

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

Evil and Bitter

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts" (Jer 2:19).



Doing an evil thing can lead to bitterness. The evil thing could be any of a number of things: offending another person, deliberately engaging in wickedness, committing a sin against a holy God. The bitter results could be estrangement from others, punishment from society, sadness in your life – even a catastrophe that Heaven may allow to come upon you.

Today, I want us to consider the "evil and bitter." We have as our example, the children of Israel, and their evil behavior, and the bitter results of their wickedness. We

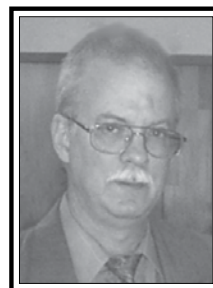
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When Peter Sat Down with the Wicked

By Lucien J. LeSage Jr.
of Pride, Louisiana

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

Notice the Lord did not say "if thou art converted" but "when thou art converted." His faith and conversion that the Lord



spoke of was of God and not of man. The Lord also called him by his former name before the Lord had called him. The Lord spoke this to Peter right before his agony in the garden and the betrayal by Judas. Jesus had told his disciples, **"...All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written,**

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What Does the Bible Say About Favoritism!

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

We wish to deal with an exceedingly practical and important subject-namely our attitude as a church towards different people.

First of all, let us realize that **"God is no respecter of persons"** (See Acts 10: 34). And the same sentiment is expressed in other



passages. God is not impressed by wealth, color or position. To Him a man is a man, regardless. Likewise we should take lessons from His example in this regard.

WHAT SHOULD OUR ATTITUDE, AS CHURCH PEOPLE, BE TOWARD OTHERS?

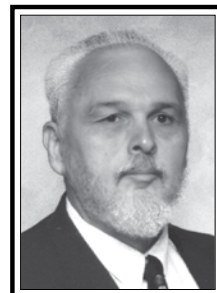
1. To the stranger and visitor who comes we should be cordial and friendly. And Proverbs 18: 24 is suggestive just here. What about YOUR attitude? Do you go

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Gospel Regeneration Will Not Work

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

It is the position of this preacher that regeneration or the new birth is a work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus plainly taught that



according to John 3:6 & 8 where it is written: **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,"** and **"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."** In speaking of the new birth John states the cause behind those who received Christ saying that they **"...were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"** (John 1:13). Additionally, in John 3:3 and 7 where Christ used the term **"born again,"** if you look in a complete King James Version Bible you will see a note in the margin that says: *"again: or, from above."* An examination of the Greek word shows that most of the time the word **"again"** was

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

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

Evil and Bitter

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have as our example, the sinfulness of many others who have gone before, and the sad condition of the lives that they lived as a result of their sinfulness. We have as our example the current condition of our country, and of the people of this land – a land currently full of strife, sin, and wicked behavior, and the bitterness that reigns as a result of the sinfulness of this place where we live.

Is your life bitter? Do you find yourself questioning the value of your existence? If times seem difficult or bitter for you, I would dare to ask, "Have you been living in sin?" Perhaps, if we will examine our lives, it may be that the evil things that attract our attention; and our current focus on the sinful pleasures of this life may be the cause for the lack of joy in our lives, and even the displeasure we may feel when it comes to the service of the Lord. Bitterness can be the result of evil – either on our part, or on the part of others. The only true and lasting remedy for bitterness is to erase the evil and the wickedness out of our lives and out of the lives of those around us. In other words, if it is a bitter person, that person needs Jesus Christ as their Saviour. If it is a bitter people, that people needs a knowledge of the Lord in their midst. If it is a bitter world, that world needs the grace and mercy of God. Our own wickedness and our inclination to evil will rob us of happiness and peace.

AN EVIL THING

The first thing that I want us to consider, is the terrible tragedy which men often commit of "forsaking the Lord" and not serving Him. Remember, our text verse tells us, "... **know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and**

bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God..." A people who had known God, and had been acquainted with the law of God, had, somehow, forsaken that God, and left His law behind. This is an evil thing! The God Who had saved them had every right to expect their allegiance and obedience! And yet, just like all men, the children of Israel were inherently wicked, and their evil behavior was made evident in the fact that they had forsaken the Lord God of their salvation.

Later on, we read in the Book of Jeremiah, "**Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have witholden good things from you. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof**" (Jer 5:25-31)? It seems that many of the Israelites had exchanged their God for the fruits and pleasures of this life. They had exchanged a pursuit of the spiritual, for the pursuit of the mortal and physical. They were successful, in many ways, in achieving physical riches and a measure of peace in the satisfying

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of their carnal desires. However, their mortal successes had guaranteed their spiritual failures and had brought damnation upon them.

It is an evil thing for any nation to reject the God that saves them in favor of a pursuit of earthly riches and pleasure! And yet, this is what the nations and societies of men have done – perhaps none more incredible and awful than the case of the children of Israel in the past, and the case of our nation of the United States, today. Mankind owes service to the Creator. **“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them... Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”** (Eccl. 12:1, 13-14). Men and nations who forget and forsake the Creator cannot expect to hold favor with God.

It is not just that the Jew and the people of Jerusalem had forsaken God, but we read that they had also forgotten their fear of God: **“... my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts”** (Jer 2:19). You might say when a person or a people has forsaken their fear of God, that they have lost their “reverence” or even their “respect” for God. The world needs to be reminded, by those of us who still know, that God is worthy of our reverence, our respect, and our fear. When we do not show Him the fear that He deserves, we make it seem as if we can live our lives without Him, and that

we have no need of His blessings or His favors. Even more, a lack of fear and reverence for God shows the sinfulness and wickedness of men, in that we demonstrate the absurd notion that God is not able or worthy to judge us for our actions. Do not be deceived! God is not ignorant of our sins and our wicked devices! Nor will He fail to hold men accountable.

Actually, a belief in God, and a fear and respect for God, is good for all people to demonstrate. In this manner, societies can hold men and women accountable to a certain godly standard; and, in this manner, men’s actions are tempered with a fear of being judged by a God Who is worthy and able to judge all men. When a society is conducted with an absence of this fear of God, then that ungodly people is bound to devolve into a more and more wicked society.

I believe this healthy fear of God is something that men are naturally born with. Of course, our consciences are seared, and as we age, we grow further and further from God. But, at the beginning, and even (perhaps) on some level throughout our lives, deep within our souls, we know that there is a God, and there will one day be an account given unto Him. I believe that it goes against human nature to forsake God and to fail to recognize and act upon our inherent need to worship God. **“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God**

of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee” (Deut 32:1-6)?

To forsake God and to lose our fear of Him, at least a public acknowledgement of Him, is not good for the individuals amongst mankind, nor for the societies of men. The restraint that a knowledge and fear of God imposes upon the societies of men is of great benefit to mankind. Of course, the very societies that ought to turn to the Lord and respect His ways are the very societies that will forsake Him. In the end, the people that forsake the Lord will be destroyed and overcome by the very sin and evil which they pursue. And, history will show that the God that they forsook was the very salvation that they needed. If there is no fear of the Lord, no reverence for Him, no respect for Him, no terror of His judgment the result will be wickedness and utter destruction. **“Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it”** (Jer. 6:18-19).

BITTERNESS

So, the children of Israel had engaged in wickedness. They had demonstrated an incredible evil in that they had forsaken the God Who made them and saved them. They had demonstrated great evil in that they showed no fear of the God Who was, and is sovereign

over all. The God to Whom we must all give an account of our deeds. Well, what was the result of the “evil thing” that the children of Israel had done? Quite simply, the result was bitterness. Bitterness and regret in this life, and an eternity of bitterness, pain and suffering in the lake of fire if they did not repent of their wickedness and return to the Lord God as their Saviour. **“Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts”** (Jer. 2:19).

I want you to know that no people who have forsaken the Lord can expect good at the hands of God. I believe that it is preposterous to imagine that any man, woman, or even people or nation, can forsake God, show no fear or reverence for Him, and then hope to find an answer in Him for the troubles that beset them merely by invoking the name of the God Whom they once served! Such evil and wicked behavior will result only in bitterness. The Lord will not bless such a person or such a people! They may call upon Him, but He will not hear.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord God let the people of Judah know that their way was become bitter, and they could not count on the goodness and the blessings of God because of the wicked and evil ways of the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. The people would receive no good at God’s hands. Instead, they would find that there is bitterness in an ignorance or a denial of God. **“Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee;**

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this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart" (Jer. 4:18). Their way was become bitter. The joy and pleasures of this life that they had found in the pursuit of earthly riches and wicked idolatry were only very fleeting, and all that was left was bitterness. The joys of carnal pleasure that they had hoped would last their lifetimes were now taken away, and the Lord would grant them only bitterness as a result of their evil and wicked behavior.

Though these things were true in the case of the city of Jerusalem, in reality, these things are true in the life of every person, and in the lives of every people, society, or nation. This simple truth will always, eventually, be fulfilled: sin and wickedness will ultimately lead to destruction and ruin. There is no lasting peace for the wicked. **"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked"** (Isa. 57:20-21). They may attain to some level of success in their pursuit of wickedness and the "evil thing," but that joy is only carnal, and that pleasure is only for a season. They may find that the judgment of God will come upon them in this life. He may allow terrible retribution to be poured out upon them. However, even if they live long lives on this earth; and even if they have success and prosperity in this life, so that the righteous may wonder at God's longsuffering upon the wicked; still, in the end, they will find bitterness in the eternal judgments of God.

However, let me deal with the condition of our world today.

It seems that the wholehearted pursuit of the "evil thing" has brought tragedy and ruin upon the nations and the societies that exist in this world in our day and age. I would dare to say that we are, even now, reaping the bitter rewards of evil, wickedness, and the open glorification of sin in our world today. In today's wicked world, there is a lot of animosity. People cannot get along peaceably with one another. Politeness and civility seem to be vanishing right before our eyes. Is it any wonder? Should we find it amazing that a people that is devoid of a knowledge and a fear of God; a people who is loath to endorse good, but always ready to promote evil; that such a people would lack even the simplest compassions and kindnesses?

We are reaping the bitter results of our evil and wicked ways! It seems that our world lacks even the most basic elements of human love and kindness. The children rebel against their parents. Marriage, as an institution, holds very little value in the eyes of our societies, and the lust that men and women have for each other has replaced the sincere and genuine love which ought to be present in the lives of husbands and wives. Sadly, even the love of mothers for their children is vanishing before our eyes. Bitterness reigns supreme! The members of our society go about expecting the government or the public institutions to supply them with their every need or want; and, if things do not go according to their selfish desires, their lives are full of bitterness, anger, and even hatred towards those whom they suppose have deprived them of their desires.

In the United States of America, there is a lot of rage, but very little kindness. There is a lot of anger,

but hardly any gentleness. There is a lot of hatred, but a nearly total lack of love towards one another. We are, today, a bitter people without a God to serve. This is the inevitable result of the nearly universal and deliberate intent of removing God, especially the name of Jesus Christ, from our societies, from our families, and from the minds and hearts of our children.

Still, men will seek joy and peace in this life, but they will not find an enduring source without the Lord Jesus Christ. Men will seek to satisfy their desires and fulfill their earthly pleasures, but they will not find any eternal and lasting satisfaction except they repent, and turn to Jesus Christ as their Saviour and their chiefest pleasure. **"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another"** (Gal. 5:19-26). The love of the physical things, can be an impediment to the love of the spiritual. An absolute and focused pursuit of the physical pleasures and joys, will certainly prevent

any spiritual joy, and will bring a person into Hell. Of course, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to us in the person of the Holy Spirit, our desires are changed, and our focus is now on the spiritual realm. This is the obstacle which the world of men cannot overcome, and the aspect of our hope and joy in this life, which they cannot comprehend. In the Spirit of God, we can taste and see greater pleasures than any that this world can provide! In the Lord Jesus Christ, we can find the grace and the faith to live in a wicked world, all the while enjoying the fruits of the Spirit of God.

