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The Offense of the Cross

By Rolfe Barnard

(1904 -1969)

I speak to you on the subject, "Where has the Offense of the Gospel gone?" Many years ago a dear man of God wrote these words: "It behooves the Evangelist to so preach the Gospel that the Holy Spirit may



Rolfe Barnard

own the Word to reveal thereby the mighty mysteries and marvels of redemption. Not to lower or humanize it in order to bring it into the reach of the natural man apart from the work of the Holy Spirit."

Many, many years ago the Apostle Paul wrote as recorded in I Corinthians 2:1-8: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the Testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of

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All of Grace

By Paul Stepp

Given, West Virginia

Grace is a doctrine or system of doctrines that can be discussed in innumerable fashions. Today, I want to look at some of the ways that grace appears in our lives. Grace is ever present in the life of the child of God. In fact, as we will see in this message,

grace is present before and after the life of the child of God.

As I am sure we have all been told, grace is defined as "unmerited favor". Read all the books that you want; discover all of the definitions that you can; I don't think that you can uncover a better definition. There are many long and preponderant definitions that are given for this simple English word. In the Bible "grace" is used in many different ways. At times it might only mean "salvation". At other times it might mean "gifts." In still other instances it means simply "favor". Yet in each situation, we understand the word to pertain to something delivered from God to underserving man.

I am not indulging in a message simply about grace and its definitions. Today I want to make a personal and real application of the "unmerited favor of God" as it is found in each of our lives. As big as grace is, it is still small enough to personally affect each of the children of God. Let's look at

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Studies in Esther 1:2-9

By Jeff Short

Mantachie, Mississippi

Verse 1 of this chapter introduced us to King Ahasuerus, which we believe to be Xerxes that reigned over the Persian kingdom. Verse 1 shows us the grandeur and success of his earthly kingdom. It says he "reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces." We read in the book of Daniel that during the reign of King Darius over the Persian empire there were 120 provinces. Darius was succeeded by Cyrus, who was succeeded by Xerxes and the



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kingdom had then grown to 127 provinces. The Persian empire was an increasing kingdom. Josephus mentions in his writings that the Persian empire came to contain around 360 provinces by the time it was at its peak.

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How Long Halt Ye Between Two Opinions?

By Raymond F. Bennett

Ithaca, New York

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (I Kings 18:21). The people Elijah was addressing were not at all that much unlike our society today, at least here in the United States of America. These were not heathen idol worshipers. These were a society that bore the name, however erroneously, of 'God's People', much like our society claims the name of Christian.

But the trouble was obvious. Despite their claim, tradition, and



Ray Bennett

inherited religion, they worshiped God only when it was convenient, when they thought they could escape religious impositions on their life style, and when times were good. It is a major tendency of man, in general, to construe a god of his own liking, while retaining some of the ritualistic elements of the God they claimed they

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A God-Called Preacher

By Milburn Cockrell

(1941 - 2002)

"And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:4).

Nearly all books of systematic theology scarcely mention the importance of the call to the ministry. The idea is played down in religious circles. Many denominations do not require a Divine call in those who are ordained as ministers of the gospel. Religious fanatics are bold to make fun of a man who claims God called him to preach.

Is the call to the ministry a human tradition of a bygone age? Or does the Bible teach that God still calls those who preach the gospel? What saith the



Milburn Cockrell

Scripture? How readest thou? **GOD CALLED PROPHETS** During the Old Testament Dispensation God called men to lead Israel and to deliver Heaven's message to the people. God called Moses to lead and teach the nation of Israel. Jehovah called Samuel to be a prophet. I Samuel 3:4 declares "That the Lord called

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"THOU HAST GIVEN A BANNER TO THEM THAT FEAR THEE, THAT IT MAY BE DISPLAYED BECAUSE OF THE TRUTH" (PSALMS 60:4).



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Esther 1:2-9

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Ahasuerus was king over a thriving and a vast empire that was a world power at this time. He reigned during the rise to superpower.

Bear in mind as we study through the book of Esther that it is a remarkable book for studying the providence of God. You do not want to read over it quickly and be done. It is short, historical and narrative. It is a book that we want to spend time meditating upon. There are a lot of things in it that seem like on the first glance that they are merely incidental or pieces of extraneous information, but I do not believe that the Holy Spirit gave us this record containing extraneous information just for us to read. There is also here a lot to learn about God's providence and how that God works, even through wicked agencies, to bring about his purpose and good for His people.

"That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in

Shushan the palace, In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him" (Esther 1:2-3). The historical character of King Xerxes was such that he was characterized as being "despotic, capricious, fickle, reckless of human lives and immersed in sensual pleasures" (Jamieson Faussett, & Brown, *Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 633). We see him throughout the book of Esther acting in this very manner. He acts very much in accord with the picture that has been painted of him secularly.

The king is setting on the throne of his kingdom in Shushan the palace. He institutes a feast for himself, attended by the nobles and princes. This large feast was for all of the important and notable folks that were around, those that were in positions of authority, that were in delegated positions underneath the king and all of the royal people. It was a scene for the cream of high society.

"When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days" (Esther 1:4). There was no real reason for this feast. It was not a normal observation or usual and customary observation of the people. There is no knowledge of a particular special occasion that was being celebrated. King Ahasuerus was intent on making an exhibition and celebration of his own power and glory. He brought in all of his princes and important people so they could behold and celebrate with him what a great king he was and how powerful he was. He made it for no other reason than his own personal ends.

The feast lasted for 180 days. This was a continuous 180 days. It was lavish and the grandest production the kingdom could afford to put on. The longevity shows us something of the indulgent nature of this king. This sort of indulgence is condemned by Solomon. **"I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?"** (Ecc. 2:1-2) He was going to pursue nothing but earthy pleasure and satisfaction, happiness and frivolity. He learned very quickly though that **"behold, this also is vanity."** It is vanity. Solomon is condemning the very excess and pursuit of fleshly gratification as what these people were doing. These parties were very well known for their drunkenness and indulgence in food and various other

things.

For a very extended period of time, they were involved in this party. They were indulgent, excessive. The flesh must have been somewhat exhausted. If we indulge ourselves day after day, no matter how much we enjoy it, we seem to grow tired of it after time. We get weary of it. The flesh has to have some variety. This was nothing but ease and revelry and all sort of partying for 180 days. I imagine there were quite a few folks that were becoming unhappy in this situation, but yet, they could not quit.

Excess and indulgence are national sins of the United States of America today. It can be seen all around us. We want bigger, faster, more, etc. God's Word says: **"All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith."** (Prov.15:15-16). Our society pursues after fleshly gratification in all the means provided in this day. But the Bible says **"He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast."** Sin never satisfies but he that has found enjoyment and true happiness **"hath a continual feast."** He is able to enjoy these things. There was no real enjoyment at Ahasuerus' feast. **"Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith."** It is better to just have little than to have a lavish feast for many days. It is better to have a meager supply and fear God than it is to fare sumptuously every day.

The Bible tells us about the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus sat begging for bread with the stray dogs, competing with them for dinner. But, **"the rich man fared sumptuously everyday."** However, now he is **"tormented"** and Lazarus is **"comforted."** That is still true today. That rich man is still tormented in that flame. He besought father Abraham that he would send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool his tongue. He is still wanting a drop of water. He has found no relief. Lazarus is still comforted today. He is still feasting today. True enjoyment comes from God and can only be had from Him.

Solomon said, **"Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding"** (Prov. 9:4-6). The Persians were known for mingling their wine and strong drink and coming up with various concoctions of drinks that were heavily intoxicating. Here the wisdom of God

says, **"Come, eat of my bread."** Come and eat of My table and **"drink of the wine that I have mingled."** The true enjoyment is found through the enjoyment of God rather than the pursuit of fleshly gratification. We might find some things that for a time make us a little more comfortable, but we know that they perish with the using. The things of God are always satisfying and he that hath a **"merry heart"** with God hath a **"continual feast,"** rather than the party of Ahasuerus that was actually unsatisfying to its attendants.

"And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace; Where were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble. And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king" (Esther 1:5-7). After his 180 days of feasting ended, he proclaimed another seven days to feast and, this time, it is not only the princes and noblemen but it is extended to all the poor people. This is like a politician courting favor with the lesser class. I imagine he had an ulterior motive in this, even though it made him look good politically and socially to his people. It made a way for him to be sure of displaying his might, even to the very ends of his kingdom. Politicians love to come in and do a project or help out a rural community so that their names are attached to the project. They are visible doing their good deeds and they earn the praise of men.

Notice, the king had 180 days for all his friends and only 7 days for all of his lesser folks in the kingdom. Notice the expense that was gone to. No expense was spared. All of the royal fare was brought out. He put out his very best. Usually when we entertain some guests, we will try to put out the best that we have. We will hide the shabby ware that we use everyday and the king was doing no different. This king was wanting to make a display of his wealth and power and all his glory. He even let his peasants drink out of his golden vessels some of the very best royal wine he had.

Mark here a great waste of his nations industry. The nation had

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afforded him a very comfortable living and we see that this capital was spent for the king to search his own glory. How many long hours had been worked by his countrymen in order to produce the money or the vessels and all the things for him to enjoy with his friends. He is wasting the goods of his country. The Bible says, **“for men to search their own glory is not glory”** (Prov. 25:27). The king was involved in self-exaltation. He was displaying and searching his own glory.

This sort of display is common even for men today. If they have a nice home or car, they want to display and show-off these things to others. If a young man is gifted with some athletic abilities, he wants to show-off what he can do. This king was doing this on a much larger scale. Feasting for 187 days is excessive and sinful.

“And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man’s pleasure” (Esther 1:8). We mark here the king’s generosity. He has already made a feast for 180 days and now it is the 7 days feast with the poor people around, but he is still being very generous to them. They were eating of the best that could be set out and they were drinking the best royal wine. They are using the best golden vessels. None were turned away empty-handed. No one went home hungry or thirsty. As much as they wanted they had. They were not restrained. However much wine, food and partying they wanted, they had. On the other hand, none were restrained and they did **“according to every man’s pleasure.”** They were not turned away but were given just as much as they wanted. No one made any reasonable judgment. A man could have drank himself to death and no one would have intervened in any way. They were not permitted to.

This is typical of fleshly indulgences in the world. They are usually solicited or encouraged. When we consider some of the things in our youth we got into, that we should not have been in, there was usually someone there to help and encourage us into trouble. We will get into trouble enough on our own, but many times we will be encouraged into this indulgence. This is what this king and his people were doing.

The world may set no limits, but the Word of God certainly does. The

men were allowed to drink until their hearts were content but this is not acceptable for the child of God. **“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls”** (Prov. 25:28). If a city is **“broken down, and without walls,”** anyone that comes along, that is strong enough, will rule the city. They are going to overrun it. It has no means of defense and no protection. Whoever wants to set up government is going to do it; there is no resistance.

We are exhorted to exercise self-control. **“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”** (II Tim. 1:7). Look at the word that underlies the translation **“sound mind,”** it means “self-control.” The Bible talks about soberness, temperance and self-control. A Christian is to rule his own spirit and bring his body into subjection. We should not be **“tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine,”** nor with every invitation of indulgence.

“Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus” (Esther 1:9). The women were not exempt from the feasting. They had a party also. It was in accordance with the rules of decorum in that day, for the men to feast in one place and the women to feast in another.

Vashti is in some exercise of authority over the king’s harem. Some of the historians have estimated there was as many as 360 concubines in the royal harem of king Ahasuerus. Even though she was the queen with some authority, she was very much subservient to the king. She was like the head servant, but she was still a servant. She was of the direction under Ahasuerus as an absolute monarch.

In conclusion, let us observe the providence of God in our text. The first notable event is the feasts of Ahasuerus. We can not find any just cause for the celebrations that take place. The record tells us it was in the third year of the king’s reign that he had this feast. Maybe this is because he felt there was no viable threat to his kingdom any longer.

The timing of the feast is remarkable because this event facilitates the removal of Vashti as queen, which opens the way for Esther to be promoted. The promotion of Esther was necessary because God was going to use her to deliver the people of Israel.

The timing is remarkable because there was no great miracle or Divine intervention that prompted it. There was no hand that appeared and wrote

on the wall. There was no prophet coming to the king, like Elijah did. There is nothing unusual that happens here. It is just the normal, ordinary course of things. This makes it so remarkable. We can see God throughout working, shaping, using all these events to effect His purposes and His glory.

Mark here His operation in ordinary agencies. **“The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil”** (Prov. 16:4). God can and does use even the wicked devices of the world to bring about His purposes and His plans. Here we have a very wicked man. This king is all about self, indulgence and success. He is a very wicked man. However, **“The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithsoever he will”** (Prov. 21:1). God did not intervene in any miraculous way to change the course of events here but God is working through the normal progression of events, He is working all the time to bring about His will, purposes, good and blessings on His people. We see His operation of providence in ordinary agencies working through Ahasuerus, the princes, the queen, and on all sides.

Lastly, there are two notable contrasts that I wish to draw from these verses. First, King Ahasuerus is the earthly king searching his own glory. He is going to great extents to be celebrated and congratulated and praised by men. Contrast that with the Heavenly King making Himself of **“no reputation.”** The earthly king did everything in his power to make a display and a show. The Lord Jesus Christ, the King of all kings, comes to earth and He humbled Himself, was made in the fashion of a man, took upon Himself the form of a servant, and made Himself of no reputation. He did work some miracles and wondrous things. However, when He had a great feast He had the people sit down in the grass and He fed them with barley loaves and with fish. Later, at another feast, He washed the feet of the disciples.

The second contrast we see is the earthly king doing according to the state of the king (vs. 7). He is exercising all of his power and authority. He is wanting to do things to make a show. Contrast that with the heavenly King content behind the veil, working out His will all the time. It is amazing that some have stumbled at this book because God’s name does not appear in it. I believe that makes it more remarkable. What a greater contrast does that set between this earthly king, who was doing everything for the promotion of his

name, but God can simply let His name remain silent from these pages, but He is seen all the time working, and exercising His will. Here we see a restraint on the part of God. He doesn’t need to make a great show of Himself. He is content to work His own purposes behind the scenes. **“Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known”** (Ps. 77:19).

The Bible talks in many places about God’s wrath being “slow”. In fact, the Bible says, **“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil”** (Eccl. 8:11). We see that God’s wrath at many times is perceived as slow, but it is always sure. John Gill described it as a great, vast wheel that turned ever so slowly but always surely, moving on and forward. God has seen fit to conceal His name from this book and thereby makes a greater statement, contrasting Himself against the earthly king and content to work out His will and purpose without some great show of power or intervention of Divine agency. **“This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes”** (Ps. 118:23).

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Samuel.” The ready reply of the young man was: **“Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth”** (I Sam. 3:9-10).

In the 6th chapter of Isaiah the prophet retraces his conversion and call to the prophetic office. God took away his iniquity and purged his sin. The blessed Trinity spoke to him: **“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”** Isaiah answered: **“Here am I; send me”** (Isa. 6:7-8). Then the Lord said to him: **“Go, and tell this people.”**

Jeremiah was Divinely called to be a prophet. **“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. 1:5).

Jeremiah was designed by God in the counsel halls of eternity to be a prophet. The One who gave him his being also gave him his Divine commission. The commission was given him in pursuance of the purpose of God, which antedated the birth of the prophet. God determined from eternity past that Jeremiah should be set apart for the prophetic office. Paul said that God separated him from his mother’s womb to be an apostle (Gal.

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1:15).

God laid His hand upon Ezekiel and made him a prophet. His book of prophecy begins with these words: **"The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him. . . . And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. . . . I send thee to the children of Israel. . . . And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. . . ."** (Ezek. 1:3; 2:1, 3,7).

