

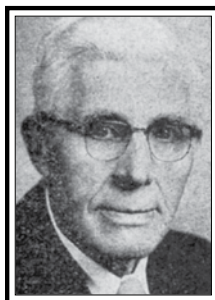
# The Berea Baptist Banner

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

## How God's People May Enjoy Each Other Daily

By Harm Rust  
(Now in Glory)

When the people of Israel left Egypt we read, **"And a mixed multitude went up also with them"** (Ex. 12:38). These were not descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and therefore not Israelites at all. They should not have undertaken the journey with the chosen of the Lord. Later we read, **"And the mixed multitude**



that was among them fell a lust: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, **Who shall give us flesh to eat**" (Num. 11:4)? It was the mixed multitude who were not willing and able to "endure afflictions," that caused  
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## Long Suffering and Salvation

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

**"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you"** (II Pet. 3:15).

In our text verse we find that the Apostle Peter gives us a definition of salvation – "longsuffering." This certainly is not a complete definition, nor is it the only definition of salvation. Yet, this



is at least an opportunity for us to consider a word that is in many ways synonymous with salvation – the word "longsuffering." Now, I want us to consider the longsuffering of God, and how the longsuffering that is demonstrated by God plays a crucial role in the salvation of the souls of men. The  
 ◇ (Continued on page 6)

## Man Can't, But God Can

By Wm. Doyal Thomas  
of Hartselle, Alabama

There is an infinite difference between the capacities of man and the omnipotence of God. This should come as no surprise to any, but apparently most men have not correctly considered this fact beyond their vanity and pride in self-centered egotism.



Their thoughts are invariably in contrast to reality as they reason within themselves and do much err.

Why is this true, if indeed it be true? Why is it that man thinks and  
 ◇ (Continued on page 11)

## A Christian Ought to Be Forgiving

By Roy Mason  
(1894 - 1978)

We are living in a vengeful and unforgiving world. People of the world like to pay people "back in their own coin." They enjoy getting "even" with those who have done them a real or a fancied wrong. The returning



of good for evil is not a characteristic of people in general. The attitude of many is, "let me do others before they get a chance to do  
 ◇ (Continued on page 4)

## The Real Rascal

Milburn Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)

**"And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity"** (Eccl. 8:10).

Death is a busy worker, and funerals are no uncommon sight. But some funerals are more sorrowful than others because of



the character of the life that has been lived. **"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,"** but cursed are the dead out of Him (Rev. 14:13). The inhabitants of both Heaven and Hell are interested in the  
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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 strengthen His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellowship 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.

## How God's People

(Continued from page 1) ♦

so much of the murmuring and rebellion and kept the children of Israel in the wilderness for forty years. The rejoicing of the Lord's people in every age has been much hindered because there are some among them who have not experienced genuine repentance toward God and heart faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

### THE LORD'S PEOPLE CAN ENJOY EACH OTHER IF ALL ARE SPIRITUALLY MINDED.

It is possible for some Christians to be carnally minded while others are spiritually minded. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; (separation) but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:5-8). The carnally minded Christian and the spiritually minded Christian cannot enjoy the same things and so cannot enjoy each other. We are reminded that our Saviour spoke very sharply to the Apostle Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matt. 16:23). At that time Peter and the others did not see things right. They looked at things from the human view. The Lord had to give further instruction. After Pentecost they saw things from God's viewpoint. So even now there are some of the Lord's people so taken up with "the cares of this world, and the

deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in" (Mark 4:19), that they become unfruitful. So many of the Lord's people have not done as Moses, of whom we read, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:24-25). For the Lord's people to enjoy one another they have to be spiritually minded. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

### THE LORD'S PEOPLE CAN ENJOY EACH OTHER IF THEY ARE REALLY HONEST IN THEIR PROFESSION OF LOVE TO ONE ANOTHER.

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:9-10). We cannot enjoy one another unless we can have confidence in each other. Hypocrisy will surely break the tie that binds. We need to mean what we say and say what we mean as Jesus said, "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. 5:37). Jesus also said, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1). Judas betrayed his Master with a kiss. "Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus and said, Hail, master; and

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# How God's People

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kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him" (Matt. 26:48-49). Judas is one of the most despicable characters in history. He professed love and faithfulness to Christ and His disciples during all the time of Jesus' ministry but was full of hypocrisy and hatred. "Let love be without dissimulation." We can enjoy each other if we know we are true.

**THE LORD'S PEOPLE CAN  
ENJOY ONE ANOTHER  
IF THEY FOLLOW THE  
THINGS WHICH  
MAKE FOR PEACE.**

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:10). The apostle wrote this to the Christians at Rome. They had erred by criticizing each other and judging. They also were belittling each other. Paul wrote, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother" (Rom. 14:10). In the world of politics our two parties are saying all the critical things they can devise, belittling each other and setting one another at nought. This is not the way for the Lord's people to do. Sometimes it seems we are too much affected by the ways of the world. Christians are all to be of the same importance. Each is to esteem the other better than himself. The Lord's people can so conduct themselves as to enjoy each other. James writes, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and

cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not" (Jas. 4:1-2). Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:39). Our prayer life is directly hindered if we tolerate strife in our homes or in our churches. We all need to pray the prayer of the Psalm, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24).

**THE LORD'S PEOPLE CAN  
ENJOY EACH  
OTHER IF THEY WILL  
BEAR THE  
INFIRMITIES OF THE  
WEAK.**

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let everyone of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me" (Rom. 15:1-3). The Lord's people come from greatly diversified strata. The early Christians had trouble because at first they could not believe that the Church was to be composed of people of all nationalities. The Jewish saints could not understand that Gentiles were to be fellow heirs and of the same body. This is a mystery kept secret until it was revealed to Paul. Judaizing teachers misled some of the Christians in the Galatian Churches and the Apostle wrote, "For ye are all the children of God (that is Jew and Gentile believers) by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither

bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29). It seems easy for Christians to find fault with each other. But "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). If we always followed this advice it would go a long ways toward helping us to enjoy each other.

**THE LORD'S PEOPLE CAN  
ENJOY EACH  
OTHER IF THEY CAN BE  
LIKE MINDED  
ONE TOWARD ANOTHER.**

One of the important objectives in the Christian life and for each group of the Lord's people is, "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This we can not do unless "The God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (Rom. 15:5-7). It is only our Lord and Master who can grant to us this disposition of humility. But in this, too, we can be labourers together with God. Each of us have need to ask God to give us the proper spirit in all we do and say. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"

(Phil. 2:5-8). Pride is a great evil and very unbecoming a Christian. Humility is a lovable Christ-like trait and very becoming a Christian. "But he giveth more grace, Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6). The proud and the humble cannot enjoy the same things and so cannot enjoy one another. If all in a Church are proud it would soon result in dissolution Jesus concluded the parable of the Pharisee and the publican in these words. "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14). Let us be humble.

**THE LORD'S PEOPLE CAN  
ENJOY EACH  
OTHER IF THEY WILL BY  
LOVE SERVE ONE  
ANOTHER.**

The epistles to the Churches show that early Christians were very imperfect just as the Lord's people are today. That is why we have so much instruction in the Bible. We need all this instruction so "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:17). So many of the Lord's people do not read their Bibles and they neglect prayer and that causes them to be so different from each other that they cannot enjoy each other as they should. "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:13-15). In our churches we need to be willing to take a servant's

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# How God's People

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place. **"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"** (Mark 10:45). **"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law"** (Rom. 13:10).

**THE LORD'S PEOPLE CAN ENJOY EACH OTHER IF THEY WILL NOT ENGAGE IN ACTIVITY THROUGH STRIFE OR VAINGLORY.**

I fear that the religious activity everywhere is on a competitive basis. How obnoxious this must be to our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Some say, very flippantly at times, "The mission of the Church is the salvation of souls and the edifying of the body of Christ." But the Church has a more important objective still. **"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."** **"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others"** (Phil. 2:3-4). No activity can be pleasing to God if it is done out of selfish motives. If through strife or vainglory it will surely scatter the "Flock of God." All of us are to heed the words of Paul to the elders, **"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood"** (Acts 20:28).