However, in the case of those who will indulge only in the works of the flesh, the Scriptures teach us that there will be no final happiness for such a person or such a people. There will be no enduring joy in the lives of a people who reject the Lord God. There will be no peace and there will be no lasting prosperity. Sure, men may succeed in their wicked ways for a while; but just like every nation who has gone before—the Children of Israel, the countless other mighty nations and kingdoms—destruction will eventually find those who forsake the God Who has made them. Ultimately, there is only bitterness for those who rush headlong to do evil. They will suffer personally; or, if they are preserved, and allowed to live out their lives, their posterity or their nation and people will suffer in their place. **"I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword without, and terror within, shall**

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destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs" (Deut. 32:23-25). In fact, there will be no need for the Lord God to actively intervene in the case of a wicked nation in order to bring judgment upon that place. All that He need do is remove His restraining hand, and the minions of the devil and the powers of Hell will be more than happy to bring sorrow, strife, destruction, and misery upon such a people. Do not make the mistake of imagining that the Devil is on the side of those that do evil because he desires their prosperity, happiness, and success! No, the devil will be more than happy to destroy any nation or any people really, any individual as he finds opportunity to do so. The very sin and Satan that many follow after and pursue so diligently will, many times, end up being the source and the means of their sorrow and bitterness in this life.

There is a paradox that exists in the lives of the peoples of this earth. We are prone to pursue evil, and the result is bitterness. We are prone to pursue evil, and yet, in the end, it is the evil that will destroy us. We can say that it is God punishing the people, but the simple truth is that the evil we pursue will rise up and strike us down. This is true on a personal level. And this is true on a national (or even worldwide) level. **"Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the LORD hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them"** (Jer. 2:37). Many will trust in their own wicked ways and in the powers of Hell which they serve. But, in the end, they are led captive

at the will of evil men and spiritual wickedness, and they will find only bitterness and destruction.

Men will do the "evil thing" and pursue it. Men will engage in wickedness and follow after it. And then, when the evil is brought close, and when the wickedness has infiltrated our lives and the core of our societies – then, the powers of the devil and of Hell will bring us to our knees, and will utterly destroy us! **"And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day"** (Amos 8:10).

Many nations and people have forsaken God and gone after evil and wickedness. There will be no widespread happiness among such a people, as the idolatrous nation of Judah in the time of Jeremiah. Instead, we, the people of this world, need the Lord God, the very God that the societies of men have constantly sought to destroy and remove from our lives. We need Him as personal and national Saviour and God. **"Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD"** (Ps. 144:15).

Men spend their time and their efforts and sometimes their entire lives seeking to deny God, forsake His Law, and erase the fear of God from their consciences. And yet, in the end they will find that the evil that they pursue is also their destruction, and without the God that they have forsaken there is no hope for their salvation, and there is no rescue from the clutches of Hell, and there is no remedy for their spiritual sickness and their eternal death! The Scriptures teach us that the people of this

Little Hills By Nathaniel Hille of Plant City, Florida



The Lord & Evangelism #1

Scripture teaches us that after an individual was saved they were "sharing" the gospel with others. A particular instance in John 1:35-46 shows two occasions of this being so. We are told that there were two disciples (followers) of Jesus (v. 37). Andrew, had been called by the Lord to **"...come and see..."** (v. 39); He was a follower of the Lord Jesus. Philip was found of Christ in Galilee and was commanded to **"...Follow me"** (v. 43). Philip went and found Nathanael and spoke unto him of the Christ of the Scriptures (v. 45). The Samaritan woman after having been instructed by the Lord went and told others of the Christ (John 4:25-30); each declared that Jesus was the Christ unto others after meeting Him.

The Scriptures teach by way of principle that those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ will be fishers of men. **"And he saith unto them, Follow me and I will make you fishers of men"** (Matt. 4:19). Scripture does NOT declare that the Lord might, or possibly make one fishers of men, but **"will"** make

you fishers of men. It seems that the absenteeism of fishing for men, in the Biblical sense of the phrase, would declare that one is not a follower of Christ. This is not only true on the individual level, but also on the "church level." Did not Christ tell His church in each of the four Gospels to declare the gospel that men, women, boys, and girls might hear; and hearing might believe; and believing might be saved! **"Go ye therefore and teach all nations [make disciples]"** (Matt. 28:19); **"...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"** (Mark 16:15); **"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"** (Luke 24:47); **"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you"** (John 20:22). So then a church that is not "fishing for men" is not following the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us examine our own lives and the church of our membership of this truth.



earth will be defenseless before the strength of evil. Without God there is no strength to resist evil, nor is there any desire to do that which is right.

What a bitterness! What a bitter conclusion to the lives of wicked men! And yet, there is still hope. There is always hope in Jesus Christ. We need to share

the Gospel with the wicked, the lost, and the dying. Perhaps, the Lord will still save some, and He will rescue them from the gall of bitterness. **"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he"** (Prov. 29:18).



When Peter Sat

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I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad" (Matt. 26:31). So it was in this context that Peter responded, **"...Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death"** (Luke 22:33). It is recorded in Matthew's gospel that he said, **"...Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended"** (Matt. 26:33). And what was Jesus' response to Peter? **"...Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice"** (Matt. 26:34).

Peter was quick to respond and are we not all at times? I believe Peter said this in the energy of the flesh. He thought it true in his mind, but the truth is that we are what we are by the grace of God (I Cor. 15:10). If we are not offended then it will be by God's grace. The truth is that the true Gospel of Jesus Christ is an offense to many and foolishness to others. So the Lord is telling Peter that without His grace relying on the flesh will profit nothing. As He had said before **"the flesh profiteth nothing"** (John 6:63).

It is interesting that Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him three times before the cock crew. Why three times? I may be wrong, but it seems to deny the Son is to deny the Father and the Holy Spirit, all three. If you read the passages you will see that Peter never denied that Jesus was the Son of God or the Christ but only that he was His disciple, and it escalated to the point that he swore and cursed. In the end Peter wept bitterly and was a better Christian as a result. The whole event had converted him and he became a great preacher. But we are no better than Peter and so I

would like to look at a few things that happened here so that we as God's people can watch and pray that we not fall into the same sort of temptation.

Peter's first mistake was to say the word **"I."** He said, **"yet will I never be offended."** That is quite a statement and a whole lot of confidence in himself. It would have been better if he had said, "Oh please Lord give me grace that I would never be offended of you." I am reminded of what Paul said, **"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh"** (Phil. 3:3). Even after Jesus had told Peter that he would deny Him three times yet he still insisted that he would not, and said unto Jesus, **"...Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee..."** And likewise also said all the disciples. How could they doubt the Son of God's words? And yet their confidence in themselves led them to question their Master's prophecy. When they came to take Jesus, we see that Peter was so bold for a bit and cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant. But in his bravery he was actually fighting the plan of God. **"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it"** (John 18:11)? And Matthew (26:53-54) records Jesus as saying, **"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"** Peter has it all out of harmony with God's purpose here, but Peter was told **"when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."**

Then we see that while Jesus was being taken to Caiaphas the

high priest's palace to be judged of the Sanhedrin that Peter followed from **"afar off"** (Matt. 26:58). God help us by His grace not to follow our Lord Jesus from "afar off." Next we see Peter sits down with the servants to see the end of the matter. He is not sitting with the servants of God but with the servants of him who wanted Jesus dead. Luke says that he **"sat down among them"** as if he was with them and one of them. Psalm 26:5 says, **"I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked."** Thus the title of this article, **"When Peter sat down with the wicked."** This was an assembly in the true sense and one of religious evil doers. Even Pilate knew that they had delivered Jesus out of envy (Matt. 27:18).

May the Lord help us in our daily walk not to sit with the assembly of evil doers. We see that Peter even warmed himself by a fire that they had made (Mark 14:54). He was getting comfortable in the midst of the evil doers. God help us not to get comfortable in the midst of them that hate the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Concerning Jesus, even as **"...they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee"** (Matt. 26:67-68)? Peter sat down in the midst of them. He must have been close enough to observe all of this for when he had denied Him the third time the Lord turned and looked upon him. Peter never denied anything about the person of Jesus; that He was the Christ or that He was the Son of God. But he denied that he knew what they were talking about when they accused him of being a disciple of Jesus and he denied that he even knew **"the man"** as he put it. It


went from a simple denial to a denial with an oath (Matt. 26:72) and then finally with a curse and an oath (Matt. 26:74). It is truly amazing that as soon as he denied the Lord for the third time that **"...immediately the cock crew."** How things happen suddenly. There was no delay. When Nebuchadnezzar bragged on himself and the kingdom that he had built for the glory of his own majesty we read **"While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee"** (Dan. 4:31). As soon as Peter denied the third time with cursing and swearing **"the cock crew."**

"AND WHEN THOU ART CONVERTED, STRENGTHEN THY BRETHREN."


We see that when the cock did crow, Peter remembered the words of his Lord and **"he went out, and wept bitterly."** Luke adds that when the cock did crow **"the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter."** That look from his Lord and Master must have pierced his heart. I can only imagine what Peter felt. If the thought brings tears to our eyes, how much more to Peter's. And so we read that he went out and wept bitterly. But, Peter's sorrow was not as the sorrow of Judas or Esau or Cain. Peter's sorrow was a godly sorrow. Paul says, **"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death"** (II Cor. 7:10). Repentance is not just a one time event when the Lord saves us, but is ongoing till our sanctification is complete when we are glorified and with our Lord. Judas' sorrow worked death. He went out and hung himself

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The Noted Pastor



By Todd
Bryant
of
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Is New Testament Giving Optional?

I have little desire to write a lengthy article comparing Old Testament giving with New Testament giving. A simple Google search will yield you months of reading on that topic. I am not sure my opinion could add anything to what many in the past have said. I will offer this, though, many times people are not so much interested in how much they are required to give to the church, but rather how little they can get away with giving. It is that mindset that I would like to quickly address.

Common sense should tell us that the local church is worthy of support. If we want an air-conditioned building with lights and padded pews, somebody is going to have to pay for it. In no way am I suggesting those things are necessary for a group of saved people to be considered a New Testament church. For centuries, congregations operated just fine without those things. Many (if not most) congregations never had a church building until the last few hundred years. Even in the New Testament, we find it common for churches to meet in homes (Rom. 16:5, Col. 4:15, Phil. 1:2). However, in our society, church buildings are deemed as necessary, but they come with a cost... a monetary cost.

New Testament giving is not

spelled out as clearly as giving in the Old Testament. However, that does not mean it is not addressed at all, because it is. Jesus said, **"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"** (Matt. 6:24). When your money becomes more important to you than your service to God, there is a problem. Remember, Paul said our lives should be that of **"...living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God..."** (Rom. 12:1). Nobody is suggesting you should skip a house payment to give an exorbitant amount to the church. Well, there may be some groups out there that would do that, but the Bible does not suggest it. However, the Bible does specifically state that we should sacrifice some worldly things so that we can serve God. And, this would include the giving of our money (which He has given us) to our local church.

One of the biggest hindrances in our society is not the inability of a poor family to give much. Does that happen? Well, certainly. However, from all I have seen, that is not normally the case. Many times those who give least spend the most on luxurious vacations and toys. They live in the biggest homes and drive the finest cars. And while they may declare these things to be "blessings from God," they actually use their money to fund their extravagant lifestyle rather than the Lord's work. In doing so, we make covetousness to be an honorable thing while the Bible calls it **"idolatry"** (Col. 3:5).

Are there religious groups on radio and television and the Internet that are seeking to rob the poor of their money? Absolutely there are! Even in the days of the New Testament, the scribes had such a sway over the people that they devoured widow's

houses while urging a poor widow to give her last cent to the temple (Luke 20:45-21:4). We ought not be surprised when we see the same today. There are those that peddle the Word of God in an attempt to live lavishly off the backs of the poor (II Cor. 2:17). Somehow, such charlatans continue to find support and often from those least able to give it. I have known men and women that have given the vast majority of their income to such "ministries" while their families struggle to put food on their table and shoes on their feet. No Biblically minded New Testament church leader is suggesting robbing from your own kids to support some mega-church where the pastor lives in a \$4 million home.