A GOD-CALLED MISSIONARY

Another example of God calling a man to preach is seen in Jonah, the Old Testament missionary. God called Jonah to go and preach repentance to Nineveh, but he refused (Jonah 1:1-3). After he attended Sea High School and Fish College, he came forth from the whale's belly ready to preach to Nineveh.

It is written of him: **"And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee"** (Jonah 3:1-2). Here we see not only a Divine call to preach, but we also see God giving this called man a Divine message. The God who called him to preach also gave him something to preach. **"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God"** (John 3:34).

A FARMER PROPHET

Amos is another example of God calling a man to preach. **"Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, God, prophesy unto my people Israel"** (Amos 7:14-15).

Here again I see where God called a country boy to preach His Word. Though not born or bred to the prophetic office, God made him a prophet by a Divine commission. His ability to prophesy came from God. In this he resembled the apostles of our Lord. They were ignorant and unlearned men who owed their knowledge to having **"been with Jesus"** (Acts 4:13). This was the case with the apostles and Amos that it might appear to all that **"the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us"** (II Cor. 4:7).

I must digress long enough here to

say that the call of Amos reminds me of my own call to preach. I am not a preacher's son, but a farmer's son. Twenty-five years ago God called this country boy to preach when I was sixteen years old. I told the Lord that He was making a big mistake in calling me to the ministry. The Lord told me that this call came from Heaven, and that up there they did not make any mistakes. So I surrendered to preach on Saturday night, March 22, 1957, and preached my first sermon the next day at Bethel Baptist Church, Dorsey, Mississippi. Having received help of the Lord, I continue to this hour.

CHRIST CALLS HIS MINISTERS

The New Testament gives us a Divine account of the Saviour calling the twelve apostles. Matthew tells us that He **"called unto him his twelve disciples"** and told them: **"Go, . . . preach"** (Matt. 10:1, 7). These men were the first and the highest officials in the church. They did not appoint themselves to the apostolate; they were set in the church by the Founder. **"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles. . ."** (I Cor. 12:28).

It was none other than Christ himself who called and commissioned the seventy missionaries (Luke 10:1-11). The Scripture says: **"The Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come."** In the course of that conversation He told them: **"I send you forth."**

In the Acts of the Apostles the Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Saul to be missionaries. **"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them"** (Acts 13:2). Notice the words: **"I have called them."** The Holy Spirit had selected them to be ministers and assigned them to missionary work.

Having knowledge of this, the church at Antioch ordained these men by fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands. Then the church **"sent them away"** (Acts 13:3). Luke adds in verse 4: **"So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia."** I believe that the Holy Spirit still calls missionaries from the local churches. I believe that it is the duty of such churches to send these men forth to do mission work.

In Acts we see not only the Holy Spirit calling missionaries, but also He is seen calling elders or bishops. Paul told the bishops or elders of the Ephesian church that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers or bishops of the flock (Acts 20:28). In apostolic

times the office of pastor or bishop was not something one took unto himself. The Holy Spirit chose, called, and commissioned one to this office. A man desired the office of a bishop (I Tim. 3:1) because the Holy Spirit had called him to that important work.

Quite often today I hear of someone who is going to the seminary to make a preacher. I do not object to a man going to a sound, Bible-believing school to be a better preacher. The Lord puts no premium on ignorance. The apostles and seventy missionaries spent three and a half years under the teaching of Christ. Paul was taught by Christ three years in Arabia (Gal. 1:17) before he went forth as a missionary to the Gentiles. When God calls a man to be a minister or missionary, I believe he ought to strive to be the most able minister or missionary that ever lived.

But I do not believe that Bible colleges and seminaries make missionaries or ministers. They may make those whom God has called better qualified to do the work they have been called to perform. I could not recommend that any man called of God attend any college or seminary where religious infidels teach lies out of Hell about Jesus Christ and the Bible. I feel that a young preacher would be better off to go a fishing than to most of the educational institutions of which I have knowledge. I know of no schools I could recommend to young preachers.

The Divine call to the ministry is seen in Romans 10:15 by the question: **"And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"** Those who preach the gospel must be called and qualified for this work. It is God's prerogative to send ministers. He is the Lord of the harvest Who alone is qualified to **"send forth labourers"** (Luke 10:2). The Lord only can qualify a man for, and incline him to the work of the ministry. **"If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth"** (I Pet. 4:11).

PAUL CALLED TO PREACH

That great missionary to the Gentiles related his call to the ministry to King Agrippa. Paul told the king that Christ had said to him on the Damascus road: **"I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee: Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee"** (Acts 26:15-16).

Jesus Christ makes His own ministers. Paul derived his call to preach from the resurrected Saviour, not some evangelist, or some pastor, or some seminary, or some missionary

board. In writing to the churches he organized, he referred to himself as one **"called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God"** (Rom. 1:1). He told the Corinthian church why he preached the gospel: **"For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel"** (I Cor. 9:16).

Writing to young Timothy, he penned these words: **"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry"** (I Tim. 1:12). Paul was no professional preacher. Jesus Christ put him into the ministry. Ministers cannot make ministers, much less can a person make himself a minister. Whom God calls He qualifies. Those who Christ did not put into the ministry ought to get out of the ministry. Christ calls and qualifies those He counts faithful.

The churches do not need a mama-called, or pastor-called, or Devil-called preacher. God knows that we already have too many of these. It is the work of a sovereign God to call and commission ministers and missionaries. These men are gifts of the ascended Christ to His churches. Ephesians 4:11 reveals how the ascended Lord **"gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."**

HOW DOES GOD CALL

Doubtless, some have been mistaken about the call of God. Once I heard of a farmer who was plowing his cornfield with his tractor who had an unusual experience. A jet airplane had spelled out Pepsi Cola in the sky. The wind soon blew away all the letters except the capital C and P. The farmer saw the big P and C in the clouds and believed it to be a sign from heaven to mean he was commissioned to preach Christ. Needless to say, this man's gospel ministry ended in failure. Years later he confessed the letters P and C must have really meant to plow corn.

What the call is and how it comes is not always easy to explain to one who has not experienced it. God's methods in calling preachers are as varied as the temperaments and dispositions of the individuals with whom He deals. The call to preach does not come as an audible voice to everyone who enters the ministry. Some are stirred by an inescapable challenge, as was Moses at Horeb. For others, there is the still small voice, which came to Elijah at the same Mount Horeb. No one should feel himself called to preach the gospel who does not have the overwhelming conviction that this is the work God

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A God-Called Preacher

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has called him to do. Paul said: **"If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work"** (I Tim. 3:1). Such a man desires the office because the Holy Spirit has called him to this work.

I have always told those who tell me they think they have been called to preach some strange words. I tell a person considering entering the ministry "If you can get out of preaching, then do it. If God won't let you get out of preaching, then you had better get to preaching at an early date." I do this because I know when God calls a man he can't get out of preaching. Jonah is proof of this.

A MAN SENT FROM GOD

In John, chapter 1, verse 6 through 8, three characteristics are mentioned concerning John the Baptist: **"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light."**

The first of these definite features is that John **"was a man."** He was not superman, but a mere man subject to like passions as other men. He was no otherworldly emissary from the throne room of God.

You will observe that John was a man, not a woman. God has never called a woman to the office of bishop or pastor. The qualifications of a minister are given in I Timothy 3:1. The passage begins by saying: **"If a man desireth the office of a bishop. . ."** In the words following Paul says a minister is to be **"the husband of one wife."** Certainly, I can understand how a man who is called of God can have one wife, but I will never be convinced by all the radicals and rascals in theological schools that a woman can be the husband of one wife. She may well be the wife of one husband, but never the husband of one wife.

Since a minister is but a mere man, he possesses all the imperfections and deficiencies that are characteristic of human beings. He may have a Divine call and possess wonderful spiritual qualifications, but he is nevertheless a mere man, a human being like every one else.

Being a man, he is no angel; he is not an object of worship. **"And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man"** (Acts 10:25-26). Churchgoers must worship the

MARK OF THE BEAST

Look at your name on the front page of this month's paper. If you see the mark 09-03, so detestable to a Baptist, wash it out by renewal of green-backs. If not your paper will stop next month. We are not able to credit. It is not a good plan.



Creator, not the creature. God's preachers are not to be put on a clerical pedestal.

Second, John the Baptist **"was a man sent from God."** Every true minister is a specially sent messenger from the very court of Heaven. The preacher in spite of his weakness is God-sent and holds a high office. This office must be respected. The Scripture says those **"who labour in the word and doctrine"** are to **"be counted worthy of double honour"** (I Tim. 5:17). This esteem is due him in respect to his calling.

If church members could learn to show respect to their pastor as a man sent from God, many church problems would be avoided. Proper respect would check the trend of some having roast preacher for the Sunday dinner. Unjust criticism of the minister's manner and methods would be eliminated. Your pastor needs your understanding, consideration, and prayerful support—not your destructive criticism. **"Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm"** (Ps. 105:15).

Third, John the Baptist was to bear witness of the Light, Jesus Christ. The man God calls is to be **"determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified"** (I Cor. 2:2). The early preachers declared: **"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake"** (II Cor. 4:5).

The Scripture teaches that a minister is to **"labour in the word and doctrine"** (I Tim. 5:17). He must give himself **"continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word"** (Acts 6:4). He must **"give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine"** and to never neglect his ministerial gift (I Tim. 4:13-14). God expects him to **"Meditate upon these things"** and **"give himself wholly to them"** (I Tim. 4:15). The religious world has added ten thousand other jobs to this, but they are the inventions of fallible men, who err not knowing the Scripture.

Those who are privileged to sit under the ministry of a God-called

preacher are to regard his messages as being sent from the throne of God. The Apostle Paul told the church at Thessalonica: **"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe"** (I Thess. 2:13).

Two immutable laws are stated in the Bible. First, a God-called preacher will deliver Heaven's message: **"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God"** (John 3:34). God's man may confess: **"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me"** (John 7:16). Second, it is equally true that the children of God will hear the Spirit as He speaks through the preacher: **"he that is of God heareth God's words"** (John 8:47). The sheep will hear the Great Shepherd as He speaks through the under shepherd (John 10:27).

A MESSAGE TO SINNERS

A man of God goes forth, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. As an ambassador for Christ he goes about preaching the Word of reconciliation and beseeching men to be **"reconciled to God"** (II Cor. 5:19-20). As a servant of the most high God he shows unto men **"the way of salvation"** (Acts 16:17). He preaches the gospel by which they may believe and be saved from their sins.

As an ambassador for Christ, I call upon you to repent **"and believe the gospel"** (Mark 1:15).

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were worshiping. These people were willing to make one, expensive, painful, and showy sacrifice—to a god who would otherwise leave them alone to do as *they* thought good.

As we continue looking at Elijah's Israel, mark well the similarities of 21st century, American Christianity. And while doing so, don't be like what one of my old Indian friends used to call "pitch fork Christians." They would just pitch the message off to someone else who they thought needed it, but not themselves.

We will look at this from four points: 1) The Pseudo-believers who practice biblical morality but question God's veracity in judgment; 2) The uncommitted believer who claims faith and trust in Jesus Christ but still clings to the World's advantages; 3) The academic believer who claims knowledge of the errors and the proper steps to take, but lacks the

commitment and courage; 4) The Mised believer who is so stepped in the traditional religion that he thinks the truth is error.

THE PSEUDO BELIEVER

The first category consists of those who take such pride in adhering to "biblical ethics," believing themselves to be Christians and fully expecting to go to Heaven when they die. Yet they still fear death despite their professed expectation of Heaven, and a goodly number of even otherwise Christian clergy will, at their funerals, preach them into a heaven they do not qualify for.

Elijah ministered, primarily, to the northern kingdom of Israel. That is, the 10 tribes that left, after the death of David's son, Solomon. The first king of the northern kingdom rejected the God of Israel, established his own gods, and took steps to keep the people from worshipping the true God. (Oh what a message these points could develop into, but that isn't our point now.) Biblical history records that every ensuing king of the northern kingdom continued in, or exceeded, that king's evil ways. As a result of these steps there was a plurality of religions in the land, and many individuals attempted to appease both Elohim and Baal, serving whichever one seemed to be the most generous to either their material desires or to achieve whatever national victory they needed at the time. They made *verbal* acquiescence to the true God, recognized the error of their ways, but lacked the faith and courage of their verbal commitments. Does that sound like you? Have you verbally expressed how much you appreciate the preaching of the Word of God, how much you appreciate Christian literature, and how you agree that there is so much wrong in your status quo? Then, have you exercised the faith and courage of your convictions and separated: from the error and unto the truth and from the place of error and unto the place of truth?

THE ACADEMIC BELIEVER

Just before Elijah's confrontation there had been 3 ½ years of drought and famine in the land, brought about because God had rendered judgment on the leaders *and* the people for their collective and personal rejection of God. There is an old axiom that says, "Government governs at the consent of the people." While that can be argued, there is still the more ready willingness of the people to follow an immoral government than a moral government. We can witness that fact in the United States today by such things as our society's ready acceptance of abortion,

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Outlines for Country Preachers

by a Country Preacher

Sermon Outlines by Milburn Cockrell

THE WORK OF CHRIST

I Peter 2:24

In looking over my sermon outline books, I find very few outlines on this verse. I cannot explain why this is.

I. IT WAS A PERSONAL WORK—"WHO HIS OWN SELF."

1. Christ did not offer some other sacrifice as Levitical priests, but He offered Himself.
2. He alone did it because He only could do it.
 - (1) See Isa. 63:6 and Heb. 1:3.
 - (2) "There was no other good enough. . . To pay the price of sin. . . He only could unlock the gate. . . Of heaven, and let us in" (C. F. Alexander).
3. The word "own" is used twice. "Own self" and "own body." He did it voluntarily (Matt. 26:53-54; John 10:17-18).
4. He promised to do this in the before-time covenant.
5. This excludes all other participation with Him in the work of redemption. Neither the mass, no man's faith, nor baptism makes up what is lacking in the atonement.
6. He did not even have the benefit of the sunlight when He died.

II. IT WAS A SACRIFICIAL WORK—"SINS."

1. The sins of the people must be atoned for before God (Lev. 16).
2. Sins can only be forgiven by a bloody sacrifice (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22).
3. Christ offered one sacrifice (Heb. 9:26).

III. IT WAS A SUBSTITUTIONARY WORK—"BARE OUR SINS."

1. Christ was free from sin (I Pet. 2:22), yet He bares our sins (Isa. 53:4, 6). He bore them as our Surety and Substitute.
2. Christ died not because He was a sinner. He put Himself in the sinner's place and bore that which our sins deserved. He took the consequences on Himself (II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:28).
3. Here is the antitype of the high priest bearing the names and the iniquity of the children of Israel (Ex. 28:29, 38) and the scapegoat bearing the sins of Israel (Lev. 16:21-22; John 1:29).

IV. IT WAS A SUFFERING WORK—"IN HIS OWN BODY."

1. Christ suffered in His body as if He had been a sinner.
2. This was the body the Father prepared (Heb. 10:3-12).
3. His soul also suffered (Isa. 53:10; Matt. 26:38). If suffered only while it was in the body.
4. The bodily sufferings were the most visible.

V. IT WAS POSITIONAL WORK—"ON THE TREE."

1. Peter used the word "tree" (Acts 5:30) while Paul used the word "cross."
2. The proper place for One on whom the curse was laid (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).
3. This speaks of the shame and pain of His sufferings.
4. Christ's whole life was not a part of the atonement. He did not go to Hell and suffer in the flames for us as some teach.
5. The sacrifices in the Old Testament were not efficacious until they were put on the altar. Christ's sacrificial work had no value to us until He was on the cross.