**THE LORD'S PEOPLE CAN ENJOY EACH OTHER IF THEY WILL**

**FORBEAR EACH OTHER AND FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER.**

A New Testament Church is to be a fellowship with rejoicing. First, if we can all rejoice in the Lord and put on the Lord Jesus Christ and the attributes of Christ, we shall also enjoy one another. **"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering: Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful"** (Col. 3:12-15).



## Ought to Be Forgiving

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me." Thus we have war and strife in the world---sometimes in families, sometimes in neighborhoods, and sometimes on a world wide scale.

**THE CHRISTIAN TO BE DIFFERENT**

Jesus meant that His followers should follow a different philosophy than that followed by the world. He taught that we should be forgiving as regards people in general, and as regards other Christians in particular. Let us take a glance at what He taught along this line:

1. --He taught forgiveness in the Model Prayer. **"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."** This is saying, "Forgive us, Lord, in the same way that we forgive." If some received forgiveness as they

extend it to others, they would NEVER receive any forgiveness.

2. --He taught that if we do not forgive, we will not RECEIVE forgiveness (Matt. 8:14).

3. --He taught that we should forgive just as long as forgiveness is sought (Matt. 18:21). (See also Luke 17:3-4).

4. --Jesus not only taught by WORD, He taught forgiveness by EXAMPLE (Luke 23:34). On the cross He exemplified His teaching. Stephen showed the same spirit as he was being stoned to death. Paul showed the same spirit when he prayed that those who had forsaken him might not have the sin "laid to their charge."

**CHRIST'S TEACHING IN REVERSE AMONG CHURCH MEMBERS**

Few things that Jesus ever taught are ignored more widely among His professed followers, than His teachings concerning forgiveness. In many small towns there are churches that have members who for years have set across the house from each other, refusing to speak. The church does not have the courage to turn them out, but that is what should be done. Often one sees a church member who treasures up something against another member for years. Perhaps there was disagreement in business meeting, or there was a difference of opinion about something, and a grudge was stored away, ready to be brought forth at any time.

**WHAT A SPIRIT OF UNFORGIVENESS DOES**

1. --It breaks the fellowship of a church. There is no fellowship so long as church members go around with something against each other. We need to daily

clear our minds and hearts of grudges, such that we forgive whatever of wrong we have received.

2. --It hinders our prayer life. The Lord has forgiven every one of us who are saved, more than we can ever forgive anybody else. If He has forgiven us a million dollars worth, then how can we afford to hold a fifteen cent grudge against somebody?

3. --It loses the respect of the unsaved world. How can unsaved people have any confidence in professing Christians who are unforgiving and vitriolic in their attitude toward each other? We have heard the unsaved comment on a church wrangle and say concerning the participants, "Why I would not be that bitter and mean, and I do not even claim to be a Christian."

4. --The spirit of unforgiveness wrangles and eats and gnaws like a canker sore. In most every community there is some old unforgiving man or woman who will not even go to church. They claim that the church, or some church member injured them or hurt their feelings perhaps years ago, so in bitterness they have pulled off into a corner to nurse their bitterness. It is doubtful if most persons of that sort are saved. They certainly do not have the spirit of Christ. And **"if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."**

If you should look---and look carefully into your own heart, would you find any hate there---any grudges---any spirit of unforgiveness? It is worth doing, for you can not have any spiritual life worth anything while treasuring these things.





# Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of  
Plant City, Florida



## Acquaint Now Thyself With Him #6

### The Breath of God Job 33:4

We turn now to the breath of God. Mankind at large is not very mindful of God nor His breath. God's people often overlook the "breath of God" giving it but a passing glance. However, in our "Examination of the Lord," we like Sarah did and Job was instructed to, **"acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee"** (Job 22:21).

### THE BREATH OF GOD IN CREATION

What Elihu states in Job 33:4 is applicable to every one of man kind. The record given by God in regard to creation gives us this truth: God spoke and it was done. God said, and it came to pass. Observe, Genesis 2:7, **"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."** See Psalm 33:6-7, 9. The Bible describes the creation of all that there is as done by the Lord. Yet when it came to humanity, something was done differently. The LORD God **"...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."** Nothing else became a living soul, but man alone. Only man had the **"breath of life"** breathed into him by the LORD God. This distinguishes man from beasts. God imparted to man His own immortal breath; He made man after His likeness by imparting

to the dust of the earth in human form, a never-dying spirit.

Every one of us is fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14), therefore let us praise Him who has done marvelously.

### THE BREATH OF GOD IN REGENERATION

When God made man, He revealed to us some principle teachings. Creation is the work of God. It is done by His work alone. This includes His hands, but also His breath. When God was finished with creating man and woman God said, **"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day"** (Gen. 1:31). God's creation, including man and woman, were **"very good."** Well something happened to that creation. Man disobeyed God and sin entered the world corrupting all of creation (Rom. 5:12). This was no surprise to God. Man was ruined by sin. There is no reforming man back to his original sinless state. However, God is able to create again. We call this "regeneration." Just as the LORD God generated us in the first place with His breath, so God will re-generate His people with His breath!

Observe the Scriptures in John 3:1-8. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus answers Nicodemus' questions regarding the new birth or regeneration. In order for Adam to become a living soul, God had to breathe into him the breath of life. In order for man to become alive spiritually, God

must breathe upon him. The word "Spirit" has the meaning of "breath, blast, current of air" (Strong's concordance). In John 3:5-6, **"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."** We are told that man must be born again. That this new birth is the operation of the Holy Spirit of God, which is likened unto a breath. We find that Jesus also stated to Nicodemus that a man had to be **"born of water."** This is a reference unto the Word of God. We are told in II Timothy 3:16-17, **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."** The phrase **"given by inspiration of God"** literally means "God breathed" or "Divinely breathed."

Thus, we are instructed that regeneration is owed to the breath of God. The Holy Spirit is the agent, and the Word of God is the means in regeneration, **"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth..."** (James 1:18).

### THE BREATH OF THE LORD

Webster's New World College Dictionary 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, defines "breath" with multiple definitions: air taken into the lungs and then let out; the act of breathing; respiration; the power to breathe easily and naturally (to get one's breath back); life or spirit; air or vapor given off from anything; air carrying fragrance or odor; a puff or whiff, as of air, slight breeze; an utterance, especially in a low voice, whisper or murmur; the time taken by a single respiration,

a moment a slight pause or rest; moisture produced by a condensing of the breath, as in cold air.

The same idea is conveyed by the word "breath" when referring to the Lord's breath. Oh, how the Lord condescends to make Himself known unto us that we might trust Him the more and extol His great and holy Name.

### THE BREATH OF THE LORD AND DELIVERANCE

Here is one of David's "Songs of Deliverance." He had many of them and so ought we to have many songs of deliverance. For the Lord delivers His people again and again (II Cor. 1:10, **"Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us"**). The word **"deliver"** = "to pluck, to rescue, to recover" (Strong's # 5337). This is exactly what the Lord does for His people when He saves them, but also down throughout our pilgrimage upon this **"desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness"** (Deut.32:10).

Notice how David, being moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21), refers to his enemies (II Samuel 22:18-19). Observe how David describes the deliverance of the Lord: **"And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils"** (II Sam. 22:16). When David was in the midst of a calamity, the Bible tells us that by the breath of His nostrils, the Lord removed the waters of the sea and the foundations of the earth were discovered! With a single, solitary breath of the nostrils of the Lord, the channels of the sea were rebuked to the point that the foundations of the earth

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# Little Hills

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were discovered! As King Asa of Judah stated pertaining to the Lord, **"...it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee"** (II Chron. 14:11).

His power and ability is beyond our imagination. He is willing and has employed the very same breath that you and I might be delivered time and again in our lives.

## THE BREATH OF THE LORD AND RESTORATION

Ezekiel 37:1-6

The Lord acts according to His will. Not only in the lives of individual people, but also with nations, specifically with Israel. Israel was created by God, given a land by the Lord, removed from that land by the Lord and restored to that land by the Lord. At present time, we are told, by revelation of the Lord, that God hath not cast off His people Israel forever, but **"...that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"** (Rom. 11:1, 25). That is, to say, that when the last Gentile is saved, the Lord will return to dealing with Israel spiritually and nationally.