However, what we cannot do is allow those that have robbed people of their money to drive us to the other end of the spectrum—the end where we keep all we have and do not give anything to the Lord's work. When Paul was collecting an offering for the church at Jerusalem, he expected the church at Corinth to give out of their bounty. He wrote, **"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver"** (II Cor. 9:6-7). Though this is not necessarily our weekly giving to the local church, it does set precedence for giving itself. We should give. We should give bountifully. We should give willingly. And, we should give cheerfully.

Churches must operate. They have leadership that has been set in place by God. And, God has determined at the very least that the church body should support the church leadership monetarily. Paul again told the Corinthian saints,

"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (I Cor. 9:13-14). In writing to Timothy, he said much the same, **"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward"** (I Tim. 5:17-18). If God has given you men to lead you in His church through His Word, the least you can do is thank God by giving to the church in order to support them.

I realize people are at different places in life. Some are young and finances are tight. Some are old and finances are tight! Some have plenty. Some do not. But this I know, there is a New Testament pattern that we ought to give to the work of God. And oftentimes, this is hindered by our own covetousness. Let us examine our lives and see if there is something we may be allowing to hinder our support of God's work. Is our life a **"living sacrifice?"** Or, are we like those whom Haggai ministered to that are more concerned with our own house than the house of God (Hag. 1:4)? I am not promising 100-fold blessing in return for giving. The Bible never gives such a promise. However, I am saying, **"...where your treasure is, there will be your heart also"** (Matt. 6:21). Are we considering that as we pass the offering plate along our pew? God's work is worthy of our support. And, sometimes we may have to give up a caramel latte in order to support it.



When Peter Sat

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and the Bible says that he went **"to his own place"** (Acts 1:25). The Bible says of Esau that **"..he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears"** (Heb. 12:17). Peter's sorrow brought about a change in him for the good.

PETER'S GREAT SERMON

On the day of Pentecost we read that Peter **"lifted up his voice,"** and said these words, **"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"** (Acts 2:22-23). He is not offended of or ashamed of his Lord now and preaches the truth to the ones that had Him crucified, and his preaching was with boldness, but it was not of the flesh, but by God's grace. Notice, **"..ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."** He also now recognized what Jesus had said concerning His crucifixion, that **"thus it must be."** Notice again, **"Him delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."** But he also tells them that they did it **"by wicked hands."** He preached to them the resurrection of Jesus and went on to say to them with a lifted up voice, **"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ"** (Acts 2:36). What a message to those Jews that had put the Lord Jesus to death. And the Lord

took that message and pricked their hearts. **"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save**

yourself from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:37-40).

IN CONCLUSION

If we who are saved are in the world and act like we are of the world then we will have no power to witness to the world of Jesus. If we look like the world and dress like the world then how can we witness to the world? If we fashion ourselves to this world then how can we reason with the world about judgment to come? Paul told the saints at Rome, **"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good,**

and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

Let us not sit with the wicked but preach to them of a savior and leave the rest in the hands of a Sovereign God. **"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"** (Eph. 5:11). Let us reason with them **"of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,"** as Paul did with Felix (Acts 24:25). May God give us grace and may He have mercy on sinners is our prayer.



A Plea for Separation

*Thank you, my friend, and who shall bend
our ministers or yours, forsooth?
And if our sect with yours we blend,
what sect will fight for Bible truth?
No! till creation's latest groan,
God help us, we will stand alone.*

*Manning, the Papist, boasts the power
to thin the ranks of every sect,
save and except the little flock,
who hold the faith of God's elect.
And so, till Rome be overthrown,
God help us, we will stand alone.*

*Come thou with us, we long to see
our weary ministers upheld.
Come thou with us, if so you be
by unison of heart impelled.
But so you come, or so you stay,
we stand by Jesus, come what may.*

*When the Lord pours His quickening love
in hearts around us, how we sing!
And who, like men of truth, exalt
the glorious grace of Zion's King?
We gather all who prize His blood,
and stand aloof, alone with God.*

*What do you say, your pulpits ring
with the same Gospel? Nay, friend, nay,
the Saviour which your preachers show
is one who cannot have His way:
'tis something with the same sweet Name,
but not the Gospel, not the same.*

*The glory of Jehovah's grace
lies in its overpowering strength.
He made the dying thief His child,
though David groaned his journey's length.
Their names are registered on high,
and God's own offspring cannot die.*

*Our God will never disappoint
His well-beloved, suffering Son,
when He in anguish bowed His head,
redemption's glorious work was done;
and every ransomed soul may boast
the sealing of the Holy Ghost.*

*Is this your Gospel? Don't you hate
the very thought of God's decrees?
And don't you hold that man has power
to baulk the Saviour, if he please?
And don't you cry, Come, use the Blood
and cheer a disappointed God?*

*O, God forgive you! Christ is crown'd
and glorified at God's right hand:
and there, in spite of earth or hell,
the whole redeemed shall shortly stand
praising the love that held them fast.*

*And so you see, while yours and ours
are different Gospels, one and none:
'tis labour lost for you to ask
that our societies be one.
No! till creation's latest groan,
God help us, we will stand alone.*

Mrs. M. A. Chaplin

Favoritism

(Continued from page 1) ♦

into a huddle with a little bunch of your friends after the services, and pay no attention to others? Do you pay attention to just a few of the “old timers” and none to newer members, leaving them to get acquainted as best they can? Do you make it a practice to go off home without ever greeting anybody, leaving that for the pastor or deacons or somebody else to do? Can you call the names of most of those who have come into the church since you have been a member, and if not, why not?

An attitude of friendliness means much in a church. Many a stranger is lonely and needs a kindly word. Why should we not have one of the friendliest churches anywhere? It does not cost anything to be friendly with people who come, and it certainly pays rich dividends.

2. The new member should not have to wait and wait for “seniority rights” before being used. Let us realize that when people join, they have all rights and privileges. We are not running a seniority system. Any church and any group of members ought to welcome new blood. It is easy to get into a rut.

3. No distinction should be made as to wealth and position. Read James 2:1-5. Let us seek to have a church where ALL CLASSES are welcome. The ground down around the cross is absolutely level. In the past, we have served as pastor where kinfolks, clannishness, and distinction between land owners and “share croppers” hindered the Lord’s work greatly.

4. Christians should be “**given to hospitality**” especially as a church. Read I Timothy 5:10 and Hebrews

13: 2. “**Strangers**” mentioned here, refers particularly to saved people. It means a great deal for us to create the idea that the doors of our church buildings are open wide in cordial hospitality to any and all who will come for worship.

WILL YOU STRIVE TO DO THE FOLLOWING—FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHURCH AND THE SOULS OF PEOPLE?

1. Will you lay aside any “exclusiveness” that you have consciously or unconsciously assumed, and will you mingle among people that come, instead of hurrying home?

2. Will you make it a practice to greet a number of people who are visitors every Sunday? Will you do your individual part in making yours the friendliest church possible? It will pay rich dividends!



Regeneration

(Continued from page 1) ♦

translated in our KJV Bibles as “above” or “top.” We fail to see how that such plain statements as these can be ignored by attempting to say that the Gospel regenerates spiritually dead sinners.

The idea that regeneration comes by the Gospel cannot be true for several reasons. One of those reasons is the teaching of Jesus regarding the four kinds of soil. His words just will not allow Gospel regeneration as we shall show. The reader will remember that the parable of the sower speaks of four kinds of soil. There is the wayside soil, the rocky soil, the thorn infested soil and the good soil. Neither of these brought forth evidence of a new life but were only a reformation of the soulish life

already there and were never a new creation that produced any fruit. The Word (including the Gospel) did not profit the people typified by these first three kinds of soil. Only the good ground received the Word and brought forth fruit.

The synoptic gospels record this parable in Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:3-20 and Luke 8:5-15. The three accounts are not contradictory, but rather complementary. Each one adds detail to the other. This in no way means that any of them are untruthful. We may illustrate the way in which one writer complements another in this way. A man may say, “My daughter and I went shopping yesterday.” The daughter may say, “Dad and I went to Walmart just twenty-four hours ago.” Someone else may say, “I was in the Poteau Walmart store and saw Bro. Curtis and his older daughter shopping for a present for their pastor.” Each one of those statements is true, but each one is a little different. We say they are complementary (not complimentary) because, like our illustration, each complements or adds to the other. By putting the differing details of the synoptic writers together we gain as complete an understanding of the words of our Lord as has been preserved for us. We know all that God wants us to know about what Jesus said in His teaching on the “**good ground.**”

The Lord, in explaining this parable of the sower in Matthew’s account said: “**But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty**” (Matt. 13:23). Mark

says this of the good ground: “**And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred**” (Mark 4:20). Luke, on the other hand, adds details saying: “**But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience**” (Luke 8:15). Putting Matthew’s, Mark’s, and Luke’s testimonies together we can say that Jesus said the good ground upon which the seed (the Gospel) fell were those people marked with three characteristics. They are people (1) with “**understanding,**” (Matthew’s word), (2) who “**receive**” the Word, (Mark’s word), and (3) who have “**an honest and good heart,**” (Luke’s words). (And please note that in the parable of the sower the seed did not make the ground good but fell on good ground.) That being the case – and we cannot doubt that the Master knew what He was talking about – three very serious problems arise.

The first two problems can be dealt with together and are these: Paul wrote the following about the unregenerate person and the Word of God (which includes the Gospel): “**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**” (I Cor. 2:14). The phrase “**the things of the Spirit of God**” is shown by the context to mean the revealed Word of God which, of course, includes the Gospel. Putting Matthew’s and Mark’s account together two things must occur. We may state these

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Regeneration

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two things together in this way: there must be a reception of the Word with understanding. Now if the natural man as Paul said (1) will not receive the Word of God and (2) cannot know or understand it because he does not have the Spirit of God, then we must conclude that the Gospel cannot have any part in the regeneration of anyone. Why? Because the Gospel (1) will not be received by the unregenerate and (2) cannot be known or understood by him – and Jesus said the good ground were people who “**receive**” the Word with “**understanding**.” Remember, Paul said the unregenerate man cannot do either of these things. Until something happens to an unregenerate or natural person to enable him to receive and understand the Gospel in a spiritually profitable way, that unregenerate person cannot be “**good ground**.” So the Gospel cannot regenerate anyone! Somebody – the Holy Spirit – has to regenerate the spiritually dead sinner and thus enable him to receive and understand profitably the Gospel. Somebody – the Holy Spirit – must make the ground “**good**” before the seed of the Word will grow and produce. It cannot be otherwise if what Jesus said is true.

The third problem has to do with the heart and the things recorded by Luke. His Gospel records that Jesus said the “**good ground**” represented people who had “**an honest and good heart**.” But God says: “**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it**” (Jer. 17:9)? Surely the prophet spoke God’s Truth! Since no lost man’s heart is “**honest**

and good” then no unregenerate person can be “**good ground**.” The Lord Jesus said: “**But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man...**” (Matt. 15:18-20). Somebody – the Holy Spirit – must take away the stony heart and give the sinner a heart of flesh, (See Ezekiel 11:19 & 36:26-27).

Furthermore, Paul wrote: “**This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart**” (Eph. 4:17-18). Paul said that the other Gentiles – the lost ones – the ones in contrast with the Ephesian church members – were “**alienated from the life of God**.” And just how was it that they were “**alienated**?” He goes on to say they were “**alienated**” “**through the ignorance that is in them**.” And why were they ignorant? They were ignorant “**because of the blindness of their heart**.” Now this was the case with the “**other Gentiles**” – the ones not saved. So then, none of these “**other Gentiles**” could be “**good ground**” “**because of the blindness of their heart**.” Honesty forces us to say that only those regenerated by the Holy Spirit no longer have a blind heart for their blindness is taken away in regeneration. Stephen spoke to unregenerate men describing them thus: “**Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the**

Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51). In the light of these indictments against the natural or unregenerate man, who will be so bold as to say they have the ability to receive and understand the Word of God, i.e. the Gospel in an honest and good heart?