IV. IT WAS AN EFFICACIOUS WORK—"BEING DEAD TO SINS."

1. His death gave us freedom from the power and dominion of sin.
 - (1) Christ's death mortified the body of sin (Rom. 6:2, 6).
 - (2) We are to be, in regard to sin, as if we were dead.
2. "Being dead to sins," means "being freed from sins," or "being away from, having departed from, or being removed from."
3. The Greek word for "death" means "missing." When sin comes to seek its old servants it finds them gone.
4. By the word of Christ on the tree we are separated from sins as to life, love, and loyalty.

5. How is it possible to go on in the sins which Christ bare upon the tree?

VI. IT WAS A POWERFUL WORK—WE "SHOULD LIVE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS."

1. He died to make us live holy lives.
2. Being bought with the price of His blood, we are bound to obey our Owner who claims all our obedience.
3. We live a life of faith and faithfulness to Christ after we are saved.

VII. IT WAS A HEALING WORK—"BY WHOSE STRIPES YE WERE HEALED."

1. See Isaiah 53:5.
2. Slaves knew something about stripes, but none were ever striped like Christ.
3. The stripes laid on Christ healed a people. It did not put them into a healing state.
4. He healed the wounds made in the soul by sin. The Physician's blood became slave for man's soul.
5. Here is the mystery of the Christian religion. The wounding of One should be the cure of another.

CONCLUSION.

1. Do we appreciate what Christ did for us?
2. Christ suffered because he wanted to serve and save us. A mother suffers for her children's sake. A deliverer suffers perils to save one in danger. A martyr suffers rather than dishonor the name of Christ.
3. Do you know Jesus?

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homosexuality, and general immorality, but adamant resistance to the pro-life movement, sexual abstinence, and the proclamation of the old fashioned biblical gospel that declares all men sinners in need of salvation, regardless of social or academic status.

These things are done in the name of morality, respecting the woman's rights, advancing health care, even protecting unwanted children from potential abuse. These are all good sounding motives, acceptable in the academically religious society, but far short of biblical morality. The biblical account is replete with accounts of those, even leaders, claiming true, religious motives, coming to the prophet of God for answers that *they* wanted but refusing to obey or believe the message from God. The minds were already made up, worshiping at false altars, regardless of "what saith the Lord." These, like those of Revelation 6:14-17, refuse to acknowledge that these events are the judgment of God, and refuse to repent.

"Oh," but you say, "There are so many in this land that *do* follow the ways of God; that *are* truly born again, committed Christians. Look at the 7,000, who had not bowed the knee to Baal, that God told Elijah about." First of all, my friend, you should be thankful for that remnant because whether you care to admit it or not, *you* are blessed because God is blessing your Christian neighbor (cf.

Gen. 30:27). Second, consider how small a remnant 7,000 was among the population of Israel. It was only a remnant even among those that professed to *be* faithful believers.

How is *your* faith, my friend? Is it academic and verbal, or is it true and practiced? In the midst of God's dealings, do you turn to *Jesus Christ* in trust and repentance, or do you turn to some other 'god' that you think might get you out of your trouble?

THE UNCOMMITTED BELIEVER

In the account of Elijah's confrontation we meet Obadiah (I Kings 18:3-13). He reminds Elijah of the good he had done, *and* God protected and rewarded him for it.

Giving credit where credit is due, Obadiah *was* a believer and was doing much to help the prophets. He reminds us of those we are often told about, who will, during the Tribulation Period, take the mark of the beast in their hand so they can hide it until they need it, but will give assistance to those who are suffering because they *refused* the mark. Obadiah pictures the believer who seeks the best of both worlds. What a contrast with Moses, who chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25). Scofield rightly notes, "Obadiah is a warning type of the men of God who adhere to the world while still seeking to serve God." Someone said, "Obadiah should have been with Elijah instead of Ahab."

Is this where you are? Are you trying to 'serve the Lord' while still

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enjoying the pleasures of the world's traditions and customs? Are you worshiping where you know it is wrong, but are unwilling to identify with those who lack the showy attributes of 'churches' either because they refuse to mingle worldliness with worship, or are simply too small a group to *have* those niceties?

THE MISLED BELIEVERS

Finally we come to the misled believer. He is the one who, in honest faith, is assured of what he has been taught, whether in some pagan or idol worshiping religion, or in apostate Christianity. For centuries the Roman Catholic Church denied their people the Scriptures and fought against any attempt to translate them into the language of the people. This way the people were totally dependent on what they were told, unable to check it out as were the Bereans of Acts 17:11. *You* have ample access to the Scripture, unfortunately there are too many translations of the Bible that pervert the Word rather than accurately translate the Word. This is why it is so necessary that we, who teach the Word, be careful to teach it right, and even more important that the Holy Spirit grant you understanding and faith. I earnestly pray, for each reader, that God will grant you understanding, faith and courage.

Romans 16:17 urges you to mark and avoid those who teach contrary to what Paul taught, but you *first must know what Paul taught!* What Paul taught was inspired by God, i.e., the infallible, inerrant Word of God. I have heard so many read a text and then need to go to great lengths trying to explain away the clear meaning of the text. Peter speaks of these in II Peter 3:16. Let me give you three solid tools for interpreting Scripture.

1. If the plain sense makes sense, it must be the proper sense. Don't try to twist it, spiritualize it, or explain it away, to fit preconceived ideas.

2. No single verse or passage stands apart from the rest of Scripture. If what you read seems to contradict something else, you need to study it out or ask for help.

3. Learn to recognize figures of speech. This will help you understand if the passage is figurative or literal. Too many preachers try to take an obviously literal passage and make it figurative.

My friend, I leave you with the opening challenge, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" I urge you to exercise the courage to study the Bible apart from traditional and cultural

presuppositions. I urge you to separate from apostasy and commit to Jesus Christ, who alone can save your soul.

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power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of the world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory."

These Scriptures that the Holy Ghost led Paul to write ought to cause us to think much on the question: *Where has the offense of the Gospel gone?* What kind of gospel is being sponsored by Hollywood and Wall Street, by the noble and by the wise? How is it that all of a sudden the Gospel has become so popular and everybody is becoming a church member and profess to be a Christian *without being changed?* What happened to the Gospel that was foolishness to the wise and a scandal to the religious? Paul said in I Corinthians 1:23-24: "**But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.**" *What became of the Gospel message that Paul was speaking about in these verses?*

What kind of gospel is it that fails to transform and change, and keep on changing men until they be conformed into the very image of God's only Son and Lord Jesus Christ? Romans 8:29: "**For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.**" Mr. Anderson, whom we quoted above, was a product of a message that changed men and the nation of Wales. And the Apostle Paul saw changes in such wicked cesspools as the city of Corinth. But neither of the two would be able to recognize the popular gospel of today.

The New Testament declares that the preaching of the cross is foolishness and an offense to the natural mind. I Corinthians 2:14: "**But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiri-**

tually discerned." *To preach Christ and Him crucified is a stone that will cause stumbling.* Romans 9:33: "**As it is written, Behold, I lay in zion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**" I Peter 2:7-8: "**Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.**"

What has become of the offense of the cross? We need to have this burned into our souls afresh: that because *the Gospel was a stumblingstone and an offense to the unregenerated man in olden days, it always created a disturbance wherever it was proclaimed.* By way of contrast how nice and quiet our services are now. How terribly disturbing is the absence of disturbance in evangelistic campaigns. We've got disturbance on the streets, in our nations, in our homes, in our hearts and disturbance everywhere except in the houses of God. And *it is because of the absence of the preaching of a Gospel that is offensive to unregenerated man.*

Listen: worldly famous figures today in commerce, in politics, in religion and in the entertainment world pay court to the evangelistic efforts that we are having today. *They all do it without having had the new birth experience take place in their own life.* These famous personalities seem to adore popular evangelism, and at the same time adore and worship the ungodly things of this present day. It would seem that there is no scandal, there is no offense, there is no stumbling block in the popular gospel today. And how tragic that is, and *how unlike the New Testament Method and Message.* We may be dead certain that the gospel message that does not cause offense *is not the Gospel of God concerning His Son,* when in these days we have revivals that do not revive, and people have a salvation that does not save, doesn't change them and still leaves them in possession of their heart's reigns.

We need to come and give a critical look today at the so-called popular gospel; and ask again, *Where is the Gospel that was offensive to men gone? And when that offensive Gospel is gone, the Gospel of God is gone, and the transforming work of God is nowhere apparent.* We have got to be done with preaching a gospel that can be understood apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. Today we hear them talk about "preach a simple gospel that a little child can understand"; but the wisest man that ever lived in helpless to un-

derstand the truth of the Gospel, except it be interpreted to him by the Holy Ghost. I Corinthians 2:14: "**But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**"

Let me illustrate what I am talking about: what extreme foolishness it is to preach a baby born yonder in Bethlehem 2000 years ago and who lived in Nazareth, from which the Scripture says, in John 1:46: "**Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?**" This baby Who lived all His days in a small country called Palestine. This baby Who wound up on a tree outside of the holy city of Jerusalem, this baby Who in His manhood was buried in another man's grave and Whose body is still in that grave so far as this unsaved world knows. What foolishness it is to preach that *this One is the eternal exalted Lord of all, the Lord Jesus Christ.* And Philippians 2:9-11 tells us about Him: "**Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**"

Now I am saying to you that *this cannot be understood apart from the Holy Ghost. Only those who have been born from above can believe that Jesus is the Christ.* The Scriptures say that the carnal mind is the seat of hostility to God. And to expect this carnal mind to accept this kind of preaching is silly. *It cannot be done apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.* Romans 8:6-7: "**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.**"

Oh! How we long to have you as a prayer partner and get hold of the horns of the altar of God, to the end that we might have some disturbance. That men should not have a gospel they can accept and never know it; and a salvation that they can get and lose it, and never miss it. And some sort of an experience that does not effect a change in them, that keeps on changing them until they are literally transformed into the very image of the Son of God. *Oh! How we need the anointing of the Holy Ghost to come upon us everywhere as the Gospel of Christ is preached.* This Gospel that offends the religious person, and is downright silly to a wiseacre, but *is the wisdom and power*

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of God to a humble babe who can believe. Romans 1:16: **"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."** How we beg you to pray that his may come to pass.

I am so tired of our nice little Sunday morning services. Oh! We have everything in these services except *the presence of Christ and the Holy Ghost*. We preach the death of Christ, but everybody accepts that; but *the message of the cross, that's what is offensive, and that's what is left out today*. Why the death of Christ is accepted by all, and it brings offense to nobody, Jew, Gentile, or Moslem. The modernists even preach the death of Christ, but *they do not preach the message of the Cross*. All the religious world today believes in the historical death of Christ, but not the message of the Cross.

No wonder the Jews refused to believe the Saviour; you just try to imagine a crucified Messiah if you can. You tell me this can be accepted apart from the Holy Ghost, I say they could not, *neither can anybody today believe that Jesus is the Christ except by the Holy Ghost*. I Corinthians 12:3: **"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."**

No wonder the world in religious circles and everywhere accepts the death of Christ, and *rejects the Christ Who died*. Imagine if you can, *complete surrender for time and eternity to a man Who died on a cursed tree. It just can't be done apart from the Holy Spirit*. Oh! If we leave out that part of the message of the cross that offends religious people and makes the wise laugh outright we leave out the Gospel itself. Oh! How *the people of today need to be disturbed by the God of the message of the Cross and the power of the Holy Ghost*.

"Oh! Lord our God, please use this message to speak to the souls of men who are deceived in religion and another gospel that is being preached today. Please send some men of God

who are filled with the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel of Christ that is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. May You have mercy on poor lost sinners, and may Christ be glorified. Amen."

All of Grace

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some manifestations of grace.

ELECTION

In discussing election, I want to point out that God Almighty did elect a people. He determined that there would be a people that was His and His alone. 1 Pet. 1:2 tells us that there is an **"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"**. The elect are elected according to the foreknowledge of God. There is no role for any man. Now, immediately following this verse we find the means of the fulfillment of this election, but even there it is the work of the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ. Read also in Rom. 11:5, **"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."** This is a very interesting verse in that it plainly says that **"election"** is **"of grace."** Again, if we read the context surrounding this verse, we can see that Paul is telling us that no matter how terrible the situation may be; no matter how vile the state of mankind; still, because of the grace of God, there is and always will be, an **"election of grace."** Isn't it wonderful that the Holy Spirit would here combine in the same verse **"election"** and **"grace?"** Surely, was it not for the grace of God there would be no election.

In respect to election, I want to establish only two points today: First, this election takes place in the mind of God, before even the existence of any of those who would be the elect. We have the familiar verses in Rom. 9:11-12: **"(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."** We see here, clearly, that the **"election"** is according to the **"purpose of God."**

Surely, Jacob within the womb could claim no merit above Esau who was also within the same womb. They both had the same father; they both had the same mother. They were both even conceived at the same time. What was there to differentiate between the two? Perhaps that is one reason that the Lord chose Jacob and Esau to illustrate election – they were twins. Yet according to God, there was a difference, for He says later in v. 13, **"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."** So we can see from these verses that there is certainly an elect people unto God. This people is elected unto God before the existence of any of those who are the elect.

Looking a little farther, we can see that this election or choosing, took place even before the world was. **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"** (Eph. 1:4). Not only did God choose His elect people before they were born, but He also chose them before their mothers were born. Even more, let us try to understand that He chose His elect before even the world was ever created!

Second, this election, because it takes place in the mind of God before the world was, is surely not based on the merits or qualifications of any of the elect people of God. **"For thou art a holy people unto the Lord the God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:"** (Deut. 7:6-7). Remember what Ezekiel tells us in chapter 16 verses 1-6. In addressing Jerusalem, he tells her that she was born a heathen, and born in filthiness. She was even **"cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born."** (v.5). Yet no matter how vile the condition of Jerusalem, she was chosen of God. There did not appear to be (and indeed there was not) any merit in Jerusalem. There was nothing that made her appealing or would cause anyone to love her. Yet we read in v. 6, **"And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live."** I believe that these verses make it plain that the elect of God are not a people that is chosen by merit, but purely by the volition of an almighty and merciful God. I think that we can all agree that elec-

tion is surely *all of grace*.

PREDESTINATION

In discussing predestination, I want to point out the God did choose the individuals that make up the number or the sum total of the elect people of God. In other words, He did not elect a people and then leave it to chance who would be included in that people, but rather, He predestined individual persons, and the sum total of those persons exactly equals the number and personage of the elect people of God. I know that oftentimes election and predestination are treated as one and the same doctrine. I suppose that it is correct to do so; I don't think that we can take election out of predestination. In this study, however, I want to consider the difference between the two only in that election is often applied to a group or class of people, whereas predestination is most usually applied on an individual basis. **"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified"** (Rom. 8:29-30). We also read in Eph. 1:5, **"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"**. Notice that here the predestination is **"according to the good pleasure of his will"**, just as the election in Rom. 9:11 was **"according to the purpose of God"**.

It is most evident from reading these Scriptures that there surely is an elect of God that is surely made up of those that are predestinated **"unto the adoption of children."** Again, we must realize, that since the election and the individual predestination took place before the world was, then this predestination is not based on any individual merit, but truly is *all of grace*.