These bones are in reference to Israel. They were dead. But the Lord would cause them to be revived by **"breath"** (Ezekiel 37:5-6). The results would be that they would **"live"** (Vv.5-6). Israel will be restored. If backsliders today are to be restored, it will have to be by the "breath of the Lord." If there is to be a revival that we live before the Lord, it will have to be

by the "breath of the Lord."

As we said earlier "The breath of the Lord," God's word is breathed out (II Tim. 3:16-17). We also stated that the Holy Spirit is in the Greek "breath." In order for man to be restored and revived, the "breath of the Lord" two-fold will be involved. Our part is to preach the Word! That which is breathed out by the Lord. The Holy Spirit will do His office work as He sees fit. Let us pray with fervent and effectual prayers for Him to come and make His Word effective in our lives.

## THE BREATH OF GOD AND JUDGMENT

II Thessalonians 2:7-8

So many believe in a soft Christ. One that does not hate sin. Scripture tells us otherwise. Our Scripture tells us that **"...the Lord shall consume with the spirit (or breath) of his mouth..."** This is clearly a reference unto the second phase of His second coming, when He shall come to this earth with His saints and judge. There have been many judgments before. The deluge (flood) Luke 17:27; The judgment of individual cities Luke 17:28-29. Yet, the judgment of God to come will be more severe for it shall come upon all unbelieving, all who have followed the wide path which leads to destruction (Rev. 19:15, 20, 21). The sword proceeding out of His mouth may be in reference to the sword of the Spirit of God which is the word of God (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17).

With the breath of His mouth He will consume all unbelievers. Compare Luke 20:17-18, **"And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever**

**it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."**

Were your sins judged at Calvary in the person of Jesus Christ? Or will they be judged in you in the day of judgment and you will be consumed by the breath of God? Come, while it is called today, and call upon the name of the Lord that you might be saved from such horrible an end as this. Come unto Jesus and live, for why will ye die?

## CLOSING

There is not one aspect of the Lord, not one part of His being that is not engaged for the benefit of His people. Oh, that we might praise Him, **"The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation... Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name. He is the tower of salvation for his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore"** (II Sam. 22:47, 50-51).



## Longsuffering

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word "longsuffering" is defined by Oxford Dictionaries this way: having or showing patience in spite of troubles, especially those caused by other people. Webster's 1828 dictionary defines "longsuffering" this way: "Bearing injuries or provocation for a long time; patient; not easily provoked. **"...The LOR God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth"** (Ex. 34:6). Some synonyms for "longsuffering" are as follows: patient, forbearing, forgiving, charitable, accommodating. I know it is difficult for us to do, but we must understand that our God

in Heaven reflects many of these qualities. In fact, in order for Him to deal with a broken, lost, sinful, and rebellious mankind, He most certainly demonstrates the attribute of longsuffering! I submit to you, that if God is sovereign, then longsuffering is essential if men are ever to be saved. Because, a sovereign God does not have to put up with sin or sinners! His sovereignty implies that He can both propose and act in any way or manner that He sees fit. As a holy God, then, one might assume that His sovereignty would cause Him to purpose and perform immediate judgment upon men, which would certainly result in the prompt and utter destruction of mankind. However, the longsuffering of God curbs the holy justice and judgment of God, until such time as He has saved the souls that He has ordained unto salvation. I believe this to be the primary intent of the words of the Apostle Peter, as he refers his readers to the salvation which God has provided, in direct connection with the longsuffering of our Holy and Beloved God.

As we consider this salvation and God's longsuffering, I want to give you some ways in which the longsuffering of God ought to be evidenced in our lives, as we work out salvation with fear and trembling. Surely, we should be longsuffering (patient, forgiving, loving, accommodating) towards each other. And, just as surely, the longsuffering of God should be a motivation for us to walk more closely with our Lord and Saviour, and a motivation for us to demonstrate love, gratitude, and faithfulness towards our Father and God.

## LONGSUFFERING IS NOT AN EXCUSE TO SIN

I first want to remind you that

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# Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of  
Temperance, Michigan

"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" (Deuteronomy 32:2-3).



## DON'T PLAY WITH THE DEVIL, RESIST HIM

When I was younger, possibly too young, I became enamored with horror movies. I loved psychological thrillers, and enjoyed the ride of plot twists along with the characters in the movie. Movies like "The Exorcist," "Amityville Horror," and "Paranormal Activity" offered sci-fi at its haunting best.

Of these stories, Amityville, was one most fascinating because there was something very real about it. My mother had even told me that when she and my dad had first married, they read the original book together and strange things began to happen around their country home. Headlights of cars coming down the road would suddenly vanish without a trace; floor boards would creak during the night as though someone were walking around, yet no one could ever be found in the house but them. Great bedtime stories, right?

As a teenager, I felt entitled to some answers. Are ghosts or spirits real? If they are, why do some have experiences that others do not? I eventually found the book my parents had read in a used bookstore. As I took the time to mentally prepare myself for this read that I had been so curious about, I surprisingly came to an unexpected quandary. What if hauntings were something you could not un-see once seen? What if, as Pandora's box, it could never be closed?

If you read through Mark 5 you will see the tale of the "Tombstone

Terror;" a man possessed by not a mere demon but many. This man dwelled among the tombs and could not be bound by chains or shackles and was heard crying and cutting himself day and night. Jesus came and commanded them to depart from him, and they went into a great heard (2,000 or so) swine which quickly ran off a cliff and drowned.

During Paul's time in Ephesus the Lord used him to heal a great multitude. These miracles came out from Paul, but were done by the divine power of God. In Acts 19 we see seven Jewish men attempt to do the same by calling on the name of Jesus to remove evil spirits. During their attempted exorcism the spirit responded and said in verse 15, **"...Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"** and the following verse tells us the man possessed **"...leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."**

Satan is very real as well as the angels that fell with him. We are not called in this life to challenge him or toy with him but rather to **"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,"** according to James 4:7. Satan fears God, he does not fear you. Those in this life who have succumbed to the devil's promises will soon find out that "sin will always take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want

to pay" apart from God's grace and your repentance.

Paul writes to the Romans to mark them which cause the faithful to stray from God's Word; to be wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil (Rom. 16:17-19). I never read that book, and eventually threw it away. Be careful who and what you give your time to.

## YOKE UP

My youngest daughter has a new obsession with saying she can't do things. This is not from some outward oppression, but rather a self-inflicted one. I ask her to tie her shoes. "I can't!" Pick up her toys. "I can't!" Go to the table for dinner. "I can't!" Eat whatever meal is in front of her. "I can't!" We all experience times in our lives when it is easier to say that we can't do something rather than bothering to try. As adults, we are not much different from children. We still have "I can't!" moments; we just wrap ours around carefully crafted excuses.

Perhaps, like me, you grew up hearing the story about the little engine that "could." This story paints the inspiring picture of a little steam engine bearing a heavy load, who has to find his way to the top of a giant mountain. He convinced himself of his unlikeliness to succeed. Would he have enough steam in his tank to make it to the top? He was so little, the mountain was so steep, and his load so difficult to haul. The mountain, and the impending difficulty, caused worry inside the little engine's head from the start.

What is worry? Our English word "worry" comes from an Anglo-Saxon word that means "to strangle." Worry certainly does strangle people physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The words the Bible uses to describe worry translate literally to being "torn apart." Worry comes when the thoughts in our mind, and

feelings in our heart, pull against our fear of the unknown to tear us apart.

A tank full of scalding hot water and a full head of steam was what was necessary for this little engine to make it up the mountain. He needed to know that it was possible. The same is true for us and our walk today. I John 2:28 says, **"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."** The greatest way to overcome our worry is to eschew our fear of the unknown.

In the book of Philippians, Paul stood to encourage the church's members to keep their eyes on the Savior. No matter what obstacles were put before them, they could overcome them all through Christ. Philippians 4:13, **"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,"** is a great reminder that the Lord provides enough strength for us to get us over our mountains every single day.

My Heavenly Father is already preparing me to do the next hard thing that comes my way. Maybe you are at the bottom of your mountain with the entirety of a challenge ahead of you. Perhaps, you are moving slowly up an immeasurable mountain. Maybe you have reached the peak of the most difficult mountain you have ever climbed.