Paul wrote regarding this aspect of regeneration saying: “**For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**” (II Cor. 4:6). And in Ephesians 5:8 he wrote: “**For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light**.” It is God who “**hath shined in our hearts**” thus enabling us to understand! Understand what? Why, understand the Gospel in a spiritually profitable way. We say ‘in a spiritually profitable way’ because any lost person can memorize and quote the facts of the Gospel, but those truths do not profit him until he is quickened or regenerated. Only after regeneration or the new birth – only after the Holy Spirit has moved in – only after Heaven has birthed the dead sinner does an individual have the ability to understand – then he has “**an honest and good heart**.”

The cause, then, of regeneration is solely in God. It is a matter of His sovereignty. It is a matter of His will. It is a matter of His unmerited favor – grace! It is not man’s believing that brings regeneration to the dead sinner. Let us make sure that we have the horse before the cart – and not the cart before the horse – and not the horse walking alongside the cart as if the Holy Spirit needed a spiritually dead sinner’s assistance in regeneration. Be

assured, the horse (the power is the Holy Spirit) and the cart (repenting and believing the Gospel) are connected. Never can there be a regenerated sinner who is an unbeliever! Never can there be a believer until there is spiritual life. The issue is not one of time, but of cause and effect so when we say “before” and “after” we mean that regeneration is the cause of godly sorrow, repentance and faith. “**The faith of God’s elect**” (Titus 1:1) is the result of the work and presence of the Holy Spirit. We are not “hardshells.” Hardshell doctrine is heresy! But the cause of faith – the cause of receiving the Word – the cause of being “**good ground**” is regeneration. Neither believing nor any other act or work of a lost sinner can make him “**good ground**!” We dare not leave Scripture and hold to any position that makes man’s act or effort or anything he produces the cause of the birth which is from above.

Let me insert one other thing here: “**But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him**” (Heb. 11:6). From this verse we can say with certainty that faith pleases God. Paul makes it perfectly clear that an unregenerate person cannot please God. He wrote: “**So then they that are in the flesh [a natural or unregenerate man] cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his**” (Rom. 8:8-9, brackets added). Since faith pleases God and persons not indwelt (and thus made

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Regeneration

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alive spiritually) by the Holy Spirit cannot please God we must logically and scripturally conclude that unregenerate people cannot have faith. No person can savingly believe until the Spirit makes him alive by moving in. After all, Paul wrote: **“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”** (Phil. 2:13).

No sinner is better than another sinner in and of himself. Jesus said, **“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”** (Luke 5:32). The **“good ground”** in the parable previously discussed must themselves be sinners just as are the other three kinds – having nothing good in themselves. There are four kinds of sinners in Jesus’ parable. The fourth kind – the **“good ground”** is the regenerated sinner made ready and able to hear and receive the Gospel which has been broadcast (sown indiscriminately) upon the natural ears of all four kinds of ground. The other three kinds of ground do not received the seed – the Gospel – with profit. Hebrews 4:2 says: **“For unto us [the “good ground”] was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [the other three kinds of ground]: but the word preached did not profit them [the other three kinds of ground], not being mixed with faith in them that heard it”** (Brackets added). Considering that the Bible teaches that faith is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), then we are thus once again confronted with the fact that it is the Spirit who regenerates the dead sinner, enabling him to believe the Gospel. It is not the Gospel that regenerates the dead sinner

enabling him to receive the Spirit. If it is understood that it is the Spirit who by the new birth enables belief of the Gospel, then it must logically follow that the belief of the Gospel has nothing to do with the new birth other than being a consequence of it.

A few words concerning common objections to Holy Spirit regeneration. Someone will doubtless bring up such passages as I Peter 1:23 which says: **“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever,”** and perhaps James 1:18 which says: **“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”** These verses could be used to contradict what Jesus said about the new birth being a work of the Holy Spirit. Most often Bible commentators will strike a compromise between what Jesus said and what these last two quoted verses say. We do not want to contradict what Jesus said. Nor do we want to attempt a compromise of the teaching of Holy Spirit regeneration as we think some do who say that the Holy Spirit uses the Gospel as a means of regeneration. First of all, nowhere is there a statement saying that the Holy Spirit uses the Gospel in regeneration anywhere in Scripture. Nowhere is that even hinted at in the Bible. The examples of conversion given – of Paul’s conversion, the Ethiopian’s, Lydia’s, etc., all testify to a prior work of the Holy Spirit in them which caused a reception of the Word. Because of space, we quote only what is revealed about Lydia: **“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped**

God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul” (Acts 16:14). God **“opened”** Lydia’s heart causing her to carefully listen to the Word preached by Paul. There was a prior work of God in her heart – prior to her listening and believing. And second, since the spiritually dead sinner cannot receive and understand the Gospel, how can the Holy Spirit use the ‘un-received’ and ‘un-understood’ Gospel in the spiritually dead sinner until He first operates upon the sinner enabling him to receive and understand the Gospel? And that is exactly what happens. The Spirit regenerates God’s elect who, up until that happens, has been a spiritually dead sinner. Thus, the Spirit makes him alive and willing to **“receive”** the Word in such a way that he **“understandeth”** it in his new **“honest and good heart.”**

However the verses quoted above which seem to say that the new birth comes by the Word (I Peter 1:23 and James 1:18), when subjected to careful exegesis, are seen not to speak of regeneration at all. Peter speaks of an ongoing process as the King James Version shows by use of the word **“being.”** The tense is present, not past. Peter does not say ‘you were born again,’ but rather, ‘you are being born again.’ He speaks of an ongoing conversion process accomplished in the lives of the regenerate by the Word of God. In James 1:18 the writer uses a word translated **“begat”** which is used only one other time in the Bible. The other place it is found is in verse 15 just prior to verse 18. The word there is the second instance of **“bringeth forth.”** (The first phrase **“bringeth forth”** in James 1:15 is a different

word!) James 1:15 speaks of the process by which **“lust”** produces **“sin.”** And James 1:18 speaks of the process by which the **“word of truth”** produces in us that which characterized the offering of **“firstfruits.”** (The offering of “firstfruits” was to be of the most excellent quality thus insuring a good harvest). The **“firstfruits”** were consecrated or sanctified to God. So it is that the ongoing sanctification (progressive sanctification) experienced by God’s children is accomplished by the Word of God – not the Gospel only. There is no justification here for the idea that the Holy Spirit uses the Gospel in regeneration.

In conclusion: unless one is willing to say that apart from the indwelling Holy Spirit a spiritually dead sinner can somehow be made to receive and understand with an honest and good heart, Gospel regeneration will not work. That the sinner must know the Gospel as a lost sinner is obvious because a part of the purpose of regeneration is to enable him – to cause him – to experience godly sorrow, repentance, faith and all that goes with conversion. Therefore, the Gospel must be broadcast (scattered abroad) as seed was flung out of the hands of the sower in Biblical days. Only by their conversion can we observe the effects of regeneration, and so we must preach to all and sundry the truth that Christ, the Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep. To one and to all, as Paul did, the members of the Lord’s congregations must testify **“..both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 20:21).



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Could the forum writers please comment on or explain II Peter 3:10? - Internet

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When Adam sinned, the earth and heavens (but not the third heaven, for there are three) were cursed, **"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life..."** (Gen. 3:17). The third Heaven where the throne of God is, was never affected by Adam's sin, but the other two heavens were. The first heaven is where the birds fly and where we see the clouds form. The second heaven is where the stars, planets, our sun and moon are. It is hard to believe that Adam's sin extended into the heavens but all that mankind has touched has been polluted by sin and has been corrupted by evil men. Therefore they must be purged with fire, **"...and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up..."** (II Peter 3:10). I believe the late Milburn Cockrell put it best in his book *The Second Coming of Christ* and I quote, "First, it extends to the heavens: **"...the heavens shall pass away... the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved"** (II Pet. 3:10,12).

The Prophet Isaiah discloses: **"...the heavens shall vanish away like smoke..."** (Isa. 51:6). The psalmist said: **"...the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish..."** (Ps. 102:25-26). Jesus Christ declared: **"Heaven... shall pass away"** (Matt. 24:35). We must either confine the word "heavens" to the visible heavens surrounding the earth, or it must include the whole solar system. The plural number "heavens" favors the latter view in my opinion. Sin has reached into the heavens (Isa. 14:12-14; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:7-9). Job 15:15 tells us **"...the heavens are not clean in his sight."** By means of space ships the sinners of earth have already defiled the heavens above us. Hence even these must be purged by fire. "Heavens" do not include the third heaven (II Cor. 12: 1-4), the holy abode of God. There is no sin there, and, therefore, no need of purging by fire." (End quote).

As a thief in the night does not necessarily mean at nighttime, but a dark period of time, which it surely will be. The earth, I believe will be at the height of corruption when the earth is purged with fire. Think of it, people will have a thousand years to believe Jesus Christ is the **"King of kings and Lord of lords."** One last chance to come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, but sadly many will not.

I believe this will take place at the end of His Millennial Reign and right before the Great White Throne Judgment. **"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of**

his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:7-15).

Let me be clear here, the earth though it is purged with fire "will not be totally annihilated."

The above Scriptures tells us that after the thousand year reign of Christ is over, Satan will be loosed for a short time and he will once again deceive many which will be the ungodly wicked of mankind, and the Lord will then drop the hammer and crush all

them that oppose Him, and God will rain fire upon the earth, and at that time **"earth and heaven"** will be purged with fire and there will be no place to run anymore, and all evil will be gone and the curse from Adam will be purged with fire. Then comes the final judgment of all those not written in the book of life. That will be, in my opinion, the saddest day ever, to see those that are relatives and those we preached the gospel to and they rejected will be cast into the **"lake of fire"** for ever and ever, for all eternity with no hope of escape, a sad day indeed.

But then, **"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"** (Rev. 21:4). Oh glorious day, then we who have truly been saved and confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour will live in peace for all eternity!! God Bless!

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"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10).

The day of the Lord! We live in the day of the Gentiles, and the day of the Jews is 69 weeks past, with only one more (Daniel's 70th Week—Dan. 9:24-27) seven

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Who are the **"four and twenty elders"** mentioned in Revelation 4:4? - Maine

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Revelation 4:4, 10-11 state: **"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold...The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."**

We know from the context that these are glorified saints in Heaven that John saw in the vision. They are clothed in white raiment signifying the justifying righteousness of Christ. They had gold crowns on their heads signifying rewards that they had received at the Judgment Seat of Christ. They are gathered around the throne of God to worship the Lord Jesus Christ who is resplendent in majesty and glory. They recognize the Lord Jesus as both the Creator of all things and Redeemer of the elect. As such they acknowledge that He alone is worthy of

glory, honor, and power. Their declarations are very similar to the ones recorded in Revelation 5:7-14. This is a summation of what our passage reveals about the twenty four John saw in Heaven.

As I read different commentators it seemed as though each one had his own distinctive take on the identity of the elders. I hesitate to go beyond what the Scripture reveals. I know for sure these twenty four elders are redeemed saints who have been rewarded. They are capable of worshipping the Lord as they are found adoring Him in His sovereign majesty. These are things we know for sure. The elders are not given particular names. Many believe they are representative of the elect who have been redeemed in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Many arrive at this conclusion by saying the twenty four elders represent the twelve tribes of Israel (Old Testament saints), and twelve apostles of Christ (New Testament saints). However, the Scriptures do not precisely identify the twenty four elders as such. I am content to believe that these are redeemed saints, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, rejoicing and worshipping around the throne of God in Heaven. Perhaps in the day when I am caught up to Heaven in the Rapture and receive my glorified body I will be able to recognize who exactly these twenty-four elders are.

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The 24 elders around the Throne of God are not specifically named, but their consistent activities around God's throne and the peculiar number of their station provide some clues that we might draw some answers from. First from Numerology, there are three sets of multiples that make up the number "24" to consider. (6x4), (12x2) and (3x8). Each set has precedent in Scripture for some observations.