JUSTIFICATION

Here we come to the prophetic and historical conclusion of the matter of salvation. In the justification of the people of God, our Lord Jesus Christ came to earth and fulfilled the demands of justice by living a perfect life in the flesh and then sacrificing that life on the cross of Calvary. The justification was fulfilled when the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and later ascended to the right hand of the Father in Heaven. We can pick up where we left off previously concerning election: Rom. 8:33, **"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."** Not only does God

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Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WFTA, Tupelo, MS	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	101.9	3,000 FM
WLZA, Starkville, MS	Sunday 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.	710	2,500 AM
WCNA, Myrtle, MS	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	95.9	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	680	5,000 AM
KARI, Blaine, WA	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.	550	5,000 AM
KORE, Springfield, OR	Sunday 8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	1050	5,000 AM
DXRA, Davao City, Philippines	Sunday 8:15 - 8:45 a.m.	783 Khz ...	10,000 AM
DWSS, Manila, Philippines	Sunday 5:30 - 6:00 p.m.	1494	16,000 AM

All of Grace

Continued from page 168

do the electing, but also He does the justifying. Can we see in the process of this justification any deed or work that man might perform? In the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah, when prophesying of the Lord Jesus Christ, tells us in Is. 53:11, **"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."** If we examine this verse closely, we can see that once again, the Lord is working here independent of the assistance of man or of any other being. Notice that **"shall. . . justify"** appears to be a verb. The verb being performed is by the **"righteous servant."** The action being taken is by the **"righteous servant."** Then the verse even tells us how the righteous servant shall justify – **"for he shall bear their iniquities"**. Indeed, can we see any part that the recipients of the justification might play in the application of this justification? Can we see any requirement or prerequisite that must be met by the lost sinner? Even the prerequisites are fulfilled by the Lord God. If we cannot see any participation by the sinner in the act of justification, then I believe that we must conclude that justification is *all of grace*.

PROVIDENCE

Now we come to the care and welfare of the people of God. First, I want us to notice that this providence of God in our lives is apparent even before the salvation of God is made manifest in our lives. We can see many instances where God has sustained and cared for us while we were yet in our lost condition. Let us consider an object of the electing grace of God that we have already mentioned – Jacob. The Lord in speaking to Jacob said in Gen. 28:15, **"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."** We know that Jacob was not a perfect man. And in his youth, I am sure that there were many times that he would stray from God and from the path that he should travel. Yet, here we have one that is loved of God while he was yet still in the womb of his mother Rebekah. He is loved of God throughout his life, and is kept by him. There was never any doubt that the Lord would complete that work that he had announced that he would perform on the person of Jacob. His love that He loved Jacob with, must be made manifest. I admit that while we were in that natural con-

dition and we are found in a certain situation we did not give God the credit for our successes and for even our existence. But the fact that we did not attribute unto God that which was rightfully His, does not lessen the importance of the existence of the providence of God in our lives.

Another example that we have in the Scriptures is the nation of Israel itself. Consider only the exodus. The Israelites were always rebellious. They did not warrant the provision that God granted them in the flesh. And remember when they came even to the land of Canaan that they rebelled against the Lord there and would not heed the call of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb to go in unto the land to possess it. The Israelites were turned back out into the wilderness for an additional thirty-eight years. For those entire thirty-eight years He provided for the nation of Israel, because His people (His elect) were amongst them. Remember that Paul tells us in Rom. 9:6, **"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:"** The Israelites would certainly obtain the Promised Land, but it was up to the Lord *which* Israelites that it would be. I am only saying that the Lord was providentially gracious to these young Israelites, who would one day go into the land, even though they might not yet acknowledge Him for His grace. While He was busy destroying those who were disobedient to Him, He was at the same time busy preserving those that would enter in. Note also, that many that would inherit the land of Canaan were not even born yet. But the Lord would have them enter into the land instead of those that had originally had opportunity. These that would inherit the land, both living and yet unborn, did not even deserve the manna and the water that He would daily provide them, but God alone must sustain them. There was no other hope for them. In other words, they must be preserved until such time as they could go into the land and make their calling known unto all the evil nations around them.

Remember, that even when we were lost and undone, still yet the Lord knew us; knew of us; was cognizant of our situation; and even (and this is so amazing) loved us. Because He knew that our miserable lives were reckoned unto the Kingdom of God through the salvation wrought by His Son, He could even love us in our unlovable conditions.

Second, I want us to notice that this providence of God extends even from the time of our salvation until the end of our walk here on this earth. Surely, we must acknowledge, that a God that

Funnybone

"... A time to laugh..." (Eccl. 3:4).

Three young boys sat talking on the playground at the Possum Trot Elementary School. They began to discuss how their fathers earned a living.

The first boy said, "I'll have you to know that my father scribbles a few lines on a piece of paper. He calls it a poem and gets paid one hundred dollars."

The second boy promptly explained, "Well, my daddy scribbles a few lines on a piece of paper, too. He calls it a song and gets two hundred and fifty dollars for it."

Then the third little boy, little Scarcey Brown, said, "That ain't nothing boys. My daddy scribbles a few lines on a piece of paper and calls it a sermon. It then takes four men to gather up all the money."



would care for us and provide for us from the time of our birth; and would preserve us until the day that our salvation is made known; this God will also care for us after that salvation. God does not preserve His people unto the day of their salvation only to leave them to their own devices afterward! No, our God provides for us and cares for us till the time of our departure from this life. Notice the words of our Saviour: **"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled"** (Jn. 17:12). How wonderful it is that, while here on this earth, it was of the utmost importance to our Saviour that He should not only save His people, but also that He should keep them. It is marvelous, but it is only fitting, that our God that would elect us will surely justify us. Our God that will justify us will surely keep us until the day of our salvation and will even keep us until the day of our death. Truly, if it were not for the care and providence of our God, we could none of us last a day here on this earth. The Christian needs the sustaining hand of God as surely as the sinner is dependent on the intervention of the Holy Spirit in salvation.

I think that we can all honestly state that the providence of God, as myriad and beautiful as it appears is not based on the merit or value of any person or his works. The providence of God is *all of grace*.

HEAVENLY BLISS

Finally, I want to look at how that even the physical life that the Christian has been given, and through which he has been sustained, even this is not enough to manifest the grace of God. No, my brethren, the grace of God is so magnificent, so glorious, and

so replete, that the bounties that we receive in this lifetime are not sufficient to display it! Even the justification of our miserable souls is not enough for the grace of God. The grace of God will be displayed throughout eternity. It is not enough that our God would save His people from their own sins. It is not enough that our God would save His people from the depths of Hell. But, our God has saved His people unto eternal, heavenly bliss. In other words, not only has He saved us from what we truly deserved, but also He has given unto us that which we did not deserve. Can you see more of the grace of God displayed before you now? Look at the words that the Apostle Paul tells Titus. Three times in his epistle to Titus he mentions a hope. In Titus 1:2, **"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"** Again in 2:13, **"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"** Lastly in 3:7, **"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."** It is wonderful that in these verses we see that this hope is **"promised before the world began;"** this **"blessed hope"** is apparently tied up in the **"glorious appearing of the...Saviour Jesus Christ;"** and finally that we are **"justified by his grace."** Truly our God can and does work in a complete fashion. He nowhere relies on us or on our abilities – either foreseen or actual. The hope that we have is not just that we will not die, but that we will have eternal life. This eternal life is not just mere existence, but it is a perfect, holy, and complete existence.

Consider, now, some verses that are

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

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PO Box 39

Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

In reference to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, is it permissible for women to sing specials, give testimonies, vote, or make motions in business meetings?— Kentucky



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The fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians gives detailed instruction on the proper use of the gift of tongues, one of the special gifts bestowed upon the early churches by the Holy Spirit. These gifts would continue only until the completion of the New Testament (I Cor. 13:10). Verses 34-35 would prohibit women from speaking in tongues, or as Paul affirms, acting or speaking in any way in the assembly so as to usurp authority over the man (I Tim. 2:11-12).

When it comes to the matter of singing as an act of worship we should be careful to follow the biblical pattern. In ancient Temple worship there were both men and women singers (Ezra 2:65, but nothing is said about special singing by either men or women. It appears that Colossians 3:16 tells us that the church is to engage in congregational singing. Singing in worship is not for entertainment or to show the talents of men or women.

I fail to see how a woman could give an open oral testimony or make a motion in a business meeting in a church without disobeying the definite commands of Scripture. On the other hand I would have no objection to a woman raising her hand to vote when a requirement for her to speak is not involved.

JIMMIE B. DAVIS



Tom Ross

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Because of the prohibitions mentioned in these verses with

regards to women, I believe they would be permitted to sing specials and vote in the business meetings. However, they are not permitted to give their testimony or make a motion in the assembly because both would require speaking. There is a difference between singing and speaking, however slight it may be, which would allow a woman to sing to the glory of God in the assembly.

There are those who believe specials should be banned altogether. Though I respect their conviction, I disagree. I am thankful for those who use their singing talents for the glory of God.

There are others who believe that women should not be permitted to vote. However, there were women gathered in the upper room in Acts chapter one that participated in that business meeting.

TOM ROSS



Garner Smith

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Faith Baptist Church
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I do not believe that I Corinthians 14:34-35 means that a woman must be absolutely silent in church to the extent that they cannot make any noise or not speak under any circumstances. I believe this Scripture is specifically speaking about women being restricted in the use of the gift of speaking in tongues. There were restrictions placed by God on the special gifts of speaking in tongues in the early church. But, I must say I do not believe this Scripture is just restricted to the use of tongues, but is a part of many Scriptures that teach that the woman is to be in subjection to man and is never to usurp or teach men whether in church or anywhere. See for instance I Timothy 2:9-12, Titus 2:1-5 and I Peter 3:1-6.

I see no reason why a woman cannot sing in church whether in the congregation, choir, or specials as long as they are in subjection and demonstrate this by not talking before or after singing nor during church

business or seeking to instruct men.

I practice something, as a pastor that probably some would disagree with, but I believe is scriptural. When a person presents himself or herself to our church for membership on profession of faith I ask them to answer in the affirmative or negative if they are sure of their salvation having repented of their sins and trusted Christ as their Lord and Savior. I require to of them to affirm or deny that they seek scriptural baptism into the membership of the church. I base this on Romans 10:9-10.

I believe it is out of order for women to testify because in doing so they often do so in such a way as to teach those listening as is true also in praying in public.

I see no reason for a woman that is a member of the church for not voting, which is allowed for every member according to normal Baptist polity and I find no Scripture forbidding it.

GARNER SMITH



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“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” (I Cor. 14:34-35).

This passage of scripture plainly teaches that it is not permissible for women to speak in the church, but rather to be under obedience. From the context we know that this passage is referring to public speaking, teaching, and the exercise of authority in the congregation, which for women, is forbidden by the Holy Spirit. It also clearly teaches that women are not allowed to ask questions in the church. **“And if they will learn any thing, let them ask**

ANNOUNCEMENT

Elder Jimmie Davis has resigned as a forum writer for the BBB. He feels that it is time for a younger man to pick up the pen and take his place. Brother Davis has served on the forum for nearly twenty-four years. He was one of the original first four writers that started in the fourth issue of the BBB in September of 1980. As this paper is the 294th issue of the Banner, and at two questions an issue, Brother Davis has written answers to nearly 580 Bible questions. We have enjoyed many years with Brother Davis and will miss his answers in the forum. **“With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding. With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding”** (Job 12:12-13).

their husbands at home.”

A woman may be allowed to sing specials as long as she has the approval of her pastor. However, she shouldn't speak by way of introduction or after the song is finished. Singing and speaking are not the same thing. When a woman sings, she is not speaking her own words freely but she is repeating what has already been written.

Nehemiah 7:67 specifically mentions the singing women in the congregation of Israel. The scriptures teach us that all saints are to sing praises to the Lord. **“Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints”** (Ps. 149:1). We are also to edify one another with singing, **“teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”** (Col. 3:16). I do not know of any scripture that would restrict special singing to men only.

Women giving testimonies should not be allowed. The scriptures are plain that it is a shame for women to speak in the church. Some pastors like to have every person who wishes to join the church tell their salvation account or testimony to the congregation. However, as a pastor, I would prefer to speak on a woman's behalf (after she relates her salvation experience to me) so as to avoid any misunderstandings with women speaking in the church.

It is permissible for women to vote as long as they are submitting to the Lord, their husbands, and the pastor.

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

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Is it "normal" or "natural" for a true Christian to doubt his salvation? - E-mail



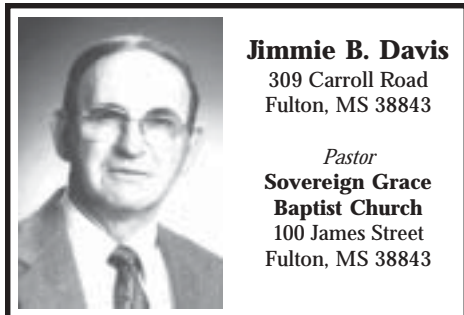
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I can only answer this question from a personal point of view. I personally have found myself in certain circumstances that made me wonder at the time whether I was sure of my salvation. My doubt never was a result of my doubt of the person, work, or credibility of Christ, but whether or not I had fully repented of my sins and truly trusted in Christ as Lord and my only Savior. I realize that my salvation is eternal and secure, but the old flesh rises up and brings to my mind all my miserable failures and causes me to wonder would a truly saved person be guilty of such failure. The flesh seeks to find some way to have a part in our salvation. I thank God that in such cases the Holy Spirit causes me to be reminded by the Scriptures that salvation is all of God and depends only on God, not me.

It may be that some have never doubted their salvation and I have had some to tell me this, but I must admit that there were times when I had to seek assurance when I had sinned against or failed my Lord. I never doubted the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ, but whether or not I had been deceived because at an early age I did make a false profession. My assurance comes not from my feelings or state of mind, but from the Scriptures as applied by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:5-16).

GARNER SMITH



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I have no reason to doubt that Satan does cause young Christians or even older Christians who do not keep their eyes upon Christ and the

Word of God to doubt their salvation at times. The most mature Christian, when considering our depravity and struggles with a sinful adamic nature might be prone to have doubts upon occasions.

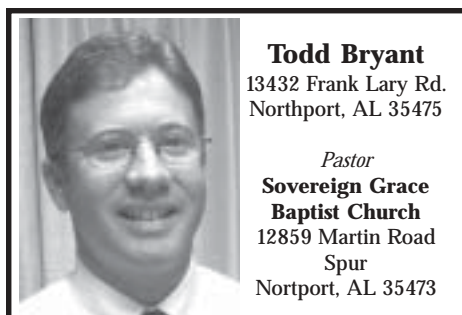
It is not presumptuous to say you have assurance of eternal salvation if it is based upon what the word of God says about our sins being purged by Christ and we are trusting in Him without reservation. However, it is presumptuous to claim assurance of salvation by the way you feel, or because your church or some preacher tells you that you are saved.

No person claiming to be saved should ever fail to examine himself/herself to see if they be in the faith (II Cor. 13:5). All believers should be careful to do what Peter tells us to do in II Peter 1:10: **"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. . ."** Paul, the apostle, does not tell us to work for salvation, but he does say--**"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"** (Phil. 2:12). In other words, you work out what God has and is working in you (v. 13).

When you have knowledge of being delivered from the guilt and penalty of sin. When you fully trust in Christ and His finished work. When you are aware of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and you realize that God is working His will and pleasure in you. Assurance is yours to claim! If the above things are real in your life, you can have the assurance, which Aunt Fanny Crosby describes in that great hymn - "Blessed Assurance."

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.*

JIMMIE B. DAVIS



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This is a question that has often been asked of me and I am sure it will

continue to be asked as long as we live in this life.

The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ referred to His followers as having **"little faith"** from time to time should be sufficient to prove that our faith wavers. There are times when we are "on top of the world" and our faith is strong. Then again, there are times when we are down in the valley and our faith is weak. Luke 17:5 says, **"And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith."** Though the subject in this passage is one of a practical nature, it still would lead us to the conclusion that our faith wavers from time to time.