In every way during Jesus' ministry, He showed us how we were to live, serve, worship, and climb. It is when we try to push on of our own accord, or allow the world to cool the strength the Lord has promised, we are more easily 'torn apart' by worry. A tank of lukewarm water causes our journey to stall just as a fire for our Lord is exactly what is needed to keep pushing forward.



# Longsuffering

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the longsuffering of God is not an excuse for us to sin. I know that we know these things; but, still, in our saved lives, we sometimes demonstrate a behavior that implies that we expect the Lord God to put up with our failures, our weaknesses, and even our “pet sins” (as if there were any sin that the Lord would allow us to retain in order for us to appease our human appetites!), all because we are His children, and based upon the fact that He has been kind and forgiving towards us and others in the past.

If we return to our text verse, and read the preceding verse, we find Peter instructing his readers this way: **“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless”** (II Pet. 3:14). This is an important premise that I want you to retain in your mind, and reflect in your service unto God: To live before God without spot and blameless is incumbent upon each of those who would dare to claim the longsuffering and salvation that is provided by God! If we look for a Saviour and a coming judgment, then we should live holy lives! If we want to be found of Him in peace – without spot and blameless – then we should strive to please Him, obey Him, and follow after Him in a diligent fashion! There is no room for a continuation in sin, in the longsuffering of God.

Despite our vain imaginations to the contrary, God does sacrifice or forego His holiness in order to associate with us. Instead, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from our sins, and His righteousness is imputed unto us. We are made fit to be in His

presence – He does not lower Himself (lessen or compromise His character or holiness) in order to meet with us. Now, I know there is a sense in which He deigns to meet with us, deigns to even consider us; however, the meeting and the communion does not compromise His person or holiness. He ordains to save us and make us His, while also ordaining the means – which includes a salvation that will not reduce His holiness.

Such a God does demonstrate longsuffering towards His chosen few – and towards the masses of humanity, humanly speaking – but those who are saved ought not imagine that that longsuffering extends to a willful and continual indulgence in sin! Previously, Peter said, **“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries”** (I Pet. 4:1-3).

We ought not, and must not, dare to bring affront to God or His holiness! In such a case, man will find that the person in the offense will always be the subject of God’s chastening – he will be chastised in a manner befitting his willfulness, and God may even remove such a person from the world and limit their usefulness in His cause. **“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent”** (Rev. 3:19).

The longsuffering of God

toward us, does not mean that he countenances our sins, or that He condones our weakness or failures. Instead, remember that we are men and women who are finite and mortal, but God has saved us spiritually and eternally. He is longsuffering toward us and this results in our salvation – but this longsuffering is never meant to grant permission to sin. Our God is longsuffering, but he maintains His holy expectations in the lives of His people and His servants. Those expectations (just like the holiness of God) do not moderate with circumstance or diminish with time. Our God does not lower Himself in order to save us; our God does not compromise His holiness in order to save us; our God does not discount His justice in order to save us. Instead, our God has devised and implemented a salvation that makes us ready for His presence and fit for Heaven. Salvation doesn’t diminish God – salvation rescues, cleans, and purifies a wicked sinner.

## LONGSUFFERING SHOULD NOT DIMINISH OUR FAITHFULNESS

A further consideration of the longsuffering of God, should lead us to conclude that His longsuffering should not diminish our faithfulness unto Him. In some ways this is similar to my previous point, but I want to extend the thought to include our active and zealous service and faithfulness unto our God and Saviour. In other words, the fact that God has been (and is) longsuffering toward us, does not remove from us the need to depend upon Him, to trust in Him, and to look for ways to exalt Him before men. We must remain true unto Him! **“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye**

**also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness”** (II Pet. 3:17). However much time has passed since we have been saved; however many sins have been committed since the world has begun; however many times the Lord did forbear the destruction of a sinner, of a nation, of the entirety of humanity; still, we must know that our hearts are with God, through the eye of faith we see Him as our Lord and Master, and our trust is in Him, as our souls have been committed to His keeping. He still is God, and He still is in control. **“The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah”** (Ps. 46:6-11).

We should not live our lives as if God has forgotten us. **“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation”** (II Pet. 3:3-4). The world may “forget” God or refuse to acknowledge Him, but we must not. His longsuffering does not mean He has forgotten the world, or forsaken His people. He only

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# Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of  
Clendenin, West Virginia

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

## THE TRUTH HURTS

The Galatian churches had changed. They were no longer believing the same doctrine they had once confessed and now they are angry at Paul for calling them out on their move. How mean! Paul had preached the gospel to these people, and they had believed with their whole heart, so much so that they were persecuted for the sake of the gospel (Gal. 3:4). Some smooth talkers came to town and in no time at all, the churches had abandoned what they once believed for this different teaching.

The truth did not change. Paul had not changed. The gospel had not changed. The Galatian churches changed. Once, they loved Paul so much that they would have given him their own eyeballs, if it were possible so he could be relieved of his physical ailments. Now, they look at him with suspicion and anger for the very same reasons they loved him a short time prior. **"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth"** (Gal. 4:16)? The false teachers knew the same thing that Paul did – once someone becomes embittered against another person, it rarely matters how tight the argument or how logical the premise, the emotion of disliking the person will overpower reasoned thought. They could not defeat Paul's gospel, so they resorted to destroying Paul in the eyes of the

Christians. Now anything Paul said is soured because of their prejudice against him.

The truth hurts when it hits a sore spot. It is easy to hear truth that confirms what we already believe. We love flattery, especially about what we think and believe. When confronted with truth that proves us wrong, we get defensive because we feel that it attacks our identity and feel it a personal slight. Some neurological studies have shown that the brain interprets being proven wrong and being under physical attack in a similar way. The truth really does hurt when we are proven wrong. When truth goes against us, our depraved human nature would rather kill the messenger rather than admit wrong. "Paul, that old fashioned fundamentalist. Paul, majoring on the minors. Paul, always harping about something, standing in the way of progress. There goes Paul, making a big deal out of doctrine again, thinking he is always right." When told that we are wrong, the first reaction is to disagree and to defend ourselves, which makes sense. Just because someone says you are wrong, does not mean you are, but no one is right about everything. Rather than dealing with the truth, the easiest way to handle this prickly situation is to get angry at the person rebuking you and then start finding things wrong with him. Make the man the enemy, then you do not have to listen to

him anymore. When the truth hurts, we need to repent instead of making excuses and making enemies. Proverbs 9:8 says, **"Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee."** Wisdom views correction as mercy.

## ISAIAH 53 #1

### BEHOLD GOD'S SERVANT

**"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high"** (Isa. 52:13).

I can remember the first time I heard Isaiah 53. I probably had heard it many times before, but this was the first time I actually heard it. I attended a Bible conference at King's Addition Baptist Church in South Shore, Kentucky and before the preaching began, we had the preliminary announcements, prayer requests, and stood for the singing of hymns (it is near impossible to sit and sing, in my opinion) and remained standing for the reading of the Word. The pastor had us turn to Isaiah 53. I did not even turn, I just listened and as he read, I could not believe what I heard. I was astonished. Never before had I perceived such a vivid description of the blessed Lord Jesus. Around 25 years have passed, and I still have not gotten over the stunning picture of Jesus in Isaiah's prophecy.

After we sat down, I grabbed my Bible, found the passage and read it for myself over and again (sorry to whomever was preaching!) and could hardly contain my wonder over the Old Testament containing descriptions of Jesus. Isaiah prophesied from 739–681 BC, so that means around 700 years prior to the time of Jesus. The physical prophecies are

profound, but what amazed me was the spiritual insight into the cross. Isaiah gives us a glimpse of the Son of Man from the perspective of the people, but he also tells us what transpired between the Father and the Son. Isaiah 53 is one of the great texts on the atonement and what Christ accomplished at Calvary.

The passage of Isaiah 53 actually starts in Isaiah 52:13 and gives a good example of why you should not assume the chapters in your Bible complete a thought. In novels, each chapter is its complete section. It may be a cliffhanger, but usually it ends a scene. This is not always the case in our Bibles. The chapters in our Bibles, as they are now, were added in the 1500's to help us find passages in the Bible. You can think of chapter and verses like addresses. Imagine how difficult a task to find this section of Isaiah without verse numbers or chapters! I am very thankful for that innovation, but we have to remember it is not a perfect system and sometimes the chapter ends or starts in the middle of a thought, like we have here. The context shows us where our passage begins. Notice in 52:13, it starts with the word "behold." Isaiah says **"behold"** to get our attention. Hey, listen up. Jehovah's servant (the Messiah, Isa. 42:1), will come and deal with man wisely (Isa. 11:2) and in His great success will be highly exalted. Isaiah describes a glorious, holy, man who has come to do the work of God. Surely, such a man would be honored by all, which making the next verse we will study so shocking.



