a psychiatrist, both from Johns Hopkins University department of psychiatry, examined over 200 leading, peer-reviewed studies from social science, psychology, and biology and found science does not support much of what the general public, politicians, and policy-makers believe about homosexuality. Their 143-page review appears in the fall 2016 issue of the journal *The New Atlantis*. Mayer and McHugh found no compelling evidence that sexual orientation was innate. Studies found some minor differences between the brain structure and functioning of heterosexual and homosexual people, but the findings shed no light on whether those differences were inborn or the result of environment and psychological factors. In other words, there was no scientific proof that people were born with same-sex attraction.

JUDGE BLOCKS HB2 FOR THREE PLAINTIFFS

(WNS)--A federal judge issued a narrow ruling on Aug. 26 saying the University of North Carolina must allow two transgender students and an employee to use the restrooms that correspond with their gender identities, not their biological sexes. The ruling is a shot across the bow to supporters of North Carolina's HB2, a law that requires people in schools and government buildings to use the restrooms and locker rooms that match their biology, not their identity. Even though U.S. District Judge Thomas Schroeder's ruling only applies to three people at UNC, he wrote in his opinion that he expects the opponents of HB2 to win their court case against the state, at least as the law relates to educational

facilities. That's because the Obama administration in 2013 declared that the definition of "sex" in Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in schools, includes gender identity. The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which has jurisdiction over North Carolina, upheld the president's interpretation of Title IX in a recent case out of Virginia. The Supreme Court issued a stay of that ruling while it considers the appeal.

CALIFORNIA JUDGE RULES SCHOOLCHILDREN MUST HAVE VACCINES

(WNS)--A federal judge in San Diego denied a request on Aug. 26 that would have allowed unvaccinated children to attend California schools while a legal battle over that state's mandatory immunization law plays out in court. The ruling by U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw declined a request to pause enforcement of Senate Bill 277, which took effect July 1. The law eliminates religious and personal-belief exemptions for vaccination requirements, compelling all kindergartners and seventh graders attending public or private schools to prove they are fully inoculated against 10 major diseases. The only exception is children who have a medical exemption signed by a physician. The decision comes as California parents are sending their kids back to school, forcing parents of unvaccinated children going into a "checkpoint" grade to weigh their options: homeschool, leave the state, or vaccinate.

BATHROOM CASE APPEAL: IT'S NOT ABOUT GENDER

(WNS)--A Virginia school board in late August asked the Supreme Court to hear its case concerning gender and bathrooms, but its legal strategy in the filing doesn't focus on gender issues. Instead the board argues in its cert petition (the formal request for the court to take a case) that the

court should hear the case in order to decide how much power federal officials have. The legal doctrine the Gloucester County School Board raises is obscure but could have more reach than the dispute over access to bathrooms and locker rooms. In January 2015, a Department of Education official sent a letter telling the Gloucester County School Board that under Title IX the board must treat transgender students "consistent with their gender identity" in locker rooms and bathrooms. A federal district court and the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals treated that letter as authoritative, ruling against the school board. The school board argues in this appeal to the Supreme Court that the letter doesn't have authority because it didn't go through the regulatory process. The letter "is about as informal an agency document as one can imagine," the board wrote. "The letter was not publicized; there is no evidence it was approved by the head of an agency; and it was signed only by a relatively low-level federal functionary."

METHODIST PASTOR KEEPS JOB AFTER OFFICIATING GAY WEDDING

(WNS)--A United Methodist pastor in Charlotte, N.C., who performed a same-sex wedding earlier this year against the rules of her church is escaping without punishment. The Rev. Val Rosenquist's overseeing body, the Western North Carolina Conference, admitted in a Sept. 6 statement she will keep her position as pastor and will not face a church trial. The decision reflects the ongoing United Methodist battle between recognizing same-sex marriage and preserving the precepts of holiness put in place by founder John Wesley. "Over the last 4 1/2 years there has been a building movement ... to disregard the church's biblical teaching on

♦ (Continued on page 24)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

8-1-2016 to 8-31-2016

Beginning Balance \$5,233.35

RECEIPTS:

Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	50.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	75.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	300.00
Grace B. C., Rual Hall, 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	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway L. B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Reedy's Chapel B. C., Calhoun City, MS ..	100.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	60.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	54.00
Anonymous	215.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,004.95
TOTAL	\$8,238.30

EXPENDITURES:

Printing	490.00
Postage	657.50
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Supplies	172.93
Order of checks	155.25
Total Expenditures	\$4,101.64
ENDING BALANCE	\$4,136.66



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

8-1-2016 to 8-31-2016

Beginning Balance \$6,745.40

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	300.00
.....	625.00
TOTAL	7,370.40

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time	500.00
Order of checks	26.34
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	526.34
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,844.17

Bible & the Newspaper

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human sexuality," said the Rev. Tom Lambrecht, the vice president of the conservative Methodist Good News Magazine. "This is just part of that."