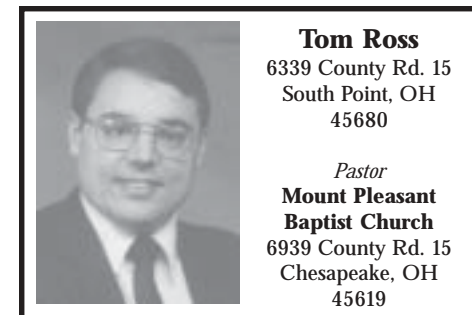
The question I have often asked people who doubted their salvation is, "What are you actually doubting? Are you doubting yourself or are you doubting that Jesus is Who the Bible says He is?" In every instance, the answer has been that they were doubting themselves. They in no way shape or form doubted that Jesus is **"...the way, the truth, and the life"** (John 14:6). When a child of God has doubts such as this, God is allowing Satan to work in order to strengthen their faith in the long run. When the Lord first saved me, I began to doubt my conversion several times--sometimes to the point of great despair. However, through prayer, meditation, and study, I made my **"calling and election sure"** (II Pet. 1:10). Satan's great desire is to make God's children unable to serve Him. One of the ways he does this is to cause them to doubt their salvation. As long as they are in a state of doubting, they cannot serve. How long one stays in this state of doubting is up to that person. If they don't pursue the help of the Lord through the means God has given they may doubt for some great length of time. However, if they pray, meditate, study, fellowship with the saints and the Lord in His church, this time of doubting will pass.

Peter encouraged the saints to **"...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"** (II Pet. 3:18). This of course teaches that we are not immediately strong mature Christians when we are birthed into the family of God. We are babes (I Pet. 2:2). However, we have the capability of growth. The Lord has given us the

abiding presence of His Holy Spirit as well as the other means that we have spoken of.

In answer to the question, yes, it is normal or natural to doubt ones salvation--especially in the early days of spiritual life. However, as we grow, these doubts will decrease as our faith will increase and we will grow in grace and knowledge. If you doubt your salvation at times, ask yourself this question--do I doubt myself, or Jesus? This question helped this preacher in his younger days considerably. Also, in these times of doubt, pray to God that He would cause Satan or one of his workers to flee from your presence. If God answers this prayer with a "yes" don't think that means that this trouble is over for good. Satan is persistent. Continue to grow in order for these times to leave you and you'll be able to serve God faithfully.

TODD BRYANT



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II Corinthians 13:5 declares: **"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"** I believe that in the course of genuine self-examination it is not only possible, but even probable that there are seasons when a believer may doubt his salvation. As we bare our depraved hearts before a Holy God are there not times when we can genuinely ask ourselves: "How could one so sinful have a union with One so righteous?"

Every believer's emotional and spiritual make up is different, so it is very difficult to answer this question with sweeping generalities. I can answer for myself in an honest and forthright manner. I have been saved for 23 years. I know that I am trusting fully in the shed blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. I know that I have been chosen, called, redeemed, and am being preserved by the sovereign grace of God. I know that the fruit of eternal predestination is glorification and absolute conformity to the lovely image of Christ. I know these things to be true, but there are times when the flesh raises its ugly head, or Satan puts doubts in my mind, or I think, do, or

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Forum #1

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Some people think that voting is a form of speaking, but in reality voting is a form of supporting. It is the woman's place to support the men and one of the ways that she can do this is by voting in agreement with the men and her pastor.

I Timothy 2:11-12 declares: **"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."** From this verse we can see that women making motions in a business meeting is absolutely not permissible. To make a motion is to exercise leadership and it is not the women's place to lead. Also, it is possible to vote in silence but it is not possible to make motions in silence. We must understand that men and women have different positions in the church just as they have different positions in the home. Women are not any less important or any less honorable than men but they have a different function than men. Men have the role of leadership and women have the role of following and submitting to that leadership. Men have a more public role and women have a more private and supportive role. When we follow God's instructions there is harmony in the church.

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"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (I Cor. 14:34, 35).

I believe the Bible is by far the most interesting book ever to be written. Every other book is left up to the interpretation of the reader. However, in the case of the Scriptures, there can be no interpretation other than that which the Bible interprets itself. In other words, we must examine all passages, which deal with a certain subject in order to find a complete truth. I Timothy 2:11-12 sheds more

light on this subject. **"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."** The Corinthian church apparently had begun to allow a practice, which many today are partaking in. They were allowing their women to serve in offices that were restricted to men. They were allowing women to preach and teach the men. They were, perhaps, allowing women to publicly pray when men were present. In other words, their women, in some cases, were usurping authority over the men. This was a violation of God's Word, which I Timothy 2:11-12 has taught us. It was also a violation of headship which Paul had began addressing to them in I Corinthians 11 where he taught on the need for an artificial head covering as a sign of the headship of the man. This is the truth of I Cor. 14:34-35 in light of what we see in Paul's epistle to Timothy.

In order to find the answer to the question, we must therefore examine it in light to what we have just presented in these two passages. For a woman to sing a special with others or as a solo is edifying to the church and in no way usurps authority over the man so long as she doesn't give words of exhortation before or after the song. In fact, I have been in churches where the women did sing specials and wore the artificial covering signifying man's headship over her. As to the second part of the question, for a woman to give a "testimony" in a public mixed assembly would violate the teaching of the two passages we have read so far as I can tell. In giving a testimony, words of exhortation (preaching or prophesying, if you will) must by necessity accompany such teaching. This office is left to the man alone. This is one of the problems with many churches, which allow women to teach men in Sunday school. That practice is a violation of the Scripture as well as the giving of testimonies. Thirdly, all members of a church should have a vote in a business meeting. Nobody has any more of a vote than anybody else—pastor included. Sadly, many preachers of our day think they are to be dictators and call all of the shots in their church. Why a pastor would want to put this burden and responsibility on himself is beyond comprehension. A woman can easily raise her hand, cast a ballot, or whatever other way the church chooses to vote without exercising authority over the man. Lastly, I see no reason for a woman to make a motion in a business meeting when there is a man present to do so. She can easily get a man to do so by asking

her husband or some other man before the meeting begins. Perhaps some wouldn't think this would be a violation since the church isn't called together for the actual worship service. However, as the old saying goes, it's better to be safe than sorry.

TODD BRYANT

Forum #2

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say something that is unbecoming of a Christian. During those seasons there have been times that I have had doubts. It hasn't happened often, but it has happened. When those times arise I confess my sins and claim some promises, which serves to lift my burdens and give me a fresh breath of assurance. The verses I run to in times like these are as follows:

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord..." (Rom. 7:24-25). **"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power"** (Col. 2:9-10). **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** There are many others that help me, but these are my favorites when I need assurance.

Let me be very frank. I worry about people who are never convicted over sin or who are never smitten with guilt. Too many professing Christians use the doctrine of eternal security to justify their sin. I know that I am eternally secure in Christ, but I feel guilty and my conscience bothers me when I sin. I pray that I never get so "doctrinally sound and intellectually secure" that I ever lose that feeling of being troubled over even the slightest sin.

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The only way that it is "normal" or "natural" (or even possible) for a Christian to doubt his or her salvation is to walk in the flesh rather than in the Spirit of God.

To be a Christian is to be a disciple and follower of Christ. It is to be a

believer in His Word and the promises that He has made to His people. The Christian life is characterized by faith and confidence in Christ; **"The just shall live by faith"** (Rom. 1:17). The Spirit of God indwells every true Christian and gives us assurance of our salvation; **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"** (Rom. 8:14-16). All those who doubt their salvation have quenched the Spirit of God, because the Holy Spirit has never caused anyone to doubt God.

Having assurance of our salvation is very important because if we do not have much assurance then we do not have much faith, and if we do not have much faith we will never produce much fruit. In Hebrews 11 all the great works of the saints were done through faith. II Peter 1:10 reads: **"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."**

There are two things I can think of that might cause a child of God to doubt.

First is spiritual ignorance. This is common among those who are saved but not part of a sound Baptist church. There are many who have not been taught the blessed doctrines of God's sovereign grace and the effectual work of Christ. They instead have been taught the doctrines and teachings of men which always leads to questions and uncertainty.

Second is backsliding into sin. When we take our eyes off of Jesus Christ and instead focus on ourselves, we sin. We must realize that we are totally dependant on Christ, not just when we are first saved but continually. If we start off even one day without looking to Christ then our day will not be good. He is the source of all grace and mercy, and it is only in Him that we find assurance, hope, peace, and comfort. Many have erred and fallen into sin by trusting in themselves. Rather it be their own works, or their own knowledge, or their own doctrine, they fall into sin because they failed to trust in Christ. Proverbs 3:5-7 tells us to **"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD,**

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and depart from evil. Often when we fall into sin we wonder how we could be saved and sin so much. This is a miserable state to be in and the solution is always the same. Repent and look to Christ for forgiveness. **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"** (I John 1:9). If a child of God doubts his or her salvation, then they must repent, trust the Lord, and hold on to all the promises of God through Christ.

MATT JAMES

All of Grace

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given to us in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. In Rev. 21:3-4,7, **"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away...He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son"** Notice again in v. 27, **"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."** This glorious existence is only reserved for the recipients of the grace of God. What lies in store for us is not just peace and comfort. God has provided more for us than we can even imagine. None of it is for our glory. None of it is as a result of our own personal merit. It is all laid up for us that we might glorify God. In glorifying God, we must of course praise Him for His grace.

Finally in Rev. 22:4-5, **"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."** How wonderful the God of all creation is unto His people! They shall even **"reign for ever and ever"**!

This God Almighty that was gracious unto us, will yet forever be gracious unto us. How my heart

trembles as I ponder the grace of God in my life! A person that only understands the grace of God in the salvation of his soul from certain damnation is seeing only a part of the grace of God that has been shown Him. I don't deserve the eternal destiny that awaits me! Surely, you too, will admit that the glories of Heaven are too magnificent for the likes of you! As we marvel at the wonders of Heaven and the heavenly bliss that awaits each of us, let us all say that it is *all of grace*.

CONCLUSION

As we close, I want to think again about the gloriousness of the grace of God. I want to emphasize again, that we are not worthy recipients of His grace. The very definition of grace (unmerited favor) reminds us that we do not deserve His attention. And yet, I know that somehow we often get into the condition where we realize a little bit about where we are and we marvel in the God that we know, and we think that there is for some reason, something in us that makes us better than the lost around us. There is something in us, and it is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! That is all that sets us apart from the reprobate. The Holy Spirit is not within us because we called Him, but He is within us because He was sent unto us! Do not think more highly of yourself than you ought to think. **"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."** (Rom. 12:3). Paul again mentions **"grace"** in this verse. He admits that the **"grace"** is **"given unto me."** He did not go out and seek it. He was not able to obtain it on his own. He also tells us that it is **"God"** that **"hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."** Now I know that Paul is talking primarily about the abilities that God has given us, and the *amount* of faith that we have; but is it not true also, that any faith is of God? The faith to believe comes from God; the faith to serve comes from God; the faith to persevere comes from God. We can never think *more highly* or too much of God, but we can certainly think on ourselves too much and give ourselves more credit than we are due.

Isn't it wonderful, that we are the objects of the grace of God! Just revel in the fact that God is gracious. I would far rather trust in the grace and mercy of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, thrice-holy, God, then in all of the might, power, wisdom, and ability of all the sinful race of man, even were it all combined in the

person of one man. Throughout eternity, the grace of God will redound to His glory! Remember the verse that we read in Rev. 22:4, **"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."** For some reason the Lord has loved us. Because of this, we shall dwell eternally in Heaven beholding **"his face."** And not only so, but the trophies of His grace will have **"his name...in their foreheads!"** Throughout eternity, the angels and the created beings will see that name in their foreheads and will cry out glory to God! Glory to God! Never will a mention be made of what we have done to believe, but all glory will be to the grace of God. It is just marvelous to think about! The grace of God must be shown; it must have a display. God is a God of grace, and the grace must be shown. You and I are the means through which that grace is and will be displayed!

Do you realize that the angels themselves will marvel throughout eternity over the grace of God? We

are in Heaven as objects of His grace. We are testaments of His grace. The angels are not recipients of His grace. They attest to His wonderful creative powers and to the holiness and righteousness that is in Him, but they are not the examples of His grace that are set before all to see. Why do you think that they wonder so much as the story of salvation unfolds? It is miraculous in their eyes that God could love sinful man and that His Son could die on man's behalf.

The fallen angels are not witnesses of the grace of God. They fell and their reservations for eternity are already made in the lake of fire. Satan, the fallen angels, and the unrepentant man, will all be examples and showcases of the wrath and justice of God Almighty, but they cannot express the grace of God.

But we will throughout eternity be held up as results of the grace of God! We will forever and forever be trophies of His grace! Praise the Lord that it is *all of grace!*



Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read. Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

HOMESCHOOL PROTECTION BILL INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C., (EP)—Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Colo., has introduced a bill that would give homeschooled students the same protection under the law as those given to public school students.

The bill, named the Homeschool Non-Discrimination Act of 2003, would seek to end the legal hassles homeschoolers and their parents have to endure when dealing with outdated and simply irrational laws. The bill was written by Chris Klicka and the Home School Legal Defense Association.

"The federal government needs to catch up with the homeschool movement," Klicka told Focus on the Family. "The homeschoolers are growing up. As a result, the laws need to be adjusted to reflect this new status or this new type of student that's out there."

J. Michael Smith, president of Home School Legal Defense Association, listed some of the features of the bill in a recent editorial for The Washington Times. For example, the bill states that homeschooled students may receive federal financial aid for college. It also al-

lows homeschoolers' parents to use education savings accounts for homeschool expenses.

The bill requires that all homeschool records collected by public schools be kept confidential. It also recognizes that homeschooled students need to be allowed to work during traditional school hours when it does not conflict with their education.

"The federal government does not have the power, nor the need, to regulate homeschooling," wrote Smith. "It is a matter of state law. Nevertheless, homeschooling is a national phenomenon, and federal issues have arisen which unfairly impact homeschoolers. Congresswoman Musgrave should be commended for her strong bill in favor of homeschool freedom."

CONSERVATIVES SAY FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—Citing the intention of pro-gay marriage forces to use the "full faith and credit" clause of the U.S. Constitution, conservatives are building support for the Federal Marriage

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Amendment.

The proposed amendment would require that marriage in the United States be only between a man and a woman. It also prohibits states from passing laws or amendments to their constitutions allowing for marital status to be conferred upon unmarried persons or groups.

Those opposing the amendment say that it would strike down laws that states currently have on their books giving gay couples rights equal to married couples.

Dwight Duncan, professor at Southern New England School of Law, says that activists for the homosexual agenda are arguing for the mainstreaming of gay marriage, saying the right is covered under the U.S. Constitution's "full faith and credit" clause.

Using that argument, marriage that is legal in one state would have to be recognized in all other states, providing to homosexual "married" couples the same rights enjoyed by heterosexual married couples. Even if a state did not pass its own gay marriage law, it could be required to recognize gay marriages from other states.

This is dangerously close to happening, especially with a case that is currently before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. In that case, several homosexual couples have sued for the right to marry. If they are successful, many believe that they can then be successful in forcing all states to recognize their marriages, thereby legalizing gay marriage on a nationwide basis.

"That's the reason that you need to have an amendment to the U.S. Constitution," said Duncan. ". . . If it were a mere law, it could be challenged as unconstitutional."