# Longsuffering

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awaits the fulfillment of His will, and all of creation – including judgment and the condemnation or justification of men – will proceed according to His certain and sure timetable.

The world may forget God, or the world may believe God to be blind and unknowing. They somehow compare His longsuffering to ignorance, blindness, or a lack of power. However, this most certainly is not the case. We must believe and be sure of the fact that God is even now aware of the sins of men and aware of the needs of His people. He does look down on the affairs of men, and He is most surely concerned with the plight of His people. Let me refer you to a Psalm of David, which Peter quotes from in his first epistle: **“Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all”** (Ps. 34:11-19).

I am glad that the God Who saved me is the God Who is even now in control! The longsuffering

of God that we see evident around us, is not (as the human mind might perceive it) a sign that God has lost control, that God has forgotten us, that God is no longer observing us, or that God is unable to complete or accomplish His will and purpose. Rather, the longsuffering that we see demonstrated, ought to draw us closer to such a God, Who is able to work out His will and purpose, and Who is able to preserve or destroy, as He sees fit. If, for a while, He is longsuffering towards this world, this is not a sign of weakness; instead, this is obviously a part of His purpose, which will, according to His will, accomplish salvation for many.

## LONGSUFFERING ALLOWS THE WORLD TO CONTINUE

Next, I want us to consider the simple truth that God's longsuffering, even now, allows our world (at least the world of men) to continue. Surely, even the most cursory observations of the behavior of the sons and daughters of Adam, would lead any honest person to conclude that we stand in need of judgment, and we are without any redeeming qualities of our own. Based on our own efforts and worth, we are most certainly bound to be destroyed – either by our own doings, or by the Hand of the God Whom we have offended.

In our text chapter, Peter said this of the wicked world of men, **“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the 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. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day”** (II Pet. 3:5-8). The Lord God is the Creator. He destroyed the world of men once, with a flood. Men should remember and know that God will judge men, and He will bring them into account for their sins! And yet, since that time of the Great Flood the world has continued, and men have become complacent in their sins. Still, the world continues only because of the longsuffering of God, and judgment will yet return. Only, this time, the world will be cleansed with fire. **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 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”** (II Pet. 3:9-13).

I submit to you, that without God's longsuffering this world would have been long ago destroyed. The very God that men mock, is the God that shows

restraint, and demonstrates longsuffering even now – declining to destroy men outright, even though our actions and our sinfulness demands such just destruction.

This is another simple truth that I want you to carry with you: God is holy, and men are not. God is sovereign, and men are not. Therefore, if unholy men exist in the presence of a holy and sovereign God, longsuffering on the part of God is indispensable in the continued existence of the mere mortal and depraved creatures who make up the sum existence of all of mankind. In other words, a Holy and Sovereign God must demonstrate longsuffering, if unholiness is allowed to continue. Men live, breathe, are born, and prosper in this world, because of God's longsuffering. The Apostle Paul told the Athenians, **“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring”** (Acts 17:24-28). In the end, it is God's part to prepare and save us – we cannot do so ourselves. His longsuffering is sufficient to allow

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# Longsuffering

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our existence and the existence of mankind in general, and then to endure our ways until such time as He sees fit to save those who are ordained unto salvation. But this longsuffering in no wise extends to a continued toleration of sin, or an acceptance of sin in the persons of men.

Surely, the Bible makes it clear that God's longsuffering does not mean that He condones sin or is powerless to judge men. Instead, it only means that, according to the Will and Purpose of God, judgment is not yet to be poured out upon mankind. **"For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made"** (Isa. 57:16). Mankind and the world continue to exist, even now, not because we deserve to exist, but because God is longsuffering towards us. This is, in a sense, salvation for mankind up to this point in time. Indeed, the Lord's longsuffering is, in effect, the basis of the physical salvation of all of humanity.

## LONGSUFFERING PERMITS THE SALVATION OF THE SOULS OF THE ELECT

And now, at the end of my sermon, we get to what I believe is the main thrust of the Apostle Peter's comments concerning longsuffering and salvation. We find, as history and the Scriptures have revealed to us, that the Lord has always ordained to save some from amongst lost mankind. In order for those to be saved in time, time had to continue, and mankind had to endure. In a sense, God tolerated (accommodated) mankind and its wickedness, and will continue to do so, until each

and every one of those who are ordained unto salvation, shall be brought into this world, and shall be convinced of their sins, and shall repent and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you"** (II Peter 3:15).

In some ways, Peter speaks of a general longsuffering, to allow the world to continue so that you and I could be born into it, and then saved by the grace of God. **"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"** (II Pet. 3:8-9). In a very real and tangible way, the children of God are the salt of the earth, preserving it until such time as the Lord has saved those that are given unto Christ to save.

In another, personal fashion, the Lord allows you and I the breath of life, as we are born into this world. And then He is longsuffering towards us, and allows us to continue to breathe and exist, even while we are sinners, lost and undone, rebels against Him Who would (and will) save us. The Apostle Paul reminded the Roman Christians of the need that they owed to serve and thank God, and the debt that they owed to His longsuffering and salvation: **"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance"** (Rom. 2:4)? We ought not deny God's longsuffering in our own salvation. Sure, He is

longsuffering towards the wicked world – but you and I were a part of the wicked world once upon a time! But, God be praised, He endured our wickedness until such time as He saved our unworthy souls.

However, before I close I want to make a further and personal application of this longsuffering of God. In a sense, it is true that this personally applied longsuffering allows you and me to continue to live our lives, even though we continue to sin from time to time. I know that Jesus Christ has died for our sins, and I know that we must and do plead His blood as we confess our sins and are cleansed from unrighteousness during the course of our saved lives. Still, do you not know yourself? Do you not know how unworthy and wavering you can be in your service unto God? And yet, God maintains you in this place, and God continues to find uses for both you and me in the cause and service of Jesus Christ! I find this remarkable that such a person as I can continually be forgiven, and then used by Jesus Christ in His service! Surely, our God is longsuffering! I cherish this wonderful attribute of God, and I consider His longsuffering the basis upon which I am allowed to live and die for Jesus Christ.

Do not begrudge the Lord His longsuffering! Though we might desire judgment and swift destruction upon the world of sinners around us – at least in some moments of despair as to any good in mankind – still, it is the longsuffering of God that resulted in your salvation and mine. Who knows? Perhaps there are many more amongst the sinners around us, with whom God is currently demonstrating longsuffering, and the end is that they shall be saved?



# Man Can't, But

(Continued from page 1) ♦

acts in such obvious opposition to the truth in relation to his lack of ability and understanding of the things of God? Why does man demonstrate such lack of knowledge and wisdom when he lives in this present age of so-called enlightenment and enrichment?

It will be my purpose in this writing to present some correct answers to these questions, and it is intended that these answers will be based upon Biblical fact, and that they will be presented in the spirit of love for those who shall read these words. It is not my desire to leave the Word of God and reason in my natural mind, or in the mind of other men who may have written on this matter. I do not want to imagine, and then declare. I want to be truthful and concerned for truth in all things, and to be enabled to so speak.

The reason that man can't, is that he is incapacitated in all his faculties as the result of sin. Man is not able to think correct thoughts, nor is he able to perform correct acts toward God and the things of God. Knowing that this will be taken as a hard saying by some, I nevertheless shall affirm that it is true. Being a man of flesh, my own carnal nature rebels at this truth, yet my spirit acknowledges that it is reality. I would like to think that I can do right things, but the truth of the matter is, I cannot.

Let me now call your attention to the declaration of our dear Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, as He affirmed that man can't. **"Why do ye not understand my speech? even because YE CANNOT HEAR MY WORD"** (John 8:43) (Emp. DT).

Knowing that these words were spoken by Jesus Christ, who will

♦ (Continued on page 16)



# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What is an "evil eye" as spoken of in Mark 7:22?