(6x4)- Six is the number of man and four is the number of the whole Earth, so $6 \times 4 = 24$ elders, that are representative of mankind from the four corners of the whole Earth. (12x2)- Twelve is the number of allotment and two is the number of support, division or contrast. Which could indicate that twelve elders are from the Old Testament (or Israel's twelve tribes) and twelve are then from the New Testament (or the twelve apostles). (3x8)- Three is the number of full manifestation (typically thru trials) and eight is the number of new beginnings/restoration, which could make martyr's crowns, what is thrown at the feet of Christ in Revelation 4:10-11, **"The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."**

Revelation 5:8-11, 14, **"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, ... And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands...And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."** This picture of the elder's actions around the throne is typical of their three instances being mentioned in the book. (cf: Rev. 11:16-19; 19:1-7) In all three events, the elders are leading a great chorus of saints and/or creatures in rejoicing and praising our great God! With their golden harps, they are perhaps the lead instrumentalists in our songs, and with the golden vials of our prayers, they are representative of ALL the host of saints from everywhere and everywhen. Selah! Think about it!

Revelation 11:16-18, **"And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which**

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Forum #1

(Continued from page 12) ♦

year period to go (the Great Tribulation—Matt. 24:21). But the day of the Lord is coming, which will encompass the end-time events (eschatology) of this earth. It will begin, as Peter reinforces all Bible prophesies, with the Lord coming (unexpectedly for most earth inhabitants) as a thief in the night. **“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief”** (I Thess. 5:4). The imminent return of Jesus Christ is the very next prophesied event that we, as God’s people are commanded to expect. From Acts 1:9-11 to I John 2:28, and a hundred times between, we are exhorted to expect Christ to re-enter the earth’s atmosphere and “seize” His saints mysteriously and completely. Selah! Think about it!

After the glorious Rapture and the intervening seven year Great Tribulation/Time of Jacob’s Trouble, the Lord will come in judgment of the nations (Matt. 25:31-46) at the Battle of Armageddon (Zech. 12:9-11, 14:4; Rev. 16:12-19:21). Jesus Christ, the King of Kings will then establish a literal thousand year reign upon this earth, fulfilling all of Israel’s prophecies concerning restoration and glorification of God’s covenant and His peculiar people (Ezek. 37:21-28). At the conclusion of this Millennial Reign will come the fulfillment of our text’s graphic revelation of physical destruction on the atomic and elemental level. **“Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth,**

wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Peter 3:12-13).

Previously in the chapter, the Apostle Peter reminds his readers of Noah’s flood which judged the earth in a consuming wave of overwhelming water. **“Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men”** (II Peter 3:6-7).

Reserved unto fire! A fire that Peter scientifically brings down to an atomic level of purging the very elements of matter that God created in Genesis 1:1. The necessity of eradicating the curse of man from the very electrons and atomic fabric of creation is vividly shown here. God is not going to overlook ANY speck of sin and corruption, but it will ALL be dissolved, purged, tempered and reforged—regenerated into a pure and holy, brand-new heavens and earth. Praise God! Selah! Think about it!

Chronologically, this elemental fire occurs at God’s disruption of the Battle of Gog and Magog recorded in Revelation 20:7-9, **“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”** As this supernatural fire obliterates the physic and chemical compounds of the known universe, the souls

of the damned will be deposited on a precarious table surrounding the Great White Throne of the Sovereign Arbiter of mankind. After an in-depth accounting **“... according to their works,”** the summary judgment of a Thrice-Holy God tips the table and every last unredeemed descendent of Adam will slide off the dais of judgment into the eternal lake of fire, **“Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched...”**

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:1-2). The immortal matter of those melting drops of the heavens and earths will be captured and those purified elements are reforged into a glorious new heaven and earth that will be occupied by those that have met Jesus Christ in this lifetime. Do you know Him as your Saviour? When the time of fire comes, He is your ONLY hope! **“...Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”** Selah! Think about it!

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II Peter 3:10-13 states: **“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned**

up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

The interpretation of these verses must be determined by their context. By the process of elimination we can identify what Peter calls the **“day of God.”** It is not referring to Christ’s coming in the Rapture before the Tribulation Period because the current state of the heavens and the earth will remain intact at that time. In fact it is during the Tribulation Period when God pours out His wrath upon the earth and its inhabitants as revealed by the seals, trumpets, and vials in Revelation chapters 6-19.

Nor does the **“day of God”** refer to Christ’s coming at the end of the Tribulation in the Second Advent at which time He will return to earth with His saints to judge and set up His 1000 year reign upon the earth. The earth as we now know it must of necessity be intact at that time in order for Christ and the saints to reign.

The only logical time of occurrence is after the Millennial reign, after the rebellion of Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:7-9), and in conjunction with the Great White Throne of Judgment (Rev. 20:11), at which the the heavens and the earth as we now know them pass away. The manner in which they pass away from their current form is revealed in our text, with great noise and fervent

♦ (Continued on page 15)

Forum #1

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heat. This is often referred to as the Conflagration of the Universe, wherein God will purge everything that defiles from the heavens and the earth, giving it an entirely new form wherein dwelleth righteousness. All the wicked will be forever separated from the righteous in the Lake of Fire, and all the enemies of Christ will be forever put down at which time He will deliver up the kingdom unto God (I Cor. 15:24-28). It was not until after this sequence of events, after Great White Throne Judgment that John saw a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1).

All these things will come unexpected to the wicked who trusted in their earthly works, all their fruitless works will be burnt up. All the things they trusted in will melt and be worth absolutely nothing when they are judged by the Lord. They will stand before Christ to receive their just sentence of condemnation in the Lake of Fire forever.

In light of God's judgment and the coming Conflagration that will follow, Peter exhorts believers to live holy lives as we anticipate dwelling with the Lord throughout the eternal ages. If the earthly things that the wicked vainly trusted in and derived satisfaction from did not profit them, then what manner of persons ought we to be in all our behavior? We need to keep our mind fixed upon the world to come and the promises associated with it, not trusting in this present world system. We are going to dwell in a new heaven and a new earth in the eternal ages. The Lord's bride will dwell in the heavenly New Jerusalem, and there will be nations of saved people dwelling on the new earth

(Rev. 21:21-25). The mistake that many premillennial students make is to place so much emphasis proving the 1,000 year reign of Christ that they spend little time looking beyond it to the realm of the eternal ages.

TOM ROSS



Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

destroy the earth." If they are representative of all saints, this passage bears more evidence of whom they might be. Three groups are mentioned here, 1) Old Testament prophets, 2) New Testament (church?) saints and 3) them that fear Thy Name from every age. As in each chorus, they rejoice at God's equitable justice on the wicked and unfailing mercy for His peoples!

If these twenty-four seats are to be filled by honor, as well as Sovereign Grace, the three requirements that I see in these passages are: 1) Every continent of the earth will have their "local" representative. In other words, they will not all be from Jerusalem, Europe and America, but the Lord is going to use a wide variety of humanity out of every race and peoples from the four corners of the earth. [6x4] 2) The division between the Old Testament prophets and New Testament saints means that there will be that same representation of folk in time, as well as geography. Saints from every age will be represented. A rough estimate, if the Lord were to come back in 2017 to rapture His saints and begin the seven-year countdown to Armageddon and the Millennial Reign, we could divide the six thousand years by 24 (for each elder) and that would approximate one elder

from every 250-year time period of the earth's existence. [12x2] 3) The third and last requirement would be that each elder arrived at the throne of God via trials and martyrdom. [8x3] (I used to think a fourth requirement might be a bridal one. That would restrict these elders to Israel and the Christ's Baptist church bride, but I do not think that is in the text.) Thusly, one person that would fit the requirements, might be Abel, the martyr of the first generation. Who will it be from the last 250 years? Good question! Ultimately, the only definitive answer we can give, is the one that Christ gave James and John in Mark 10:40, **"But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared."** Selah! Think about it!

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As with many people there are many different views on who these twenty-four elders are. But I believe following what the Scriptures say that the twenty-four elders are the twelve sons of Jacob (the twelve tribes of Israel). **"And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel"** (Rev. 21:12), and the twelve apostles of Christ, **"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb"** (Rev. 21:14).

Again I would like to quote

the late Milburn Cockrell, "They represent the Old and New Testament saints caught out at the pre-trib coming of Christ (I Cor. 15:23; I Thess. 4:13-18). This is confirmed by the antecedent of the pronoun **"they"** (Rev. 20:4) which must be the armies which come from Heaven with Christ in Revelation 19:14. The saints cannot come from Heaven until they are first caught up to Heaven." (End quote).

We may not all agree who these elders are, but one thing I am sure we can agree on and that is the elect of God sure have some exciting times to look forward to. God Bless!

ROGER REED



**Quotes
from
Brother
Ritechus
N.
Dignation**

by Joseph Harris

SELF PROMOTERS

Nothing gets me mad as hornets quicker than someone who seeks recognition, especially when that someone is a preacher. I wonder if some would do any ministry work at all if they were told they would never receive any glory or recognition. There may be a lot of pulpits empty next Sunday, if the back patten' quit.

JUDGING

When someone tells you to stop judging them, that only God is their judge, it's a sure thing they have been hit smack between the eyes with conviction. One day God will judge them. That's when they will wish you were their judge instead.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



Restoration of the Joy of Salvation

“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit” (Ps. 51:12).

Psalm 51 was penned by David after the Prophet Nathan had come to him and exposed his sins of murder and adultery. King David had committed adultery with the wife of Uriah, one of his loyal and brave soldiers. The act of adultery resulted in the conception of a child in the womb of Bathsheba. To cover his sin David had Uriah killed in battle and then married his widow (II Sam. 12). The king had become a traitor to his subjects and the betrayer of a friend. This whole affair is a dark spot in the life of a good and godly man.

There are four important truths seen in my text which I want to study in great detail.

SALVATION IS OF THE LORD

Please note when David spoke of salvation that he said: **“Thy salvation.”** He does not say: “My salvation.” On a number of occasions in the Psalms he wrote of God’s salvation (Ps. 9:14; 13:5; 21:5; 40:10; 106:4; 119:174). In Psalm 3:8 he declared: **“Salvation belongeth unto the LORD.”** Again he said in Psalms 37:39: **“But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD.”** The psalmist was not among those who believed that man was his own savior. The sweet singer of Israel held firmly to the gospel of free grace.

David is not thinking here of temporal salvation; he is writing of spiritual and eternal salvation. He knew God the Father had contrived the scheme of salvation in the covenant of grace before the morning of time. He believed the Godhead had made a compact to save a special people. There was no doubt in his mind that he was among those the coming Messiah would save. The psalmist had more than a hope of salvation at the end of life. He had even in this dark hour of his life assurance that his soul had already been saved by God.

The consciousness of salvation is accompanied by a great degree of joy. The sweet singer of Israel speaks of **“...the joy of thy salvation...”** Salvation is deliverance of a sinner from the curse of the law, the terror of Divine anger, and the fires of Hell. This deliverance from the greatest danger the soul fears is the cause of the most rapturous joy the soul can feel on earth. Under a deep sense of sorrow for sins against God there is granted the awakened sinner a revelation of mercy through Christ. The soul embraces Christ as the only way of escape, and then the soul rejoices **“...with joy unspeakable and full of glory”** (I Pet. 1:8). It is always **“with joy”** that a person draws **“...water out of the wells of salvation”** (Isa. 12:3).

The song writer has so well

expressed it---

*I have found His grace is all complete,
He supplieth every need;
While I sit and learn at Jesus’ feet,
I am free, yes, free indeed.*

*I have found the pleasure I once craved,
It is joy and peace within;
What a wondrous blessing! I am saved
From the awful gulf of sin.*

*I have found that hope so bright and clear,
Living in the realm of grace;
Oh, the Savior’s presence is so near,
I can see His smiling face.*

*I have found the joy no tongue can tell,
How its waves of glory roll!
It is like a great o’er flowing well,
Springing up within my soul.*

*It is joy unspeakable and full of glory,
Oh, the half has never yet been told.*

There is joy pertaining to salvation. It is the joy of the saved, and it grows out of the fact that they know that they are saved. It is said that Zacchaeus received Christ **“joyfully”** (Luke 19:6). After the Ethiopian eunuch was saved and baptized **“...he went on his way rejoicing”** (Acts 8:39). The saved rejoice in the great salvation which is of the Lord. David said: **“But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me”** (Ps. 135:5-6).