PRESIDENT BUSH PROMISES TO PRESERVE TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—In an effort to encourage acceptance of individuals while still preserving traditional values, President Bush told journalists during a rare Rose Garden press conference on Wednesday, July 30, that government lawyers are researching the best way to ensure that marriage remains between a man and a woman.

Bush's words came in response to a reporter's question on the President's view regarding homosexuality.

"Yes, I am mindful that we're all sinners, and I caution those who may try to take the speck out of their neighbor's eye when they've got a log in their own," said Bush. "I think it's very important for our society to respect each individual, to welcome those with good hearts, to be a welcoming country."

Bush went on to address the issue of

homosexual marriage.

"On the other hand, that does not mean that somebody like me needs to compromise on an issue such as marriage," continued Bush. "And that's really where the issue is heading here in Washington, and that is the definition of marriage. I believe in the sanctity of marriage. I believe a marriage is between a man and a woman. And I think we ought to codify that one way or the other. And we've got lawyers looking at the best way to do that."

Colin Stewart, the interim president of the Family Research Council, welcomed the news. "We were appreciative that the president used the opportunity to once again declare that marriage must be protected," Stewart said in a statement released just hours after the speech. "We absolutely agree with the president that marriage must be defended. Not just the word, but also the institution."

Stewart added: "We cannot mount a true defense of marriage if we are willing to give away all its privileges to counterfeit legal arrangements bearing another name. As the president heads into the campaign season he will surely be asked to defend what he today called 'the sanctity of marriage.' Pro-family voters are counting on him to do just that."

Bush appears to be echoing fairly closely the view of Americans on the issue of gay marriage and homosexual rights. Gallop news service has reported that there has been a "significant shift in public opinion" on the issue.

Gallop notes that the shift happened after the United States Supreme Court overturned a Texas anti-sodomy law on June 26.

Gallop says that in May 2003, 60% of those polled stated that "homosexual relations between consenting adults" should be legal. That number dropped dramatically to 48% in a poll conducted July 25-27.

The issue has a sense of urgency among pro-family groups as they wait for a ruling from the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court on a gay marriage case. It is feared that if gay marriage is made legal in Massachusetts, then all states may be forced to recognize gay marriages. That ruling is expected soon.

WHO SHARES THEIR FAITH? STUDY SHOWS EVANGELISM MUST START WITH BELIEF SYSTEM

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (EP)—How serious are Christians about following Jesus' command to "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel?" It depends on how strongly they believe God's Word.

A new study by Barna Research Group shows that nearly 50 million born again adults—some 60 percent of that population group—shared their faith in Jesus Christ with non-believers during the past

year.

"A veritable army of Christians is still active in spreading the good news about what Jesus Christ has done for all people," George Barna said in reporting the study. But, he admitted that the church still faces many challenges when it comes to evangelism and suggested that the place to start is with church-goers' beliefs, rather than with evangelism training programs.

"We know that people's behavior is driven by their beliefs, and the research showed that the most significant distinction between those who share Christ with the culture and those who don't relates to their religious beliefs. Providing motivation and behavioral training are helpful, but the factor that seems most likely to stimulate Christians to bring the truths and love of Jesus into the marketplace are what they believe about sin, surrender and salvation," Barna wrote in his report.

So who is doing a good job sharing their faith? Those who believe the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings (77 percent of evangelizers questioned said so as compared to 57 percent of those who don't evangelize); and those who believe they have a personal responsibility to spread the Gospel. Other common beliefs of evangelizers revealed in the study were that Satan is not just a symbol of evil, that a person cannot earn a place in Heaven through good behavior and that Jesus Christ did not sin during His time on earth. Some 81 percent of evangelizers interviewed said every word in the Bible is true and can be trusted.

The study showed nearly one out of every three evangelizers is aligned with a Baptist church. None-denominational Christian churches also made a strong showing as did Catholic churches.

Some two thirds of those surveyed who were associated with an Assemblies of God Church were born again and had shared their faith in the past year. The study showed the lower rates for Baptists (40 percent), Presbyterians (31 percent), Lutherans (24 percent) and Methodists (21 percent).

Ethnic Christians are more likely to share their faith than whites; marrieds more likely than singles.

Perhaps most troubling among the study's findings was the fact that there are few huge differences between evangelizers' lifestyles and those of the rest of the population. While non-evangelizers are slightly more likely to smoke than evangelizers, the survey showed no significant differences regarding levels of volunteerism, problems with serious debt, dealing with a personal addiction or consulting to psychic.

That may be why some evangelizers have a hard time getting the Christian message across.

"Non-believers are seeking evidence that Christianity is truly life transforming," Barna said. "Naturally, none of us,

no matter how committed we are to Christ, will live a perfect life, but the research encourages believers to allow God to change us from the inside out so that our lives will substantiate the difference that following Christ makes."

The Barna research involved telephone interviews with more than 4,000 adults between August 2002 and May 2003. To find out more about Barna, log on the www.barna.org.

PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA SAYS NO TO SAME-SEX MARRIAGES

SYDNEY, Australia (EP)—Christian churches in Australia praised Prime Minister John Howard and Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson for publicly stating their opposition to the legalization of same-sex marriages.

Howard told reporters that he will not support legislation that gives homosexual unions equal status as marriage. On Aug. 5, Howard said that same-sex marriages were "gravely immoral."

Howard explained his statement saying that barring the unions wasn't "an expression of discrimination, it is just an expression that marriage as we understand it is one of the bedrock institutions of our society. It is very much about the raising of children, the having of children, and the continuation of our species."

Chris Moroney, president of the New South Wales Council of Churches said that Australian Christians "welcome this statement from our prime minister which shows that he is supportive of the traditional views of marriage and the family that are the basis on which our society has been built and which guarantee its survival. Indeed this understanding of marriage is the very cornerstone of our society," said Moroney. "It is encouraging for the churches to see this unambiguous stand from the political leaders of our nation. . . We offer them our warmest support in this stand."

GLEANINGS HERE AND THERE

ROME, Italy (EP)—The Vatican has announced the establishment of a worldwide campaign against the recognition of same-sex marriage. The campaign encourages lay people to speak and act out against the recent gains that they gay marriage movement has made in Canada, the U.S., and Europe. The document describing the campaign, titled "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons" was released July 31 and requests that governments not give homosexual marriages the same status as traditional marriages. Official Catholic doctrine forbids discrimination against homosexuals but also demands that they remain celibate.

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CHICAGO, Ill. (EP)—A Chicago couple has sued the city and the Chicago parks service, claiming officials violated their freedom of speech and religion. Robert and Mildred Tong said in the July 22 lawsuit that the park district had treated them unfairly by refusing to let the Tongs write a religious message on a brick used to pave the center of the playground. The bricks were being sold as part of a fund-raiser. The Tongs paid \$50 for a brick for their three children. They wanted the brick to read: "Missy, EB & Baby: Jesus is the Cornerstone. Love, Mom & Dad. The park district told the Tongs it would not accept commemorative bricks with a religious message. The Tongs told local Chicago media they believe it is their duty to "evangelize and equip children to stand for Jesus in our community, our city, our nation and our world."

VENTURA, Calif. (EP)—Ever wonder what's going through the minds of those sweet little cherubs as they file out of children's church or devour their juice and cookies during vacation Bible school? Barna Research Group's latest report shows that 80 percent of young people recall some important insight or category of lessons learned during their early days of church attendance, though few said they came out understanding enough of the Bible so that they could base their decisions on its principles. The California-based independent marketing research company performed interviews with 305 people ages 13 through 18. "Unfortunately, less than one out of every 10 churched teenagers has a biblical worldview. In other words, the result of their involvement at a church is that they can recite some religious facts, they made some friends and they had fun. That's wonderful, but we also find that most of them have neither accepted Christ as their savior nor altered the basis on which they make their moral and ethical decisions in life," Barna reported on the company's Web site. The Barna Research Group Ltd. Has been studying cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors since 1984.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—U.S. House lawmakers took a stand for life on July 15, when they voted to cap funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The House of Representatives voted 216-211 to cap taxpayer funding for the UNFPA to fiscal years 2004 and 2005 at \$25 million per year. The State Department had requested \$50-million for the organization. It also restored President Bush's authority to deny that funding, if he determines that the United Nations fund is involved with implement-

ing forced-abortion policies in other countries.

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (EP)—Visitors to the Grand Canyon will no longer see Bible verse plaques that have been displayed along the South Rim for more than 30 years, though some of the canyon's formations will keep the names of Hindu gods. According to the Associated Press, complaints from the Arizona American Civil Liberties Union prompted the National Park Service to remove three bronze plaques quoting Psalms 68:4, 66:4 and 104:24 from structures at Hermits Rest, Lookout Studio and Desertview Tower. Department of the Interior officials determined that the verses—placed by The Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary in Phoenix in the late 60s—were not appropriate for federal public facilities in light of the First Amendment's separation of Church and state. The Park Service plans to clean the signs and return them to the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary.

MADISON, Wis. (EP)—A federal judge has ordered a Wisconsin city to remove a Ten Commandments monument from a public park, even though the city no longer owns the land the monument sits on. According to the Associated Press, U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb said the display still violates the separation of Church and state despite the fact that the town of La Crosse sold the property last year to the Eagles Club, which installed the monument in 1965. The Madison-based Freedom From Religion Foundation had challenged the constitutionality of the monument. Crabb said the city's sale of the land was simply an attempt to "disguise its intent" to advance religion.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (EP)—The General Synod of the United Church of Christ called upon the Boy Scouts of America to change its policies banning homosexuals from membership and leadership during its conference in Minneapolis Sunday, July 13. "Discrimination against anyone based on sexual orientation is contrary to our understanding of the teachings of Christ," said the resolution. The resolution passed, but not without some discussion from both sides of the issue. Some of the delegates questioned the motives of those that supported the resolution. "I ask you to reconsider your attack on this American institution," said James Haun, a volunteer scout leader and a member of Zion New Providence Church in Strasburg, Pennsylvania. "Scouting is portrayed as anti-gay and perverted. This must be challenged. This has everything to do with activists enlisting Scouting into their crusade."

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—Tax dol-

lars will continue to pay for controversial sexual habits studies, thanks to a failed attempt by the Republican Party to have the funding removed. Rep. Pat Toomey, R-Pa, and Rep. Christ Chocola, R-Ind., offered legislation that would have prohibited many of these studies, but the proposal failed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 212-210. The money funds such projects as studying Asian prostitutes in San Francisco, sexual habits of elderly men, and arousal experienced by women watching pornography. "I just don't understand how we can justify spending taxpayer money on studying American-Indian-Alaskan-native-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-and-two-spirited-individuals and their psychological problems," Toomey told Focus on the Family. "I think that most people don't have any idea that this is going on, and I think when they find out they're appalled by this kind of stuff."

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—Did you really think that you were working for yourself all this time? Not according to Americans for Tax Reform, which says that once all the costs of government are taken into account, on the average Americans have to work until July 11 to pay all their taxes. Americans needed 193 days to get to that point. Activists say that though it helps taxpayers when Congress passes tax relief bills, it also needs to concentrate on reigning in spending. "There is now another challenge in front of us as activists, and that is to create the conditions that make it possible for elected officials to say not only 'no' to tax increases but 'no' to the spending interests," Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform told Focus on the family. This year's tax relief day fell 4.5 days later than it did in 2002.

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. (EP)—The CBS affiliate in Raleigh, N.C., won't air a reality show that offers a couple \$1 million to stay married for a year because station officials say the show demeans marriage. According to the Associated Press, the 11-episode show "Cupid" was scheduled to premiere the evening of July 9. The show, produced in part by "American Idol" judge Simon Cowell, allows a young woman to audition potential husbands. Each man has 30 seconds to impress her, and she will date the 10 finalists. Voters will determine the winner, and the couple gets \$1 million if they stay married for a year. WRAL-TV General Manager, Jim Hefner said the station's parent company, Capital Broadcasting, has pulled programs before because of content. WRAL's sister station, WRAZ/Fox 50, pulled "Married By America" in March. The company also pre-empted "Who Wants to Marry a Multimillionaire" in 2000. "We're not trying to be holier than thou, but eventually you have to draw a line in what you believe to be

acceptable in the marketplace," Hefner told The Fayetteville Observer.

INDIA (EP)—World Vision, citing statistics released by India's National AIDS Control Organization, says that India appears to be creeping closer to an AIDS catastrophe. The number of AIDS cases reported to authorities jumped more than 15 percent to more than 4.58 million infections in one year. This is the most dramatic increase the country, which numbers over one billion, has seen. Only South Africa has a larger HIV-positive population. It has 5 million reported infections in a population of 42 million. There are fears in India that HIV infection has now crossed over from high-risk groups to the general population. For the first time, HIV infection in pregnant women has crossed the one percent mark. "India is similar in many ways to Africa," said Jayanth Vincent of World Vision. "Ignorance and a high level of stigma keep many from reporting their status. As the prevalence increases, the government's response is increasing. But with a population 51 percent greater than sub-Saharan Africa, India's epidemic could have apocalyptic repercussions."

RATHGAMA, Sri Lanka (EP)—Attacks on five Christian churches on Aug. 2 in Sri Lanka were allegedly led by Buddhist monks. Compass Direct reports that over 50 monks led an initial attack on a Methodist church in the town of Rathgama on July 27 that was thwarted by police. Buddhist monks and a crowd of young people threw rocks and hurled verbal assaults against the church and threatened to burn down 18 churches in the district of Galle. The monks returned to the church on Aug. 2 and threw stones, destroyed pews inside the church and severely beat two church workers. Churches in the towns of Thanamalwila, Lumugamvehera and Hikkaduwa were also attacked by mobs led by monks. Outside the church in Rathgama, local Buddhist villagers set up a watch to protect the church grounds. They said they were angered by the actions of the monks and were willing to protect the church with their own lives, despite the fact that they were not Christians.

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GLEANINGS

THESE BAPTISTS THAT I HAVE MET

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 – 2002)

The editor has been a Baptist preacher for over twenty-four years. Over the years I have met a number of different kinds of Baptists. In this article I want to list them and what they remind me of.

First, there are Buzzard Baptists. These come to church only when some person dies. Like Jacob and Esau they gather only at death.

Second, I mention Polecat Baptists. These are the people who keep a stink going all the time in the church with their long tongues (Prov. 6:16-19; 22:10; 26:20; I Tim. 5:13; Jas. 1:26; 4:11). Even their mouth stinks (Mark 7:20-23).

Once I heard of a Polecat Baptist who came to the pastor and said she wanted to lay her tongue upon the altar and rededicate her life to the Lord. The pastor told her not to lay her tongue upon the altar, for it would hang off on all four sides.

Third, I mention Idiot Baptists. These are willingly ignorant of the Word of God (II Pet. 3:5; Isa. 1:3-4). Some of them have been converted so long that they ought to be teachers of others, but they have never learned **“the first principles of the oracles of God”** (Heb. 5:12-14). One little girl said to her mother, an Idiot Baptist: “Mother, if the Bible is God’s book, let’s give it back to Him. We never read it anyway.”

Fourth, I call to mind Bulldozer Baptists. They push and shove every person who gets in their way. A good number of preachers and deacons fit into this group. Such Baptists rule or ruin; they destroy everything in their path (Acts 8:3). Some of these are like Queen Jezebel and try to destroy God’s preachers (Ps. 105:15).

Fifth, I ask you to consider the Driftwood Baptists. They just drift along with the tide. They follow the crowd. They are far more concerned with the path of convenience than the path of conviction. They will not stand up for the truth when it is under attack (II Tim. 4:16).