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Mark 7:21-23 declares: **"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."**

In the broader context Jesus is rebuking the scribes and the Pharisees for focusing on outward rituals and ceremonies. Their emphasis was on an outward, legalistic show rather than an inward sincerity and love of the truth. Jesus condemned their hypocrisy in exalting traditions and rituals over the clear commandments of God. Jesus then goes on to explain that the real source of all personal sin resides within the depraved heart of a man. All men are diseased with a carnal heart that is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). From that corrupt moral faculty proceeds all manner of evil as enumerated in the verses under consideration.

Included in the list is **"an evil eye"**, which is a common Hebraism that refers to the evil twin sins of jealousy and envy. Proverbs 23:6-7 connects a depraved heart to an evil eye in a warning by the wise man: **"Eat thou not the bread**

**of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: For as he thinketh in his heart so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."** Those given over to the wickedness of jealousy and envy are marked by insincerity, and thus are untrustworthy.

Matthew 20:15 records: **"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"** Jesus is rebuking those who had worked all day and received the same wage as those who only worked part of the day. Jesus is exposing the jealousy and envy of men. They should have been happy and content with their own wage that they had contracted to receive at the beginning of the day. They should not have even concerned themselves with what the Sovereign Lord was pleased to pay those who started working later in the day. Instead, they were jealous and envious of those who received their penny for only working a few hours. They were envious because the Lord chose to show kindness to someone else and were charging Him with injustice. At the root of jealousy and envy is a selfish heart that secretly despises the kindness of God shown to others.

Jealousy and envy proceed from a corrupt, depraved, and wicked heart. They are the cause of much evil in homes, the workplace, and society at large. Politicians are fond of stirring up the putrid stench of jealousy and envy to incite hatred and class warfare. In order for the Marxist systems of socialism and communism

to work, class warfare must be constantly fueled by the unholy desires of jealousy and envy. This is why the Scriptures soundly condemn these works of the flesh as being sensual and devilish, and opposed to godly wisdom. James 3:13-16 declares: **"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."**

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**"...He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, ...Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. ... Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye. ... Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth**

**not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, ...That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man"** (Mark 7:6-23).

The expository context of the list of defiling attributes and actions containing this **"evil eye"** is the departure of the Pharisees and Jews from following the strict confines of the Holy Word of God, and adding new traditions that counteract the commandments of God. Surely in this day of apostasy we are seeing new traditions and modern insights that are defiling and destroying the Lord's faithful New Testament Baptist churches like never before. Selah! Think about it!

We could spend a message on each carnal item in our Lord's list of defiling agents, but this **"evil eye"** is interesting. According to Strong's says that when used figuratively, as in our list, it means "jealous or envious." To differentiate between the "covetousness" and "lasciviousness" already on the list, I would say the emphasis is of pairing "evil eye" together. Perhaps we would understand this familiar saying as a "wandering eye." Discontented and avaricious of fame and power, the Pharisees wanted folks to be their disciples, to watch and mimic them, even as they discontinued the tried and true commandments of Holy God. Selah! Think about it!

The Modern "evil eye" is "wandering" off God's landmark paths in several areas:

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

## 2. Could you please comment on Luke 11:34?

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Whenever I read Luke 11:33-34 I am reminded of the children's hymn *This Little Light Of Mine*. It goes as follows:

This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Won't let Satan blow it out.  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Won't let Satan blow it out.  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Let it shine til Jesus comes.  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Let it shine til Jesus comes.  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel - NO!  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Hide it under a bushel - NO!  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Let it shine over the whole wide world,  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Let it shine over the whole wide world,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

On these two verses J. C. Ryle states, "The saying of this verse (v. 33) is evidently to be a rebuke to

the unbelieving Jews, who had the light, but would not use it, — and a warning to our Lord's disciples, who believed in the light, that they ought not to conceal the light, but display it to the world. A candle is intended to be placed on a candlestick and give light. So also God's truth is intended to be imparted to others, and exhibited to all around us.

It is hard to conceive a more striking example of putting the light "**under a bushel**" than the treatment of the Bible by the Church of Rome. The Church of Rome possesses that word which is given to be the light of man's soul, and yet discourages its reading and opposes its circulation."

Concerning verse 34 he says, "When thine eye is single" The eye is to the body, what the heart is to the man. If the eye is dimmed—does not see objects clearly, the whole action of the body is more or less affected. If the heart is double-minded and compromising, the whole character of the man will be influenced by it, His course will be wavering and unstable. His life will be trimming and inconsistent."

The light is still shining in this world. We pray in our services at the mission that we would be a light on the hill for the community. "**Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid**" (Matt. 5:14). But the problem is, even though the light is shining, evil has blinded their (the lost community) eyes, leaving them in utter darkness even though the light is shining all around them. The men in Jesus' day and the men of this

generation have impaired sight because both generations suffer from sinful blindness that was of their own making.

So when the eye is single (focused on the Saviour of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ) the body is full of light. But when the eye is evil, looking other places and not focusing on the Lord, the eye is evil and the heart is full of darkness and sin, instead of joy. King David should have been in battle with his men (the single eye), but he chose to stay at home, and he got bored until he saw Bathsheba naked taking a bath (the evil eye, the blinded eye of sin), he forgot all that he was and all that God had done for him and lost all his light along with his joy, for he wrote, "**Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit**" (Ps. 51:12).

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. Our light does not belong "**under a bushel, but on a candlestick!**" Are you letting your light shine for the Gospel of Jesus Christ? God Bless!

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Luke 11:33-36 states: "**No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of**

**darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.**"

The Lord is showing by way of metaphor the superiority of Gospel light and the sincerity and holiness it produces in men, as opposed to the darkness and depravity of the natural man's heart and his religious systems.

In the previous verses (29-31) Jesus is declaring that He has arrived and is superior to all his forbears. The Lord Jesus Christ is greater than Jonah the prophet, and greater than Solomon the king. Jesus is the True Light, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Word, the Glory of God, the express image of the Father, and the one and only Messiah. Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again the third day to save poor sinners who are trapped in the darkness of depravity and false religion.

The ministry of the Lord Jesus was very public, His deeds, words, teachings, and miracles were not done in darkness. He was openly manifested so that sinners for time and eternity could clearly see Him as Savior and Lord, the True Light and glorious redeemer.

When the eye is opened by the Holy Spirit to perceive that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, it affects the entire being of man, spirit, soul, and body. A spiritual and scriptural understanding of the truth of the Gospel and the light it produces enables the believer to walk in the light as God is in the light (I John 1:4-9). The transformative power of

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# Forum #1

(Continued from page 12) ♦

1) They are leaving the King James Bible for the NKJV (temporarily) as they exit on the ramp of polyglot, alphabets soups of ESV, NASB, ASV, etc... No longer content with the "Old Black Book," they are running aside to line up with reformed Baptists and other malcontent revisionists that do not want to be bound by God's strict authority in His Baptist churches.

2) Their "evil eye" has determined that there are second tier doctrines in their Bibles that are not nearly as important as their considered main things. (corban?) They proclaim to give liberty to themselves and others to discontinue the ancient Godly traditions of the preserved Baptist churches and God's Holy Word. (I do not wonder anymore why God's Word is filled with admonitions to "come back" and "return" to His holy paths!) Evil eyes wander and depart. **"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"** (Jude 1:3).

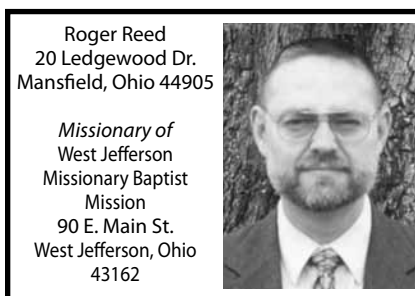
3) Liberalism and modernism are their social and doctrinal soapboxes. Evil eyes write articles and preach sermons that are purposely divisive and provocative to push the envelope on heresy and the repudiation of the Baptist love for ancient truth (...can we not all get along? ...keep reading in Jude 4, 8, 12-13, 16-19).

4) Evil eyes are quick to mock and be derisive of sound conservative truths, doctrines and Baptist heritage. "If it's on the old paths, then it ain't good enough anymore."