There is much in the salvation of the Lord to inspire joy. First, there is joy because of the past condition from which we have been delivered. We were enemies of God, but now love has taken the place of enmity. We were condemned as guilty before God, but now justification has superseded condemnation. How cheering when a soul is brought

to see that by Christ he has been justified from all things (Acts 13:39). This knowledge is a perpetual spring of everlasting joy, for the justified believer knows the thunders of the Divine law are hushed into eternal silence. Such a person can say with Habakkuk: **“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation”** (Hab. 3:17-18).

Second, the person that is saved can rejoice in a present salvation: **“Beloved, now are we the sons of God...”** (I John 3:2). **“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren”** (I John 3:14). **“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life. . .”** (I John 5:13). In the present state, amid the trials of life, the temptations of Satan, the frown of the world, and the infirmities of the flesh, we can have a know-so salvation. Those who enjoy such assurance have obtained **“...joy and gladness...”** (Isa. 35:10) of which the unsaved world knows nothing.

Third, we can rejoice in a future salvation. The body is not yet saved, for it is still a body of sin and death. Believers are **“waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body”** (Rom. 8:23). Those who already know that their immortal souls are saved long for **“...the manifestation of the sons of God”** (Rom. 8:19). Thank God, Jesus is coming soon and that our **“...salvation is nearer than when we believed”** (Rom.

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13:11). **“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation”** (Heb. 9:28). Until Christ actually comes we can only **“...rejoice in hope of the glory of God”** (Rom. 5:2).

THE LOSS OF THE JOY OF SALVATION

The joy of salvation may be lost by a believer by his engaging in sin. I did not say a man could lose his salvation, but the joy of salvation. There is a difference in losing the joy of salvation and in losing salvation. As a sovereign gracer, I do not believe that a person can lose the salvation which God gives him, but I do believe he can lose the joy which accompanies that salvation. David had lost the joy of his salvation, but he had not lost salvation itself.

A number of things can cause a person to lose the joy of salvation. First, as we can see in the case of David, there may be scandalous sins. Wilful sin deprives one of the joy of God's salvation. It is when a person engages in wilful sin that his hopes are shaken. Often after committing black sins a believer may find his own salvation has become debatable and doubtful (II Pet. 1:9-10). Such a person becomes sad and cheerless; he has no peace of mind and conscience. He is of all men most miserable as he lives from day to day upon this earth.

A second way to lose the joy of salvation is by allowing love for Christ and the brethren to diminish. Love for Christ (Rom. 5:5) and other believers (I John 3:16) is implanted in the heart at the point of regeneration. It is not to be like wind and weather.

Love must be constant at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances. In the cluster of Christian virtues in Galatians 5:22-23 love and joy are joined together. The reason for this is that when love wanes, the joy of salvation is lost.

A third way to lose the joy of God's salvation is to neglect the study of the Bible. The Bible is a means of progressive sanctification. Jesus Christ prayed: **“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth”** (John 17:17). Psalm 119:9 says: **“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.”** Read and study the Bible much, for it will keep you from sin. Those who neglect the Bible will soon get involved in wilful sin. Such unconfessed sins in the life of a Christian creates a distance and darkness between God and the soul. This results in the loss of the joy of salvation.

A fourth way to forfeit the joy of God's salvation is by losing the spirit of prayer. When a believer is near his Lord he loves to pray. Day and night he cries to his heavenly Father. There is no place so sweet and pleasant to him as the throne of grace. As long as there is delight in prayer the joy of salvation fills the soul. But when the spirit of prayer is lost, or the duty performed in a formal manner, the joy of salvation is lost.

THIS JOY CAN BE RESTORED

There is on the part of King David in my text a yearning after the joy of salvation. He looked upon this loss as a great misfortune and a great fault. The words: **“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation”** means “Cause the joy of God's salvation to return.” This implies he had formerly known this joy. He believed it was

highly important to have this joy restored. He had lost what the world could not give, and all the world could not make up for.

The prayer of David in the text shows he knew God could restore this lost joy. God had not taken the joy of salvation from David. It was David who had lost this joy by wilful sin and disobedience. While it was David who had lost it, no one could restore it but God. And so he prays that God will give it back for His own glory and grace.

King David needed this joy restored for a number of reasons. First, for his own comfort. How could he face the people of Israel as their king when he was guilty of such crimes as adultery and murder? How could he ever sing psalms and play his harp again with this desolate sense of loss? How wretched is the condition of any believer who has lost the joy of his salvation. There is a vacuum in his heart which all under Heaven is incompetent to fill.

Second, the psalmist desired to reclaim this joy so he could be an effective witness to lost sinners. Note the text again and the verse which follows it: **“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee”** (Ps. 51:12-13). No man can be a successful witness for Christ if his life is full of sin.

Third, he wanted his joy restored to put honor upon true religion. Nathan had told him that his sins had **“...given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme...”** (II Sam. 12:14). David's conduct had misrepresented the religion of Jehovah to pagan idolaters. They would look at the sinful and sorrowful condition of King

David and assume that true religion was a gloomy, repulsive thing. David must repent of his sins and have his joy restored so as to clothe the true religion with a halo of glory.

THE MEANS OF RESTORATION

How can the joy of salvation be restored? First, it can be restored by confession of the sins that caused the loss of the joy. David in Psalm 51 made a noble confession of his sin: **“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest”** (Ps. 51:3-4). I John 1:9 declares: **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

Second, there must be repentance of these sins and a desire for forgiveness. David surely did this. Listen to his words: **“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. . . . Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. . . . Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness”** (Ps. 51:1-2,7,9-10,14).

Third, there must be earnest prayer to God for the restoration of the joy of His salvation. David

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prayed: **“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.”** He knew that only when God grants a renewal can there be consciousness of God’s favor. David prayed with the expectation of getting this joy back.

Fourth, there must be a prayer for the renewal of the influence of the Holy Spirit. The last part of the text says: **“...and uphold me with thy free spirit.”** In these words he acknowledges that only the Holy Spirit can keep him from falling into sin and gives him liberty and safety. Left to himself a weak human being would soon sin again and lose the joy of the Lord’s salvation.

CONCLUSION

Are you an unhappy Christian? Have you engaged in wilful sins which have robbed you of the joy of salvation? If this is your case, then repent of your wrongs and ask God to restore your joy once again. Please remember that **“...the joy of the LORD...”** is our strength (Neh. 8:10). Do not forget that the joy of salvation here on earth is but a foretaste of Heaven where in His **“...presence is fulness of joy...”** (Ps. 16:11).

Have you ever experienced the joy of salvation? Have you heard the joyful sound? Do you rejoice that your name is written in Heaven? Do you have in your heart spiritual joy, a joy that no man can take from you? If you have not known this great happiness, you have never experienced true joy. If you know nothing of this joy, you never will, unless you repent. It is repent or perish for every man who hears the gospel.



THE

BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

MONKEYING AROUND WITH PERSONHOOD

(WNS)--Governments have granted legal personhood to rivers, and a New York court has heard a case arguing for human rights for two chimpanzees. Now the craziness continues as a California federal appeals court just heard arguments on whether Naruto, a monkey who has learned how to take selfies, should be allowed to hold a copyright to the photos. The court is expected to make a decision soon.

UP NEXT, DESIGNER BABIES

(WNS)--When so-called three-parent babies first became possible, many researchers touted the technique as a way to help women with mitochondrial disease give birth to healthy children. Ethicists warned it was the beginning of a slippery slope and soon doctors would use the procedure for applications other than preventing disease. A U.S. fertility doctor, John Zhang, who owns a biotech company called Darwin Life, is now plummeting down that slope with plans to use the three-parent baby technique to help women over 40 become pregnant by shifting their DNA into a young woman’s egg, MIT Technology Review reports. And Zhang does not plan to stop there. Despite warnings from ethicists and experts’ concerns about the safety of the procedure, Zhang has profit-making designer babies in his sights. “Everything we do is a step toward designer babies,” he told MIT Technology Review. The procedure is illegal in the United

States, so Zhang plans to offer it overseas only.

A TRICKY QUESTION

(WNS)--The Education Department just can not win when it comes to pleasing transgender advocates. The agency announced last week it would change the tense of a gender-related question on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) after someone complained the present-tense wording might confuse transgender students. Instead of asking, “Are you male or female?” the department plans to ask, “Were you born male or female?” Gender is important because all FAFSAs filed by male applicants must be checked against Selective Service registration, a requirement for getting any federal aid. But transgender advocates say asking about an applicant’s birth gender could “out” some transgender students while also suggesting transgenderism is not a real thing. They offered to meet with Education Department representatives to help them get the question “right.” But a simple tense change probably will not fix the problem. Nothing short of a total rejection of biological reality seems likely to suffice.

MOTHER PUSHING FOR RESTROOM ACCESS FOR TRANSGENDER TEEN

(WNS)--The mother of a 16-year-old transgender student is suing a Florida high school for denying her child access to the boys restroom. The teen, identified as Drew

Adams in the complaint, was born female but has identified as male since 2015. After an anonymous complaint shortly after Adams began identifying as a male, Allen D. Nease High School, in Ponte Vedra, Fla., told Adams to use a single occupancy, gender-neutral restroom instead of the boys restroom. Adams’ mother is suing the St. Johns County School Board for discrimination. “It makes me feel isolated from the rest of the student body,” Drew told The St. Augustine Record. “It is telling me that the school district sees me as a lesser person just because I am transgender.”

EVOLUTIONISTS TRY TO NOURISH DARWIN’S WILTING TREE OF LIFE

(WNS)--In the 158 years since Charles Darwin developed the idea that all living organisms evolved from one common ancestor, scientists have attempted to prop up the so-called “tree of life” theory against the prevailing winds of reason. Since 1859, little empirical evidence has supported the concept, but a team of researchers from Rutgers University thinks reshaping the tree could help prove its existence. The researchers say the tree does not give the full picture of evolution because it depicts various families of organisms as independent branches. A better picture would show how forms of life such as microbes and their hosts are linked physically and evolve together. “The goal is to transform a two-dimensional tree into one that is multidimensional and includes biological interactions among species,” researcher Debashish Bhattacharya said in a statement. Even though the researchers want to reshape Darwin’s tree, they were quick to defend their champion. “What we wish to clearly stress is that we are not engaged in Darwin-bashing. We consider Darwin a hero

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of science,” Bhattacharya said.

LOUISIANA SUED (AGAIN) FOR ITS PRO-LIFE LAWS

(WNS)--The Center for Reproductive Rights filed a lawsuit in Baton Rouge in late June targeting Louisiana’s abortion facility licensing law and other health and safety regulations. The group sued on behalf of Hope Medical Group for Women in Shreveport and three anonymous abortionists who say the Louisiana laws run counter to last year’s Supreme Court decision *Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt*. Last June’s ruling determined a Texas law requiring abortionists to have hospital admitting privileges and mandating abortion facilities meet ambulatory surgical standards created an unconstitutional undue burden on abortion access.

OREGON POISED TO MAKE ABORTION FREE

(WNS)--Oregon taxpayers will soon be paying for abortion, contraceptives, and sterilization under a new law Gov. Kate Brown vowed to sign. The Reproductive Health Equity Act, recently passed by legislators, forbids health insurance plans from imposing “a deductible, coinsurance, copayment, or any other cost-sharing requirement” for abortion, STD screening, prenatal care, post-natal care, and all forms of contraception. Churches and religious nonprofits will be exempt from the law if they notify employees they do not cover contraceptives or abortion. Their employees may turn to Oregon’s general fund, padded with more than \$10 million, to cover contraceptives and abortion. The bill also allocates \$500,000 to cover abortions and contraceptives for illegal immigrants.