Sixth, there are Tightwad Baptists. Some of these use their money to pressure the preacher to do what they want him to do. Others in this group steal God’s money like Judas did (John 12:1-6). They are totally unlike

many of the early Christians who gave their all to the church (Acts 4:37).

Seventh, there are Deadheaded Baptists. These are the backsliders who might as well be dead so far as the church is concerned (Rev. 3:1). Most of these profess salvation but do not possess it. They are nothing but dead weight around the church’s neck.

Eighth, there are the Mooneyed Baptists. Down South we called a person “mooneyed” if he had bad sight. Hence these people see no need of missionary work or witnessing for Christ (Rev. 3:18). They cannot see any thing, which the church needs. They have their eyes completely closed to the white harvest fields of lost souls (John 4:35).

Ninth, there are the Smart Aleck Baptists. They are the know-it-alls of the church. They know what every verse in the Bible means. The preacher could learn much from being taught by them. They think they are as smart as God and getting smarter every day. They think themselves to be something when they are nothing.

Tenth, there are the Fence-Straddling Baptists. They are unstable in all their ways (Jas. 1:8). You think sometimes they are all out for God, then at other times all out for the Devil. They pride themselves in being able to serve both God and mammon (Matt. 6:24). Like Reuben of old, they are as **“unstable as water”** (Gen. 49:4).

Eleventh, there are Grasshopper Baptists. When the preacher preaches a sermon, which they need and send it toward them, they jump out of the way. They see the failures of others but never their own. Often they leave the church after a powerful message saying, “If old so-and-so had been here today the preacher would have told him off.”

Once upon a time one of the Grasshopper Baptists was the only one who came to church due to bad weather. The pastor let him have it. This time it was not easy to jump out of the way. When the Grasshopper Baptist got ready to leave he said to the pastor, “I know that you are supposed to feed the sheep, but you gave me enough today to feed the whole flock.”

Twelfth, there are Smallfry Baptists. These are the babes in Christ who desire the milk of the Word (I Pet. 2:2). Physical age has no bearing upon this class, for they are among the young and old. They require a lot of the preacher’s attention. He must change their diapers often and keep a good bottle of the milk of the Word in their mouth.

Thirteenth, there are the Toadfrog Baptists. They are always puffed up about some word that a brother has

said or a statement by the preacher. They carry a chip on their shoulder because a wooden block is higher up.

Fourteenth, there are Scarecrow Baptists. They are the hypocrites in the church. Because they hold membership people stay away from church (Rom. 2:24; Matt. 23:13). They do great harm to the church of the living God.

Fifteenth, there are Strip Tease Baptists. They go around without enough clothes on their bodies. They wear modern apparel rather than modest apparel (I Tim. 2:9-12). Some cows are better dressed. Some do not wear enough clothes to make a Jay Bird a pair of socks!

Sixteenth, there are Beer-Guzzling Baptists. These are the social drinkers in the church. They are often filled with alcohol but not with the Spirit of God (Eph. 5:18).

Seventeenth, there are the Bible-believing Baptists. Thank God for these! They believe every word in the Bible and do their very best to practice it at all times. These keep the preacher encouraged in his work and carry on the work of the church. If it had not been for these most pastors would have quit preaching long ago. Oh, may the Lord fill our churches with Bible-believing Baptists and rid us of these undesirable Baptists!

AN INVITATION TO WHAT?

By Dana L. Douglas

The question of giving an invitation has plagued many Gospel preachers for the last hundred years. I believe that the question can be answered only after examining what we are inviting the recipients to.

The system of concluding an evangelical sermon, by inviting people to physically move to an appointed place did not find its beginnings until the 19th century. We commonly credit Charles Finney (1792-1875) with the modern invitation system that is in place today in most “Christian” circles. Charles Finney called people forward during a service to a position, which he called the “anxious seat.” He defended the practice on the grounds that it served the purpose which baptism had in the days of the apostles. However, he never could cite scriptural reference, which contained a divine command to occupy an “anxious seat.” At some point later the “anxious seat” became the “enquiry room,” the “mourner’s bench,” the “altar” and now commonly it is simply the front of the church. This practice was foreign to the first Church of our Lord Jesus, as it was to our Bap-

tist forefathers since that time until the last century. Its earliest practice is found eighteen hundred years too late to be traced to Christ.

My greatest concern with the modern invitation system is found in its implications. For confirmation of its implications, listen to the words of its best-known advocate Billy Graham. “God is speaking to you. Get up and come right now. . . a little voice says, ‘You ought to come to Christ.’ Come now quickly! You may never have another moment. You have to come by faith. You need Christ, you get up and come. . .”

The implication is that coming to Christ and coming to the front of a church or stadium are synonymous terms. It furthermore implies that we respond to the invitation to come to the appointed place, by faith. The hearer is coerced into coming to the front of a church and then to repeat a prayer or sign a card, and only after having done such are they told, “You are saved!” It is obvious that the carnal mind associates the act of coming forward, repeating a prayer and signing a card with the work that can only be done by the Holy Spirit of God, the work of regeneration. The invitation system implies that regeneration is conditioned by the performance of some physical act. It also renders support to the image of God as someone waiting, pleading and even begging for the lost sinner to come. Let it be said that God has never begged helplessly at the front of a church for a lost sinner to come to Him, but in fact the Scripture teaches that we are unable to come to Him unless the Spirit of God draws us (John 6:44).

The invitation system also implies that we have the ability to choose Christ. Is it the decision of the sinner that results in regeneration or reprobation? Is the only thing necessary for this saving work willingness on the part of the sinner? According to Romans 9:16, it is not of him who wills or acts, but of God that shows mercy! What effect does the act of coming to the front of the church have upon the one who is lost? It may leave him deceived into thinking that he has now made himself acceptable unto God, but ultimately it leaves him unchanged! The modern invitation system has deceived many a lost sinner and filled “churches” with countless numbers of unregenerate members!

I oppose the inviting of lost sinners to come to the front of a church for the following reasons:

1. It lacks scriptural support.
2. It is deceptive by its implications.
3. It removes the focus from grace and places it on the act of coming.
4. It amounts to nothing more than

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a "salvation" by works.

5. It plays upon the emotions and psyche of dead men, who are incapable of spiritual discernment.

So, is it ever appropriate to give an invitation? It is always appropriate to invite lost sinners to come to Christ. There is but one place for a wicked sinner to turn, and it is not the front of a church, stadium or building, but to Jesus Christ. This will only happen by the enabling of the Holy Spirit of God, but we must point them there! Many preachers today think that the lost will not be saved without their counsel, encouragement or coercion.

What we ought to do for the lost sinner is preach the glorious Gospel! Psychological and emotional tactics are not necessary or appropriate when the Spirit of God is at work.

I do not believe that every invitation to come to the front of a church is totally inappropriate. Many times we invite those to come who wish to follow the Lord in scriptural baptism uniting with one of His churches, or to join a church by statement or the reception of a letter of recommendation. While a time of invitation might be granted for that, I believe it to be inappropriate to invite a lost sinner to the front of a church that he might be saved! Salvation is of the LORD! (Jonah 2:9).

A Partaker of Other Men's Sins

By Milburn Cockrell

(1941 - 2002)

"Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (I Tim. 5:22).

The subject under consideration in my text is ordination to the ministry. That is what the expression about laying on of hands has reference to (I Tim. 4:1; II Tim. 1:7). The hasty admission of men to the ministry would result in ministerial irregularities and a reproach upon the cause of Christ. It is worth remembering that Christ chose the 12 apostles only after they had been with Him a year and after He prayed all night (Luke 6:12-16). Paul and Barnabas ordained elders only after they had proven themselves as to their character and conduct (Acts 14:21-23). Any church who ordains a wicked man or a heretic to the office of minister or missionary becomes in some degree responsible for his sins and heresy.

The words: **"Keep thyself pure,"** discloses that it is the duty of pastor and people to be pure in heart, word, and conduct (II Cor. 7:11; Phil. 4:8; I John 3:3). We must be pure ourselves so we can demand purity in those who would be ordained to the sacred office.

We must not share in the iniquities of others. We must not join with them in doing wrong. We are not to patronize them in their wicked business. We are not to be known as their companions and friends. We must not share in their unlawful gains. We must not furnish them a gun, or a car, or a knife for evil deeds. We must not furnish them money for unlawful enterprises. All who do so are sharers in the sins of others.

A NATION CAN PARTAKE

Divine Revelation makes it plain that when a nation tolerates wrong God holds the citizens responsible. **"But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel"** (Josh. 7:1). Please note that Achan only committed the sin (Josh. 22:10), but it was charged by God to the nation of Israel. Because of tolerating this sin even in ignorance Israel lost the battle with Ai and 36 Israelites died in the war.

God informed Joshua of the problem: **"And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you"** (Josh. 7:10-12).

Joshua did not ignore the problem and hope that it would somehow vanish. He did not sweep it under the rug so as to create no problems for himself among the Israelites. He did not denounce the Lord for telling him about the sin in Israel, nor did he accuse God of trying to stir up trouble. Joshua set out with all speed and

determination to discover the culprit and to remove the problem (Josh. 7:16-18). Achan was discovered and he confessed his sin (Josh. 7:20-21). Despite his confession, Joshua ordered Achan, his family and his animals executed (Josh. 7:22-26).

The account of the sin of Achan proves that no man sins to himself. Achan's sin resulted in the death of 36 Israeli soldiers, his own death, and the death of his family. These partook of his sin and they shared in his punishment. Those who speak of personal liberty and the right to do their own thing are not Christians. They are libertines, Communists, anarchists, humanists, evolutionists, one-worlders, or members of secret orders. Such language has no place in the vocabulary of a Christian. Romans 14:7 says: **"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."**

Surely the judgment of God is upon the United States of America. Within our government are secret societies who are working to destroy our republic and establish a single world government with a world dictator. Backed by millions of dollars, they are determined to destroy our Constitution and close the doors of our churches. Their goal is to establish a new world order without any moral standards. Most Americans are ignorant of this, and what few know about it are doing almost nothing about it. This is said to the shame of God's own people.

Then consider how this nation tolerates abortion, adultery, homosexuality, murder, gambling, stealing in high places, drinking, cursing, lying, the abuse of children, and countless other things in direct violation of the teachings of the Bible. Those who elect officials in the nation, state, and county are responsible for these evils in our land. Surely God holds His elect responsible since we help to elect many of the leaders who promote these evils.

Christians have a moral responsibility to denounce evil wherever it appears. We should vote out of office those elected officials who rob the citizens by excessive taxation and constant increases in their salaries. We should only vote for those individuals who serve well and who are in line with our Christian principles, regardless of their race, name, or political party. Failure to do such things will make us partakers of the sins of the powers that govern us.

A FAMILY CAN PARTAKE

A family can partake of another person's sin. This is seen in the Scriptures. After giving commands about true worship God warned: **". . .visiting the iniquity of the fathers**

upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Ex. 20:5). It is written in Numbers 14:18: **". . .and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."** In Jeremiah 32:18 it is written: **". . .recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name."**

How does God do this? First, the parents set an example before their children. Then the children follow in their steps and partake of their punishment. Ezekiel 16:44 declares: **"As is the mother, so is her daughter."** If the father is a drunkard God will punish him for his drunkenness, and if his son follows in his footsteps God will equally punish him for his sins also. If a mother plays the whore God will punish her for her whoredom, and if her daughter follows in her steps God will equally punish her for her sins also.

Second, a parent, or a son, or daughter, can partake of the sins of another member of the family. Let me illustrate. Suppose the father commits incest with one of his daughters. The mother and other children have a moral and civil obligation to report this crime to the proper authorities. Failure to do so makes them a partaker of the sin of the father of the family. The same may be said of relatives who know of this abuse and do not report it to prevent family shame.

In the nation of Israel the citizens had the responsibility to report to the authorities any man who offered his children to Molech. There was judgment when this was not done: **"And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth his seed unto Molech, and kill him not: Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people"** (Lev. 20:4-5). Lamentations 5:7 says: **"Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities."**

A CHURCH CAN PARTAKE

First, my text makes it clear that when a church ordains a man to the ministerial office in haste when he is disqualified they are a partaker of his sins and heresy. Zealous churches I fear do not take I Timothy 5:22 seriously enough. Too often novices, heretics, thieves, liars, adulterers, and racketeers are ordained to the

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ministry. Great reproach is brought upon the ordaining church and upon the cause of Christ in general. The churches are the blame for these unworthy preachers they have turned out, and they are partakers of their sins, and they will answer to God for their conduct. Churches would do well to lay ordaining hands suddenly on no man. They should be very careful and cautious about the men they ordain, lest they sanction wickedness and error.

Second, a church may be a partaker of another man's sin by failing to rebuke him. **"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear"** (I Tim. 5:20). There is only one verse between this verse and my text. The context in I Timothy 5 is about elders in the church, or ministers of the gospel, although the rule may also be applicable to others. The primary thought in I Timothy 5:20 is the need for a church to rebuke an elder in it who is convicted of living in scandalous sin.

Modern Baptist churches have ignored or tried to water down the meaning of this verse. Liberals among us have twisted and turned it to mean that we should hide the sins of immoral ministers and missionaries so as not to hurt the cause of Christ. It has never occurred to them that to disobey the Scripture is the way to hurt the cause of Christ. Their unwillingness to obey I Timothy 5:20 either precedes from a double portion of moral cowardliness, or possibly from a desire for peaceful coexistence. I mean by peaceful coexistence: Don't tell people my sins, and I will not expose yours.

Most of the time when a preacher proves immoral or heretical his chief defender is another preacher. Churches generally have stronger moral convictions than their pastor. This is due to the fact that most young preachers have been taught by older preachers to tolerate every known evil under the sun in their churches in order to have "the fastest growing church in town." Some preachers seek peace at any price so that the money can keep rolling in to denominational headquarters. The faith has been discarded in order to promote finance.

Any church and pastor that tolerates a minister or missionary in its membership who is a thief, a criminal, an adulterer, a liar, or any sort of religious racketeer, is a partaker of his sins and must share in his punishment. Any church and pastor who has knowledge of the wrong doing of one of its ministers and does not inform

other churches are adding sin to sin and increasing the judgment of God upon themselves for their disobedience to His Word. Such persons will not be guiltless at the judgment seat of Christ.

According to Scripture, when such an immoral minister or missionary is discovered, the church must degrade him from office and withdraw fellowship from him in a public manner and inform the churches of their action. **"Rebuke before all"** denotes that the offender must be reprovved before the whole church. This public rebuke will at once vindicate the church from complicity with the sin and deter other ministers from falling into it: ". . .that others also may fear." One of the main reasons a good number of preachers are falling into open sin is because churches are not obeying I Timothy 5:20. Some brethren seem to think they are smarter than God, and, therefore, can change His moral rules for the better. Such men are traitors to Christ and a curse upon His churches. May the Lord give us some churches like the Ephesian church in the New Testament. Christ said of them: **"I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say that they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars"** (Rev. 2:2).

Third, a church may be a partaker of the sin of any member they fail to discipline. The Bible teaches that immoral members are to be excluded from the fellowship of the church. Paul told the Corinthian church concerning the incestuous man: **"Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person"** (I Cor. 5:13). Had the church failed to exclude this man the whole church would have been leavened with wickedness (I Cor. 5:6-13; 12:26). The church did act wisely by excluding the man. By doing so she vindicated herself.

Modern churches tolerate every evil under the sun among their members. No one is excluded for even the worst of crimes. Such churches are in apostasy. They are no more than religious societies and social clubs. Christ has forsaken them because of their worldliness (Rev. 3:14-22). How tragic that the chaste virgin has become a whore!