5) Wandering evil eyes are not satisfied with reading after the Baptist giants of yore, but the "fresh" new writings of denominational and cross-dimensional authors have become their favorites, and eventually they become so familiar with them that they quote them openly.

**"This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth"** (Titus 1:13-14). Please re-read the text above and see if it is not happening before our very eyes. We need to protect our flocks and call the heretics for what they are! **"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness"** (Matt. 6:23)! How great is that darkness of incoming apostasy among our Sovereign Grace, Landmark Baptist churches today! Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



**"But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it"** (Jer. 22:17).

**"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks"** (Eph. 5:3-4).

**"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them"** (Col. 3:5-7).

An "evil eye" comes from "envy" and "covetousness!" "An evil eye" is to be prideful in one's heart and life. It is the way one walks, talks, and even the very clothes a person wears, that can show these things.

The word **"covetousness"** is in the Bible 19 times, **"covet"** 8 times. **"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's"** (Ex. 20:17). And **"envy"** 20 times.

I believe **"an evil eye," "envy,"** and **"covetousness"** go hand in hand and are one in the same. **"Covetousness"** and **"an evil eye"** are mentioned together in our text Mark 7:22. In Matthew it says, **"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness"** (Matt. 6:23)! **"An evil eye"** shows that the human heart is sinful and produces all manner of evil desires, thoughts, and actions, everything from murder to envy.

**"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate,**

**deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them"** (Rom. 1:28-32).

I believe the above verses in Romans 1 describe what **"an evil eye"** consists of. There are many today that do not believe in church discipline and I will not take the time here to cover the evils of such thinking. But I would be willing to say that those who do believe in church discipline do not consider that **"an evil eye," "envy,"** and **"covetousness"** are a punishable offense for church discipline. For the very verses in Mark 7:20-23 include "adulteries, fornications, murders, as evil things that defile a man."

**"And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man"** (Mark 7:20-23).

We that are saved should be thankful for the Gospel, when these verses are read. The Gospel contains the complete provision for all we need for our depraved natures. The precious blood of Christ has **"cleansed us from all sin"** **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,**

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## Forum #1

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**and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"** (I John 1:7). The Holy Spirit can change even our sinful hearts, and keep them cleaned when we are changed. The person that does not glory in the Gospel can know little of the iniquity that is in them. **"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"** (II Cor. 4:4).

Let us be careful of having **"an evil eye."** **"He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him"** (Prov. 28:22). Let us cry with fervent hearts, **"...lead us not into temptation..."** (Matt. 6:13). God Bless!

ROGER REED



## Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

Jesus Christ through the power of the Word and the Spirit enables the believer to walk in sincerity and truth.

The warning is to those whose eyes have not been opened to perceive the truth and power of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. They are blinded by Satan, inward depravity, and false religion. Their inability to perceive the truth as it is in Jesus darkens their whole soul and being. Even though they walk in darkness and are blinded by Satan, they actually think they are the ones who have light and understanding. This is why this darkness is so great, it deceives and overwhelms the masses of depraved sinners to embrace lies, heresies, and wickedness.

The darkness of depravity has produced an ignorance about God, His Word, and the Lord Jesus Christ. As such, this darkness is a great evil in our world. Dear reader, take heed that you are indeed a partaker of the True Light and have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Make sure you have been changed by the power of the Spirit in regeneration, and have faith only in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Way of salvation.

TOM ROSS



**"The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness"** (Luke 11:34).

An old adage says quite appropriately that the eye is the "Window to our Souls." One can tell much about a person, their thoughts, intents, etc, from looking into their eyes. Hands, motions, words, gestures, tongues and articles can deceive, but look me in the eyes when you say that. Then, I can tell the truth. Selah! Think about it!

The contrast is **"when thine eye is single"** or **"when thine eye is evil."** The exhortation is for our eyes to be singular, and focused on the truth. Truth is singular! Once a person takes the evil path of error, there are literally myriad of paths to take. But any thousand directions away from the truth is still error. When we walk, talk, preach, and

live the truth, we are going to be identical to our forefathers and God's preserved Baptist churches, who also, by God's amazing grace walked, talked, preached and lived the truth down through the ages. Jesus Christ promised this in Matthew 16:18, **"...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."**

When we recognize that God is going to preserve His truth through His churches (not individual men), it behooves us to show some reverence to the steady-as-she-goes Baptist churches down through history. **"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to BEHAVE (-tms) thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"** (I Tim. 3:15). So many "modern" Baptists are falling away, because they have taken their eyes off the Way, the Truth and the Life- Jesus Christ and His Body- the Lord's New Testament Baptist churches. **"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; ...for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister..."** (Col. 1:23-25). Please do not follow men, O ye congregations of His grace. Follow the Bible, as it has been taught generationally by the Lord's Baptist churches. I am not saying that certain churches may not fall into error, as men and pastors may do so, but the Lord has promised to correct His churches, while casting out apostate men as reprobate.

**"...when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness."**

One of the reasons the Lord uses the analogy of a "body" for His "flock," His "church," is seen in this concluding thought. I have often heard it said that a "good church" is one pastor away from apostasy. How true it is! One pastor can take away the KJV from a congregation and fill its pews with the corrupt ESV. One pastor can teach its lady members to discard the venerable headcovering. One pastor can persuade his (her) congregation that some things are not important enough to stand for, and that we need to make the lost visitors feel more comfortable and more entertained. **"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness"** (Matt. 6:23). Selah! Think about it! **"...how great is that darkness!"**

**"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come"** (II Tim. 3:1). **"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron"** (I Tim. 4:1-2). May God help our eyes to have a "single focus" on the unchanging truth of God's Word! I heard a prominent Baptist pastor note that our churches are shrinking and hearts are getting cold out there, and that if we kept doing the same old things, then how can we expect things to get better? Then he exhorted "door knocking," "lighter messages," more modern this-n-that... "Let's do something different!"

Sound good? Sound like a necessary rebuke and exhortation to God's churches to get with the

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## Forum #2

(Continued from page 15) ♦

times? Selah! Think about it! How about just trusting God, by living holy lives, talking to our neighbor about the Lord, being faithful in worship and doing what Baptists have been doing for the last 2000 years? We do not need to do something different! We just need to do what our fathers and mothers in the faith have been doing. Let our light shine thru our eyes. I think God is still full of light and I pray that He will give us the strength and courage to cast out the darkness in our churches in this divisive new generation. We have got to stand for something (Bible) or we will fall for everything. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



## Man Can't, But

(Continued from page 11) ♦

contend with Him? Who will be so impertinent as to question His choice of words as He spoke to the unbelieving Jews who confronted Him as He taught in the temple. Who indeed would dare to say that He was not telling the truth? Some so dared then, and some so dare now!

But who would dare, you ask. And I answer, all those who hold to the position that man is an active participant in the salvation of men. All those of the arminian position so dare, and repeatedly so as they preach their heresies declaring that man's own volitional powers are instrumental in the birthing process of a spiritual being. All such, regardless of their elevated position in religious circles. No matter how much certain men are held in high esteem because of their position in the "electronic

churches" of today's TV exposure, nor what great outpourings of charisma they may demonstrate, they, by and large, are self-seekers and glory hounds, and so declare that man can, when Christ said that they can't.

We realize that many there are that deny the inability of man. But that is no reason why we should avoid the subject, and seek not to expose the error of those who so deny this doctrine. It is the truth, and God holds His churches, and His servants accountable for their failures to declare all the counsel of God. May God give us grace and divine enablement at this time to speak the truth, and in so doing, do honor to His great Name, Person, and work.

Jesus declared to the eleven apostles, as they were assembled as the church that He began, (the only one that He ever started, by the way) to do His work as He had authorized and commanded. Here is what He said to them:

**"...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen"** (Matt. 28:18-20). Now, since man's total inability is taught throughout God's Book, how can churches and individuals deny it, or fail to proclaim it, and remain in compliance with Christ's command? They cannot. If they, or we, do not teach the truth, then they, and we are in direct disobedience to the Lord.

Hear me preacher! Hear me churches! If you deny the total inability of man, and the depravity of his fallen nature, and do not teach it, then you, (not

those other folks), but YOU are in direct disobedience to God. You are sinning against God. He said, **"...Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:"** Now, did Jesus teach that man is unable to save himself? Did He teach that man was unable to hear God's Word, when left to himself? Did Jesus teach that it was sin that had ruined man, and that sin had darkened his faculties and had rendered him impotent to think right, or to do right?