OKLAHOMA AG: DEFENSE OF UNIVERSITY CHAPEL A TOP PRIORITY

(WNS)--Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter has stepped into a dispute over the display of Christian emblems on a public university campus, declaring the issue a top religious liberty priority. In a July 5 letter to East Central University’s Board of Regents, Hunter said the fight could have repercussions beyond the ECU campus and asked administrators to refer all future responses to his office. For 60 years, the Kathryn P. Boswell Memorial Chapel on the ECU campus in Ada, Okla., has hosted a variety of religious services, concerts, and university club meetings, all while a cross stood atop its steeple and Bibles rested in its pews. But according to Americans United for the Separation of Church and State (AU), someone complained that those elements constituted government endorsement of religion. The cross, Bibles, and religious icons “do not belong” on the public university campus and must be removed, AU told university administrators in a June letter.

FLORIDA FORTIFIES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(WNS)--Florida public school students will have added protection for expressing their faith on campus during the upcoming school year, thanks to a new law that went into effect July 1. Supporters say the bill just reiterates existing constitutional protections for religious liberty by listing specific practices with which educators cannot interfere. Opponents say the bill goes too far and could unleash a rash of lawsuits. The Religious Expression in Public Schools Act forbids school districts from discriminating against students, parents, or staff members for their religious views or expression. It

specifies students are free to refer to religion in their schoolwork, pray without interference, and wear religious symbols without fear of punishment. The Florida House passed its version of the bill unanimously, but Republicans in the state Senate insisted on adding a provision that would require schools to allow student-led prayers during the school day and at school-sanctioned events, like sporting events and assemblies. It passed mostly along party lines.

HAWAII PRO-LIFE CENTERS SUE OVER ABORTION PROMOTION LAW

(WNS)--Two pro-life pregnancy resource centers in Hawaii filed suit against a new law requiring them to promote abortion. The law, signed by Gov. David Ige on July 11, requires pregnancy resource centers to post signs telling women about the state’s “family planning services.” Pregnancy centers must post the signs on letter-sized paper in at least 22-point font, or give each woman a notice in person when she checks in. A Place for Women in Waipo, run by Calvary Chapel Pearl Harbor, and a National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, which has five affiliates in Hawaii, filed suit with help from Alliance Defending Freedom.

ILLUSTRATING THE NEED FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

(WNS)--An address by U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions to a group of Christian attorneys drew fire and false accusations from media sources. The incident served to illustrate the theme of Sessions’ speech—the essential role of religious liberty in America and the need to preserve it. In his remarks to a gathering of Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) attorneys in Southern California on July 11, Sessions recounted the “Western heritage of faith and

reason” that framers of the Bill of Rights understood as the foundation of religious liberties. They did not seek to establish a theocracy but to recognize the rights of conscience that were “essential to being a created being,” he said. “But the cultural climate has become less hospitable to people of faith and to religious belief. And in recent years, many Americans have felt that their freedom to practice their faith has been under attack,” he told the attorneys. “This feeling is understandable.”

A BAKER AND A FLORIST WALK INTO THE SUPREME COURT ...

(WNS)--Barronelle Stutzman, the Washington state florist sued for declining to create custom floral arrangements for a gay wedding, has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to hear her case. In their July 14 appeal, Stutzman’s attorneys asked the court to consolidate her case with that of Colorado baker Jack Phillips, which the court agreed to hear this fall. Stutzman will have to wait until the justices return from their recess in October to find out if they will take up *Arlene’s Flowers v. the State of Washington* and *Arlene’s Flowers v. Ingersoll*. Stutzman’s attorneys with ADF also represent Phillips in *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*. Both petitions question whether the government can compel the baker or the florist to “create expression that violates their sincerely held religious beliefs about marriage.”

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS SELECTIVE TOLERANCE IN EDUCATION

(WNS)--An Orthodox Jewish girls school in East London is facing closure for not agreeing to teach its students—ages 3 to 8—about gender reassignment or homosexuality. The U.K.’s Office of Standards in

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Education cited Vishnitz Girls School three times in June, arguing the school does not give its pupils "a full understanding of fundamental British values." While acknowledging the students are "well-motivated, have positive attitudes to learning and are confident in thinking for themselves," and that the teachers' "good subject knowledge and high quality classroom resources inspire pupils with enthusiasm for learning," the report asserts the school's decision not to explicitly teach about issues such as sexual orientation "restricts pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and does not promote equality of opportunity in ways that take account of differing lifestyles." It is unclear how the government plans to follow up on the citation if the school does not comply, and the school has not made its response public.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOTES TO AFFIRM

TRANSGENDER MEMBERS

(WNS)--Despite claims this week's Church of England General Synod resulted in no doctrinal changes on the issue of sexuality, conservative Anglicans are lamenting the three-day meeting, saying the Church stepped away from Biblical Christianity and mocked God's Word. In February, the General Synod rejected a report reaffirming traditional church cannon on marriage, a decision seen as a victory for LGBT advocates within the Church. Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said afterwards "a radical new Christian inclusion in the Church" was needed to deal with disagreements and find ways forward. Reporting to the General Synod on Saturday, Welby said two working groups would provide pastoral guidance and produce new

teaching on human sexuality.

PARENTS PUSH BACK ON 'SMACKING' BAN

(WNS)--A group of Welsh parents is calling on the local government to ditch plans to criminalize spanking. The campaign, called Be Reasonable Wales, is pushing back on plans to remove the legal defense for parents who use corporal punishment to discipline their children. The group says current law adequately protects children from abuse and attack, and the move will instead criminalize parents who moderately discipline their children. They also note it will backlog the already overloaded child welfare system in trivial cases, diverting time and attention away from serious cases of abuse. "The law already protects children from abuse, which of course is important and vital, but this additional change can have no other consequence other than making parents who are loving and caring into criminals," said Lowri Turner, campaign spokeswoman.



The Limited Atonement

By Christopher W. Burke, Sr.
of Catlettsburg, Kentucky

(Please read Isaiah 53:4-6, 8, 10-12).

We have asked you to read these verses simply as a foundation for our subject. I believe these verses most assuredly teach the limited atonement of Christ for His people.

We will now consider our subject in 5 points, which are as follows:



1. First, we want to consider the meaning of the atonement.

The English word atonement is found 70 times in the Scriptures, 69 times in the Old Testament and only once in the New Testament. There are some other words for the atonement used in the New Testament, which we will also see.

The word atonement essentially means "At-one-ment." Thus, to make atonement means to reconcile, or to make reconciliation. In the Bible reconciliation means to bring a Holy God into a loving relationship with sinful man so as to make perfect peace between them.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. 5:10-11).

The word atonement also means satisfaction, or the price that was paid to make reconciliation between a Holy God and sinful man. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was the price that was paid to make satisfaction for sin, which satisfied God's wrath upon guilty sinners.

"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" (Isa. 53:11).

The word propitiation is also used in the New Testament to describe the atonement.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10).

The word propitiation means to appease or to expiate the sin

and guilt of sinners. So then the atoning work of Christ appeased God's wrath that was due to wicked vile sinners because of our sins. And the same Greek word translated propitiation is also translated "mercy seat" in Hebrews 9:5. The mercy seat was the cover of the ark of the covenant where the high priest sprinkled the blood of the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people.

It was on the mercy seat that God's wrath was appeased when the blood of the atoning sacrifice was applied thereon. Christ, beloved, is our Mercy Seat. He is our High Priest, and He is also the sacrifice that appeased God's wrath for our sins. It was His blood that He sprinkled on the Mercy Seat in Heaven that propitiated, or appeased God's wrath that was due to wicked sinners.

2. Secondly, we want to consider the necessity of the atonement.

"Limited atonement" is the "L" in the center of the "TULIP" doctrines, as they are often referred. The atonement is right at the center or the heart of the doctrines of grace, as it should be.

The first two doctrines of grace make necessary the atonement. The fact that man is totally depraved makes the atonement necessary and essential for his salvation. Without the atoning work of Christ no man could be saved from his sin!

And the fact that God elected a people unto salvation from among Adam's sinful fallen race, also requires that an Atoning Sacrifice be made to pay the price for their sins. Without Christ's atonement for sin, the election would be of no effect and would have no purpose.

So then, without the Atonement of Christ there would be, and could be no salvation of sinners. All of the other doctrines of grace are

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dependant upon the atonement of Christ to be effectual.

3. Thirdly, we want to consider the substitutionary nature of the atonement (Read Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:24, 3:18).

The basis for the doctrine of the limited atonement is the fact that the atoning sacrifice of Christ was vicarious, or substitutionary **“the just for (or in the stead of) the unjust.”** The atoning Sacrifice of Christ was the exact, the actual, and the literal price necessary for our pardon, which the Holy law of God demanded as payment for our sins. Jesus suffered the exact penalty that the sinner would have been required to suffer in hell for his own sins. This was done, not merely for our potential benefit, but literally in our room and stead, as if we individually were in Christ suffering and dying for our sins. Paul said **“I am crucified with Christ...”** as if he was on the cross with Christ suffering for his sins!

The vicarious or substitutionary nature of the atonement is most crucial to understanding the doctrine of the limited atonement. Since the atonement of Christ was substitutionary, only the sinners for whom He suffered and died in their room and stead are atoned for; all others will be made to suffer for their own sins.

4. Fourthly, we want to see the extent of the atonement.

We will consider the extent of the atonement in two aspects.

1) First, we want to consider the unlimited aspects of the atonement of Christ.

We speak about the limited atonement a lot as Baptists, and of course we will get to that in a few minutes, yet we do not very often

consider the unlimited aspects of the atonement. But there are some ways that the atonement is unlimited; at least unlimited to our finite minds.

The atonement is unlimited in its scope. Notice the following verses:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:2).

We understand that the word “world” has different meanings depending on the context of its usage. In these and other similar passages, the word “world” is speaking of all kinds of people.

People from every nationality, from every ethnic group, from every race and color, throughout all of time, from Adam to the end of the world. The atoning work of Christ was not limited to the Jews only (although salvation was to the Jew first), but it extends to all kinds of people everywhere in the world. To the Jews in Christ’s day this was big news, and to most of them, it was bad news, which caused even greater rejection and hatred for Christ. The Jews thought that their Messiah would be their Savior only! But they did not know the Scriptures, which teach the salvation of the Gentiles also!

So then, the atonement is unlimited in its scope and its reach over geographical, ethnic, cultural, and national boundaries, as well as the boundaries of time. The great commission given by Jesus to His Church expresses this fact... Jesus said in Matthew 28:18-20, **“Go ye therefore and teach all nations... lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of**

the world.” That covers all people of all time.

Next, the atonement of Christ is unlimited in its ability to atone for any and all sinners who come unto Jesus.

“The vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. “Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear His voice!” There is no sinner who has sinned too great a sin, or too many sins that the sacrifice of Christ cannot atone for.

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

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

Jesus atoned for all kinds of sinners who were guilty of the vilest of sins, therefore the atonement of Christ is unlimited in its ability to save lost, undone, guilty, vile sinners, such as you and me. There is no sinner that Jesus can not save and that His blood can not atone for!

2) Secondly, we want to consider the limited nature of the atonement.

Essentially, the doctrine of the limited atonement means that the atonement of Christ was intended for, and sufficient for, and efficient for the elect of God, and only the

elect...that the blood of Christ atoned only for the sins of God’s elect whom He chose, whom He foreknew, whom He would effectually call by the Gospel, and whom He would in time glorify.

All professing Christians who have given this subject any real thought, must admit that the atonement must be limited, at least to some extent. No one that I have ever talked to on this subject believes that the atonement of Christ was intended for either Satan or the host of fallen angels who sinned against God. No one seems to care that God did not atone for them?

But these same folks get upset at the idea that God would not provide an atonement for all men without exception. They get angry at the idea that God would design the atonement exclusively for a people of His own choosing, and that all the rest would be left to perish in their sins.

But the fact is, beloved, that God is God, and He does whatsoever He pleases with His own; and He is perfectly just to save some and to damn others, seeing that all men are worthy of His wrath. But the proud heart of man will not accept or allow God to exercise His divine prerogative over His creation, to do with it whatsoever He will.