Fourth, a church may be a partaker of another man's sins by membership in an association, or convention, or a Bible fellowship which contains immoral persons and heretics. In Revelation 18:4 God calls upon His people to come out of all forms of Babylonianism: **"And I heard**

another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Any church that stays in a convention, or association, or Bible fellowship that has liberal professors in its colleges and seminaries is a partaker of these men's sins and heresy. Any church or pastor who associates with a mercenary who poses as a missionary is a partaker of his evil deeds.

Sometimes pastors and churches say that when they send their money to mercenaries who pretend to be missionaries that they gave their money with good intentions, and that they cannot be held responsible for its misuse. This is about like Pilate washing his hands at the trial of Christ. Such a saying may appease their seared conscience, but it will not remove their guilt before a holy God. Pastors and churches are responsible for the men they support, and if the men they support are evil and heretical, they are a partaker of their sins and will share in their plagues. Churches have an obligation to know what they sponsor and support in the way of teachers in religious schools and colleges and missionaries. Writing to the church at Thessalonica, Paul said: **"And we beseech you, brethren, to KNOW them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you"** (I Thess. 5:12).

INDIVIDUALS MAY PARTAKE

II John 10-11 says: **"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."** If a false teacher who corrupts the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ comes to your door, don't let him in the door nor wish him well. Don't entertain him as a minister of Christ. Don't give him any reason to use your name or influence in propagating his errors.

According to II John 11, even to give him a friendly greeting is to seem to approve of his doctrine. You must not wish a false preacher well in his career of sin and error. Rather, you must seek to convert him from his error (Jas. 5:19-20), not condone him in his wrong. If you justify and excuse him in his religious errors he will continue in them. He will never repent and embrace the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Today we have many false cults who come to the door of our house, asking for the privilege of coming into our home and telling us that Jesus Christ was not God and that there is no real burning Hell. To allow such people into our house, or give them money

for their booklets, or wish them well, is to be a partaker of their evil deeds. These deniers of the faith are destroyers of souls. Therefore, let Christians be very cautious!

CONCLUSION

1. Christians have a responsibility to separate from evil. Our Lord was **"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"** (Heb. 7:26). We must be also if we are to follow in His steps. Isaiah 52:11 says: **"Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD."** II Corinthians 6:17 declares: **"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."** II Timothy 2:19 commands us: **"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."**

If a minister or missionary is found to be either immoral or heretical, let him be exposed and subjected to public rebuke and scorn. To deny that the problem exists will not make it go away. To allow it to continue in the church is to make the church a partaker of this man's evil deeds. To continue to tolerate this known evil is a low form of betrayal of Jesus Christ and an open denial of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. If members cannot get their church to separate from such a person, then those members who believe the Bible should separate from such a liberal church.

2. It is not only the responsibility of a church to separate from moral evil, but it is also her duty to reprove it: **"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him"** (Lev. 19:17). **"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"** (Eph. 5:11). According to the Bible, a Christian who is immoral is to be subjected to public rebuke and scorn so as to prevent his cancer from spreading to others. I Timothy 5:20 says: **"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."**

3. Churches and pastors must keep informed as to the religious schools and colleges they support and pray for. They must keep tab on the missionaries they support. No mission work is above giving a financial report as to how much money they receive and how it is spent. It is the height of foolishness and the depth of stupidity to make your church treasurer give a financial report and then exempt missionaries. The first mark of a religious racketeer is that he gives no

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report of how much money he receives and how it is spent.

4. Churches and pastors need to pray for and support sound schools and colleges that are church-authorized. We need to support true New Testament missionaries who preach the gospel in the region beyond. By doing this we can share in their rewards. Jesus Christ said: **"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. . ."** (Matt. 10:41). I Samuel 30:24 declares: **"But as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike."** It is possible to partake of the good deeds of others. This is far more desirable than to be a partaker of their evil deeds!

5. As members of the human race we are all partakers of Adam's original

sin. But those who trust in Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, are partakers of the benefits of His blood atonement. How glorious to be **"partakers of the heavenly calling"** (Heb. 3:1). Oh, to be made by God **"partakers of the Holy Spirit"** (Heb. 6:4) and **"partakers of the divine nature"** (II Pet. 1:4).

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, no unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things come the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (Eph. 5:3-7).

rades and celebrations, they are ridiculed and often physically attacked. When conservative speakers try to speak on university campuses (those bastions of "free speech") they are often booed, shouted down and shown utter disrespect by the preachers of tolerance.

Libraries traditionally have excluded pornography from their shelves because pornography just does not measure up to the overall objective and mission of libraries. Why should they begin to offer it on the Internet, even to adults? Pornography has no redeeming value. It is immoral, ungodly, demeaning, and destructive. It should not be tolerated anywhere at anytime, but especially in public places such as libraries. (www.miniedition.com)

South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH	150.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Raleigh, NC	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	60.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH	75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	200.00
Subscriptions	141.00
Dividing checks	500.00
Sub Total	\$5,441.92
TOTAL	\$12,293.68
EXPENDITURES:	
Wages	3,680.00
Printing (2 months)	1,006.29
Postage	1,107.94
FICA taxes	281.47
Dividing checks	500.00
Total Expenditures	6,575.70
	5,717.98
Bank charge	-18.65
ENDING BALANCE	\$5,699.33

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will be a hosting a Bible conference Friday through Sunday, October 17th, 18th, and 19th. The service will begin Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. The Saturday service will begin at 9:30 a.m. with a break for dinner followed by an afternoon service. The Sunday service will begin at 10:00 a.m. and dinner will be served afterward. The dinners will be served at the church building by the ladies of the church. The preachers for our meeting will be Elders Garner Smith, Wayne Adams, Larry Lafferty, Shawn Berry, Troy McGahan, Chris Page, Todd Bryant, and Matt James. There will be special singing by the Bryant family, Sister Donna Lafferty and Adam Lafferty, the Adams family, Sister Terra McGahan, and perhaps by some others also.

The church building is located right on Highway 363 and is 1-1/4 miles south of the intersection of Highways 363 and 371 in Mantachie. For more information, contact Pastor Jeff Short at 662-282-7085 or via email at bbchurch@intop.net.

The Salem Missionary Baptist Church in Willow Hill, IL will have special services September 12th and 13th. Services will start at 7:00 p.m. Friday night and 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning. Planned speakers are Brother Scott Guiley and Lonnie Bennett and they will bring messages that deal with music. For more information contact Pastor Billy Holbrook at holfam5@shawneelink.net or call him at 618-592-3806.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Mini Edition

By Joseph Harris
Chairman of Biblical Studies
Southeastern Baptist College, Laurel, Mississippi



FREEDOM OF SPEECH DOES NOT MEAN FREEDOM FOR FILTH

Occasionally the Supreme Court stumbles across with a fair ruling based on a common sense understanding of the Constitution. The recent decision to uphold the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is the latest example of the triumph of clear thinking. Libraries that receive federal funds must install software filters to protect children from the scourge of filth dominating cyberspace. Hats off to Justices William Rehnquist, Antonin Scalia, Sandra Day O'Connor and Clarence Thomas for having the sobriety of mind needed to make this much important decision.

The misnamed American Civil Liberties Union and the American Library Association have been fighting against CIPA from its birth. Since when does FREEDOM mean liberty from ALL restraints? The Constitution does not have freedom for filth in mind with its guideline for free speech. The framers of the Constitution would be mortified at the blatant misuse, word twisting and "interpretations" that have ensued over the past 40 years.

In the name of free speech and art, an abundance of ungodliness, immorality and anti-God material has satu-

rated society in print, through broadcast media, and now the Internet. The main purpose for restraints or boundaries is protection. Remember this the next time you are visiting the zoo with your family. The bars of restraint between you and the lion are for your protection. Imagine some nut from PETA petitioning to remove all fences and cages. No one would visit a zoo where the animals are not restrained. Laws for decency are often viewed as an attempt to "legislate morality," but even the legislation of morality (which by the way is not necessarily wrong) is for protection. And pornography is dangerous and destructive and therefore protection is required.

Liberals are the biggest hypocrites in the world. They want unlimited expression, except when it crosses their agenda. They will censor the truth about the abomination of homosexuality at the drop of a hat. They will muzzle anyone who preaches abstinence, or promotes Christianity, if given half a chance, while promoting that darling religion of the liberal media, Islam. The road is paved with gold for the ungodly and degenerate as they rush to shove their agenda down the throat of the masses.

Those who preach love and tolerance are often the most bigoted and hateful. When decent people express their displeasure at homosexual pa-

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 7-1-2003 to 7-31-2003

Beginning Balance	\$953.76
RECEIPTS	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Berea B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	200.00
John Otis, Agra, KS	100.00
Anonymous	180.00
	830.00
TOTAL	1,783.76
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	690.00
Postage	15.30
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	705.30
	\$1,078.46
Bank charge	-10.00
BALANCE	\$1,068.46

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,053.32
RECEIPT	
Total	1,053.32
EXPENDITURES:	
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,053.32

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 7-1-2003 to 7-31-2003

Beginning Balance	\$6,851.76
RECEIPTS:	
Arthur D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	37.92
Berea B. B., Mantachie, MS	1,100.00
Berea M. B.C., Mansfield, OH	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN	150.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL	100.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL	25.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	20.00
David Hitt, Paris, TN	15.00
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME	200.00
Faith B. C., Clarksville, TN	100.00
Faith B. C., Seffner, FL	50.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. M, Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Helen Milem, South Point, OH	100.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winton-Salem, NC	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Joseph Dodson, Early, TX	3.00
Joseph Jurzec, Lake-in-the-Hills, IL	25.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	25.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Letson Farrell, Long Beach, MS	125.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	300.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
New Testament B. C., Leivasy, WV	100.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Aztec, NM	25.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	75.00
Ronald D. Street, Morwich, OH	10.00
Rose Beall, Cedarville, WV	80.00



WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans - Norfolk, Virginia

Bush's "Faith - Based" Plan is Challenged



I was recently a subject of a letter to the editor, urging restraint by myself and all others to consider themselves in their enthusiastic support of the Bush administration and his appointees as the champions of religious freedom and the American way.

The writer continues with the criticism of the President's perverse use of the horrific crimes committed on 9/11 to put our Constitution right in the crosshairs of the power brokers who would strip away our freedoms and civil liberties. He continued his thought-provoking letter. His points are well taken and I respect his viewpoints.

WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

He continues: I believe the Bush administration is a wolf in sheep's clothing once you look beyond the rhetoric and publicity stunts.

I disagree.

Bush is a Christian and is fair and courageous. He is honest and dependable, and most people are proud of him as Commander-in-Chief. However, he is a professional politician - how else could he be President?

Religious faith is real. President Bush's father, President Bush the Elder, explained to Tom Brokaw on NBC Nightly News that the current national crisis has shown the Nation that his son's religious faith is real; "this thing about faith - I mean it is real for him. Here's a man who has read the Bible through twice, and it's not to make him holier-than-thou or not to make a political point. It's something that is in his heart, and we see it all the time."

President Bush's genuine Christian faith and his unwavering beliefs in justice and fair play are reasons that he and First Lady Laura will have a second term in the White House.

OUR FOUNDING FATHERS

Our founding fathers understood that our political freedoms are based on Christian faith.

* George Washington in his first Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1789 called upon Americans, "To acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God. . .to be grateful for his benefits and to humbly implore His protection."

* Benjamin Franklin, at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, warned that without God's "Concurring aid we shall succeed in

this political building no better than the builders of Babel."

* Thomas Jefferson in 1781: "God, who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of the Nation be thought secure when we remove their only firm basis, conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God?"

In 1892, before the internationals and moderates came to power, the Supreme Court ruled that our laws and institutions are based upon the teachings of the Bible and that "Our civilization and institutions are emphatically Christian. Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon the teachings of the Redeemer of Mankind."

"FAITH-BASED"

His new White House Office of Faith-based on community initiatives has the noble goal to involve "Faith-based" groups in federally funded social programs, i.e., encourage and back up the charitable work now done mostly by churches, and Salvation Army and other religiously oriented organizations.

This courageous and prompt move puts real meaning into his presidential campaign theme of "Compassionate Conservatism," and caught his detractors off guard. But not for long - Jesse Jackson, morals advisor to Clinton, and Barry Lynn of Wall of Separation fame, are gearing up for all out assault. They can expect support from liberal congressmen and senators, and of course from liberal judges.

His Executive Order for this new office will remove barriers to government cooperation. He requires key departments to modify any current policies that inhibit cooperation, namely: Justice, Labor, Education, Housing and Urban Development and Health and Human Services.

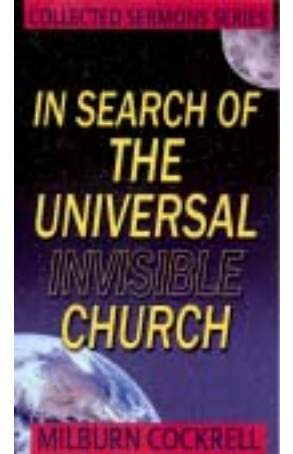


New and Republished Books by Milburn Cockrell

As this paper goes to press the booklet **Backsliding Baptists** by Milburn Cockrell should be in from the printer. The retail price

of this book is \$3.95. Add \$2 for postage and handling. On five or more copies the price is \$2.25 each but add some for postage.

As soon as this new booklet is back from the printer we will be sending the book **The Doctrine of Hell** to be reprinted. Other previously published titles to soon be reprinted are **In Search of The Universal Invisible Church** and **100 Reasons for the Pre-Trib Rapture**. Other new titles expected later this year are **John the Baptist, Matthew 24 & 25, Second Coming, Spiritual Growth** and **The Home**.



REP. SCOTT CRITICIZED

A Hampton Roads lawmaker is intensifying his running battle with the Bush Administration over its plan to increase federal support for "Faith-based" charities, arguing that the White House essentially wants to use tax dollars to support religious bigotry.

Rep. Robert Scott, D-VA of the 3rd District, introduced legislation to nullify a Presidential order that permits churches receiving public funds for charitable works to deny employment to people who don't share their religious views.

As Scott blasted the administration policy, H. Jim Towey, head of the White House office on faith-based charities argued that some religious groups won't provide vital services to the needy if they're forced to hire non-believers.

Towey called on lawmakers to strengthen Bush's executive order. He has sent Congress a position paper urging that it relax anti-discrimination clauses in laws establishing Head Start and other federal social service programs.

BUSH NOT DISCRIMINATED

President Bush is not, in his faith-based plan, discriminating against any religion nor setting up a crisis in our culture. He is making available the

power and bounty of this great nation available to faith-based groups in their dedication to compassion and service. He calls it "Compassionate Conservation."

He deserves cooperation and praise. Liberal editors, unprincipled judges and greedy Congressmen and Senators should be challenged at every turn. The Bush plan is an American plan, in no way threatening our Constitution, but on the contrary, is an open and sensible way to promote the general welfare. It has honor with class.

A SHAMEFUL NOTE

A closing thought: Canada's Professor Eugene Hill of the University of New Brunswick noted Canada's "Day of Prayer (and) National Day of Mourning in which there was no public prayer." A "National Day of Mourning" - but no public prayer!

In contrast, noted the professor, "This past week, the coverage of Americans and their return to spiritual roots was remarkable and so appropriate and characteristic." He then hit a shameful note: "But there remains a great mystery - how people and a country could for forty years, through their attitudes and courts, do everything they could to get every reminder of God. . .out of the public domain and out of public sight and then suddenly, in a very public and government involved way, seek God."

(Captain Evans is a retired U.S. Coast Guard officer and lives in Norfolk, Virginia. Donna Bateman, secretary, helped with this article. Excerpts from my previous articles and news stories from the *Norfolk Virginia Pilot*, June 26, 2003).



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