GAY CUSTODY BATTLES EXPAND DEFINITION OF PARENT

(WNS)--New York's highest court changed the definition of parenthood in September to include former partners with no biological or adoptive tie to a child. The decision by the New York Court of Appeals overturns a 25-year-old definition restricting parenthood to a biological or adoptive person. The new definition expands the term parent to include caretakers who initially agreed to conceive and raise a child. Under the ruling, if an unmarried same-sex couple with children splits, the non-biological partner has a right to the children just like the biological partner. The court said the previous definition was "unworkable when applied to increasingly varied familial relationships." But the ruling also applies to unmarried heterosexual couples who conceive through artificial insemination, and critics say it might open the door to individuals with no close ties to a child dragging a biological parent into court to fight for visitation and custody rights. It also means marriage or adoption is no longer necessary to establish parental rights.

NEW YORK ATTORNEY GENERAL GREEN-LIGHTS LATE-TERM ABORTIONS

(WNS)--New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, a Democrat, issued a legal notice to the state comptroller on Sept. 8 saying that abortions after 24 weeks are legal in the state. Schneiderman argued that the "health" exception in judicial precedent allows abortion

at any time in a pregnancy. "New York law cannot criminalize what the federal Constitution protects," Schneiderman wrote in the opinion. "[A]n abortion performed after 24 weeks from the commencement of pregnancy is legal in New York when the fetus is not viable or when the abortion is necessary to protect the health of the pregnant woman." The "health" of the mother is a nebulous legal exception that can mean physical, emotional, psychological, or familial health, according to the Supreme Court precedent in *Doe v. Bolton*.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS CHRISTIAN WOMEN PETITION CANADIAN PARLIAMENT OVER PERSECUTION

(WNS)--A conservative, pro-family women's group in Canada wants greater protections for Christians' religious freedom and rights of conscience. REAL Women of Canada says religious freedom has eroded as Canada has sanctioned things like gay marriage, so the group recently launched a petition to present to Parliament. "What we're seeing now is lack of respect for Christians," REAL Women of Canada researcher Diane Watts said. "[T]hey're facing fines in human rights courts." She said defendants in those trials are required to pay their legal expenses, even if the accusations against them are false or charges eventually get dropped.

"There's still a veneer of thinking that Christian rights are protected," said Watts. Many Canadians don't know their rights of speech and conscience won't be protected until someone complains and takes them to court.



The Short Pews



Brief
Articles
by Curtis
Pugh

MOSES OR JESUS CHRIST

Some professing Christians desire to put themselves under the Old Testament law of Moses. To attempt to please God and achieve righteousness by trying to keep Moses' law is, according to Paul, to fall from grace. His words in Galatians 5:4 are these: "**Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.**" Grace provides eternal life. In II Corinthians 3:9 Paul calls the law "**...the ministration of condemnation.**" In Romans 8:2 he calls the law "**...the law of sin and death.**" In the next verse in that chapter Paul wrote: "**For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son**

in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Christ accomplished "**what the law could not do,**" as that last verse says.

John 1:17 tells us "**...the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.**" There no grace to be found in Moses' law! Not only that, but the law was added because of sins and was only temporary. In Galatians 3:19 God says, "**Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made...**" That "seed" was Jesus the Messiah. He came. With His coming and the attendant ministry of John the Baptist the law of Moses ended. Jesus said in Luke 16:16 "**The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached...**" And in Romans 10:4 Paul wrote: "**For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**"

Again we are told of the temporariness of Moses' law in Hebrews 9:10 which says that the law: "**...stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.**" That "reformation" was the work accomplished by Jesus Christ. Paul made this clear in Ephesians 2:15 where he wrote that Jesus Christ, "**Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances...**"

So it is that Paul sums up the matter of the Christian's relationship to the Old Testament law of Moses. He wrote in Galatians 5:18, "**But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.**"



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