Does God not have the right to choose, to atone for, to save, and bring to glory a people as it pleases Him? Romans 9 teaches us that He does! Who is man to question God? Who is man to reply against God? Who is man to tell God what He can or cannot do with His own? The fact is, beloved, regardless of what proud and haughty men might think, God has limited the atonement to those He elected and predestinated unto salvation

♦ (Continued on page 22)

Limited Atonement

(Continued from page 21) ♦

and eternal glory.

But why, you might ask, must the atonement of Christ be limited?

Because, as we have already seen, the atonement of Christ is substitutionary. Since Jesus actually died for the individual sins of individual sinners, in their room and stead, then it must be that all sinners He atoned for must be pardoned of their sins. The holy, righteous justice of God requires that sin be paid for, but it must only be paid for once. Therefore, if Jesus paid a sinner's sin debt and suffered their eternal hell in their room and stead, the sinner will never have to do so. The justice of God will not punish the same sins twice.

Beloved, since hell is a real place where sinners will suffer for their sins, then Christ could not possibly have atoned for sinners who end up in that awful place of torments. This truly would be unjust. It would be unjust to Christ who suffered for sinners who also will suffer for these same sins. It would not only be unjust to Christ, but it would also make a mockery of His work on the cross, and render His atonement ineffective and of no value to the multitudes of sinners in hell.

Those who believe in a universal atonement, that is, that Christ died and atoned for all men without exception, cannot believe that the atonement was substitutionary. They cannot believe that Christ actually and literally suffered for any particular sinner and their sins. They can only believe that the atoning sacrifice of Christ merely made it possible for God to save sinners, but that the blood of Christ did not actually and literally atone

for anyone, or reconcile anyone to God.

If, beloved, Christ did not actually suffer in the room and stead of sinners, how then are their sins paid for? If Christ didn't actually and literally suffer for our sins, then will our sins go unpunished? Will the justice of God not be meted out on our sins? Was the death of Christ merely a formality that in reality accomplished nothing for certain for anyone, but only made possible for God to forgo His justice upon everyone of Adam's sinful fallen race? This is what the universal atonement advocates must ultimately concede to.

And the teaching of the sufficiency and efficiency of the atonement (which many professing sovereign grace Baptists believe today) is also a fallacy. Since the atonement of Christ was substitutionary, His sacrifice can only be sufficient and efficient for those He atoned for. Beloved, sufficiency must equal efficiency! How could the atonement of Christ be sufficient for all men, including those He did not die in the room and stead of? And how could His atonement be sufficient for sinners suffering in hell? This is inconsistent, contradictory, and a futile attempt to compromise with the universal atonement heresy.

Beloved, all such thinking is foolish! All such thinking is a mockery to God and His holiness, as well as His justice.

5. Fifthly, we want to consider, The limited atonement and the free offer of the Gospel.

How does the doctrine of the limited atonement affect our gospel ministry? Does it render our message insincere to the non-elect for which the atonement was not intended? That is what

we are accused of. The answer lies in our presentation of the Gospel. What do we tell lost sinners? Do we tell them that "God loves you and Jesus died for you, and He wants to save you, if only you will believe. Jesus did everything necessary for your salvation, now it is up to you to accept His offer." That is one message being propagated today, but it is the wrong message.

Beloved, what we need to tell lost sinners is that Jesus came into the world to save sinners, that Jesus died on the cross, was buried in the tomb, and rose again the third day, and whosoever repents and believes that Jesus suffered, bled, and died for them shall be saved.

It is not our place to say who God loves redemptively. It is not our place to say who Christ died for, and who His blood atoned for. Nor is it our place to guess and speculate who the elect are. But it is our place to preach the Gospel to every creature. To tell them what Christ came into the world to do, and what He accomplished on the cross for sinners. Beloved, God will call His people through the Gospel, and give faith to His elect, whoever and wherever they are.

We preach the Gospel as a statement of fact about who Christ is and what He accomplished on the cross, and God makes it effectual as He sees fit in accordance with His eternal plan and purpose.

So, beloved, it is not insincere to tell all men about Jesus Christ and His work on the cross for sinners. The Holy Spirit is the One who must reveal this truth to the hearts of sinners in the new birth. That is His business. Our business is simply to tell sinners about Jesus and His power to save all who will come unto Him by

faith.

In conclusion, was the atoning sacrifice of Christ intended for you? Are you one for whom Christ died and shed His precious blood? Are you one of the elect? How can you know?

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:24-25).

We notice the words **"through faith in his blood."** This is how God applies the atoning work of Christ to sinners, by giving them faith in His blood. By giving them faith to repent and believe the Gospel, that Jesus Christ died on the cross for their sins, that He was buried in the tomb, and that He rose again the third day for them. The atoning work of Christ is applied through faith.

If you believe in your heart that Jesus died for you, that His atoning blood was shed for your sins, then you can be sure that you are one of God's elect, and that His limited atonement was made for you. It is by faith in the blood, and only by faith that we can know that we are the redeemed, the elect, and the beloved of God.

Finally, I hope that this message will help strengthen the saints of God, and encourage you to continue believing in this most precious doctrine of the limited atonement. Do not let the errors of false religion discourage your faith in the limited atonement, and all the precious doctrines of God's amazing grace. God help us all to stand strong for these precious truths of His Word.



Praying in Jesus' Name

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

UNANSWERED PRAYER
CAN MEAN ONLY THAT
WE HAVE FAILED TO MEET
GOD'S CONDITIONS

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do..."
(John 14:13). **"...Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you"**
(John 16:23).



Prayer is one of the greatest privileges, as well as one of the most neglected duties, of a child of God. The Bible is full of invitations and exhortations to prayer. Promises of God to answer prayer are rich and plentiful, and perhaps none of them seem more inclusive than the promises of Jesus that God will do and give **"whatsoever"** we ask in His name.

Yet millions of prayers fail to obtain **"whatsoever"** is asked for, though the persons praying say and think that they are praying in Jesus' name. Has Jesus left us with false promises, or have we failed to understand and meet the conditions attached?

To the true believer in Christ there can be, of course, no doubt in this matter: the failure is in us, not in our Lord. What, then, does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus?

A MERE INVOCATION

Perhaps we think we are praying in the name of Jesus just because we use His name on our lips, including somewhere in our prayer a form of words such as

"We ask it in the name of Jesus."

Certainly there is nothing wrong in using such words, if we mean them. But it is possible to take God's name (or Jesus' name) in vain. I suppose no one is so foolish as to think that a mere pronouncing of a form of words can satisfy Jesus' condition that we ask in His name.

Nevertheless, **"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him"** (Col. 3:17).

AS OWNED BY HIM

"In the name of Jesus" could mean as owned by Him. So we speak of a bank account in the name of John Smith, meaning that it is his account.

This meaning has led some commentators to explain the phrase "in my name" as requiring no more than a recognition that Jesus is the rightful owner of all things, so that we ask God to give us what belongs to Jesus.

It is more to the point that He owns us, and we are invited and commanded to pray in view of the fact that we belong to Him.

"...Ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16:26-27).

When the policeman shouts, "Stop, in the name of the law," he means by the authority of the law. Likewise when Jesus tells us to ask in His name, we are to ask by His authority.

Accordingly, we are to ask under His direction, in obedience to His Word. We have no more right to ask for things contrary to His Word than an officer has to act contrary to law while professing to act in the name of the law.

Because of this principle, we do

well to search the Scripture for promises which we can fairly take to ourselves. Then we can pray as did David, **"...do as thou hast said"** (II Sam. 7:25).

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14).

IN HIS BEHALF

When an attorney acts in the name of his client, he acts in his behalf: that is, in his interest, in his support or defense, for his benefit. Thus when we pray really in the name of Jesus, we are not praying merely for ourselves, but for Him--in His interests and for His glory.

Right at this point, I fear, is where most of our praying fails. It is only when we abide in Him, and His words abide in us, that we can claim the promise, **"...ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"** (John 15:7).

James pointed to our common failing when he wrote: **"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts"** (James 4:3).

IN HIS CHARACTER

Finally, an actor acts or speaks in the name of a real or imaginary person when he assumes or represents that character. And we are to put on Christ (Rom. 13:14), we are ambassadors for Christ, we represent Christ (II Cor. 5:20).

And it is when we pray as in the character of Christ, with His Spirit praying beyond our ability to utter, that we most truly meet the condition of praying in the name of Jesus. Then He will surely do and give whatsoever we ask.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be

◇ (Continued on page 24)

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

7-1-2017 to 7-31-2017

Beginning Balance\$982.30

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL 60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX 50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV 200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 150.00
Bruce Allen, Fairmount, GA 25.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL 50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL 25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY 100.00
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME 100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR 12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME 20.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Corbin, KY 300.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV 100.00
Landmark B. C., Moncks Corner, SC 100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC 50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY 35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH 100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN 50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL 100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR 50.00
Rebecca Williamson, Huntingburg, IN 15.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS 25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Indianapolis, IN 45.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL 100.00
Sovereign Grace, B. C., Silsbee, TX 60.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA 25.00
Subscriptions 136.00
Anonymous 1,220.00
Dividing checks 150.00
Sub Total \$3,853.50
TOTAL \$4,835.80

EXPENDITURES:

Printing 490.00
Postage 523.87
Wages 2,300.00
FICA 175.90
Dividing checks 150.00
Bank Charge 13.00
Total Expenditures \$3,652.77
ENDING BALANCE \$1,183.03



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

7-1-2017 to 7-31-2017

Beginning Balance\$3,922.77

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Everson, WA 100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 300.00
..... 725.00
TOTAL 4,647.77

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time 843.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 843.98
..... 3,803.79
Interest +.03
ENDING BALANCE \$3,803.82

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, 3484 HWY 92 N, Silsbee, TX will be hosting a Bible Conference October 20th thru 22nd.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Larry Wilson, Elden Joslin, David O’Neal, Dan Taylor, Joey Newell, and Jimmy Nelson.

Service times are Friday 5:00 p.m., Saturday 9:30 a.m, and Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

All are invited to attend.

The Beauty Mt. Baptist Church of Edmond, WV has unanimously called Elder Ray Sexton as pastor.

Please remember this church and their new pastor in your prayers.

The Grace Baptist Church of Fairmount, GA is in need of a pastor. Due to old age and health reasons Bro. Al Lyons is planning to retire in October.

The church is looking for a man that believes like they do. They are Sovereign Grace, independent, landmark Baptist. Visit their website which states what they believe: <http://gracebaptistchurchfairmountga.com>.

Interested parties should contact Pastor Al Lyons, phone: 770-881-1486; Email: Preacher@royal-lion.com or Mail: P.O. Box 861, Fairmount, GA 30139.

The Bryan Station Baptist Church of Lexington, KY is printing a new booklet by Elder Tom Ross entitled *Are You An Exceptional Church Member?*

You may order copies from Bryan Station Baptist Church, 3175 Briar Hill Rd. Lexington, KY 40516 or visit their website



at www.bryanstation.com

The Windsor Baptist Church in Windsor, IL is seeking a qualified candidate for pastor. We are a sovereign grace independent Baptist church, small in number but rich in truth. We are seeking a candidate qualified for the position as described in I Timothy 3. Any interested potential candidate please contact Brother John Gregory at windsorbaptist.grace@gmail.com or phone 217-728-8311.

The Lord’s Baptist Church in Tacoma Washington is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Gaylen Russell at 360-879-5565 (home) or 253-495-4567 (cell) or by Email: gaylenr@rainierconnect.com.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact the church in writing at SGBC, 400 N. Main St., Caldwell, KS 67022, or by phone Brother Darin Wiley 620-863-2431.

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

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

Jesus’ Name

(Continued from page 23) ♦

uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:26-27).

In our praying, as in our whole Christian life, Christ in us is our hope of glory (Col. 1:27). When we can truthfully say with Paul, “... Christ liveth in me...” (Gal. 2:20), and when our prayers are the expression of the life and Spirit of Christ within us, then indeed we are praying in Jesus’ name.



NOTICE!

The Berea Baptist Broadcast can now be heard in the Bristol, Kingsport, and Colonial Heights areas in northeast Tennessee, as well as in the areas close to there in Kentucky, Virginia, and North Carolina. See the radio log on page two for station details.



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