**"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father, From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him"** (John 6:63-66).

In these verses Jesus dealt with depravity. And His preaching caused some to turn from Him in hatred! Can we expect less? Can we, as finite creatures, whose understanding is so limited, expect to be more understood; to be more accepted than our dear Lord Himself? Can we?

The God man, the very Personification of wisdom and righteousness was not heard and received by most men. His message was not believed by most men. Nor will we be heard and believed by most men. But, praise God, some did hear Him, and some will hear us. It is therefore acceptable to us to know that even though we will not be held in high regard by many, yet some will be made to rejoice in the precious truth of

God's Holy Word as it is preached. We will, therefore, be content to preach the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, to men, women, boys and girls just as they are, and leave all the results in His capable hands.

Now, we would that you should read the text Scriptures again, and then follow this message very carefully.

Here, Jesus announced that the words which He spoke were the words of God, and in them is life. He also made it very clear that the Spirit does the quickening (making alive), and that the flesh is completely, COMPLETELY, unprofitable in the matter. The flesh, being the natural man who is dead in sins and in trespasses is not instrumental, nor effective in the matter of making one who is dead to live.

Does this impotency on the part of the flesh not announce to you that the flesh is depraved, that is, void of any ability to accomplish that which is pleasing to God, or profitable to man? Remember verse 63? **"...the flesh profiteth nothing."** Nothing? NOTHING! The flesh profiteth nothing. Jesus declares that it is the Spirit of God, as opposed to the fleshly, carnal nature of fallen man that quickens, and that the flesh profiteth nothing. That is, the flesh is completely unprofitable in that it, the flesh has no ability to be profitable.

Because man is totally lacking in ability to birth himself, or to aid in the birthing of himself, he is declared to be impotent, and being so he cannot come to God. In his own strength, which is no strength at all, man cannot come to God. Jesus reiterated this truth in verse 65, and reminded His audience that He had already told them this truth before. Notice verse 65: **"And he said, Therefore**

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# Man Can't, But

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said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.” **“Therefore, SAID I,”** (Emp. DT) meaning, that He had previously told them this same truth. I told you, and now I tell you again, **“...no man can come unto me EXCEPT it were given unto him of my Father”** (Emp. DT). The coming to Him then is the result of their having been given the ability to come, and that of the Father.

Listen now to these words: **“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day”** (John 6:37-40).

Take note of verse 44: **“No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”** Here is where Jesus first told His audience that they could not come to Him except the Father provide the enabling ability, or the drawing power for them to come to Him. And it is to this verse that Jesus makes reference when He again speaks of man’s inability to come to Him, as He said in verse 65 of the text that we read.

Now in the next place we ask, Do men come to Jesus? Some do. Others do not. Does God

the Father draw men to Jesus? Listen to Jesus as He speaks to Nicodemus in John 3:14-15: **“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”** God had ordained, or appointed that His Son was to be lifted up as a Sacrifice for the sins of His people, and in due time He brought that appointment to fruition. He does draw men to Christ, lifted up, dying in accordance with the Scriptures. But, does man come to Christ, even though God commands all men everywhere to repent? Some do. But others do not and consequently they that do not die in their sins are forever separated from God. Why is it that some come to Him and others do not? To some it is given. To others it is not given. Verse 65 says, **“...no man can come unto me EXCEPT it were given unto him of my Father”** (Emp. DT). Also note: **“For unto you it is GIVEN in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake”** (Phil. 1:29) (Emp. DT).

Believing, then, is a gift of God! Believing is an expression of faith! **“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). And what is faith: **“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”** (Heb. 11:1).

Believing is an expression of faith, and this faith is also of God. The source of faith and of expressing that faith that has been given by the act of believing is of God. It is all of and by Him, and apart from Him and His gifts,

there can be no faith felt, and no expressions of that faith as evidenced by those who believe. **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”** (Eph. 2:8).

God commands repentance and faith. He makes those demands upon all men. All men in their depraved, fallen, helpless estate have the same demand placed upon them, and that is, repentance and faith. And because the demand is the same for all men, and because the depravity, or lack of ability is the same for all men, then those who do repent and show forth faith, must, of absolute necessity do so as some power outside of themselves enables, yea, even constrains them to do so.

God has concluded all to be under sin, that He might show mercy upon whomsoever He is pleased to show mercy. God has commanded repentance and faith of all men, and shows mercy upon those of His own choosing and then enables them to comply with His demand. Thus they repent of their sins and are turned to God as He gives them faith to believe Him. God grants repentance and God gives faith to His people.

The Apostle Peter spoke of this act of God as he related his experiences in dealing with those of the household of Cornelius as is recorded in Acts, chapter 10, when he spoke in chapter 11. **“Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life”** (Acts 11:17-18).

Man is a totally depraved, totally corrupt being. And that is because he is a sinner. Adam sinned, and all sinned in Adam. Adam fell, and all fell in him. Now, there is no recovery from that fall; not even hope for recovery to be found in man. Numerous are the Scriptures that verify that this assessment is correct. Note these: Job 14-4; Psalms 51:5; Psalms 58:3; Genesis 6:5; Psalms 14:3; Jeremiah 17:9; Jeremiah 13:23; Jeremiah 10:23; Job 40:9-14; Isaiah 64:6; Ecclesiastes 7:20, and many others which could be cited.

Now to that evidence that God has levied against man, listen as He speaks through the Apostle Paul: **“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Rom. 8:7-8).

Because man is depraved, he cannot come to God; he cannot please God. But God is able to do His will, and He does draw some men to Christ, and He does so draw them, in loving kindness to Himself, savingly.

In II Samuel, chapter 9, there is the account of King David and Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the grandson of Saul. Here, Mephibosheth is presented as being in a terrible predicament, and is totally lacking in power or ability to extricate himself from his awful circumstance. He is typically presented as being the expression of every lost, forlorn, depraved, impotent sinner who desperately needs help, but is unaware of his actual state. He is the epitome of lost men in their lost condition.

But according to a covenant that is in force between his dead father, and the King of Israel, he is about to be dealt with in mercy,

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# Man Can't, But

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and his deliverance is about to be effected. He does not know it, but he is now, and has been under the protection and provision of a wondrous covenant.

Please read the entire chapter and note these things.

1. Mephibosheth is lame on his feet.

2. He is held captive in the house of the strong man in the land of Lodebar.

3. He does not know of the covenant.

4. He is not planning to improve his circumstances for he knows nothing different than that he has always known.

5. King David remembers the covenant and undertakes in behalf of the beneficiary of that covenant.

6. King David sends for Mephibosheth, and fetches him, positively fetches him, to himself.

7. King David places Mephibosheth as if he were his own son, at his own table to enjoy all the benefits and blessings of being one of the King's sons.

It is awesomely true that man can't. He can't save himself. He can't help to save himself. He can't come to God that he might be saved. He can't think correctly as to his condition, nor as to any possible remedy. He can't desire the things of God, nor can he know that he can't. And he will never know except God make it known to him.

You may imagine that I have painted a more horrible picture of man than what the Scriptures paint of him. But I have not. I have not even begun to speak of the awfulness of man and of his complete lack of ability or desire. God has said much more of fallen man than I have been able to

relate.

But my God is able. In every area where man can't, God can. For He is able. He is able to know of my need. He is able to care for His own. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. Let us all acknowledge that God is able, and that will resound to His glory and praise. Remember, our God is able. Amen, and Amen.



## The Real Rascal

(Continued from page 1) ♦

departure of every soul.

There are just two kinds of people in this world, the just and unjust, the believers and unbelievers, the sheep and the goats, the saved and the unsaved. There is no third group of the pretty good or those not too bad.

Solomon describes a wicked man in the text who had been seen going to the temple with the righteous and holy. He came as he went and was buried a wicked person. This is so because coming and going to church is not salvation.

Multitudes of churchgoers assume going to church on Sunday morning qualifies them for a seat in Heaven. These folks are content with a Sunday-go-to-meetin' religion. They seem to forget that Cain brought his sacrifice as well as Abel. The Pharisees went up to the temple as well as the publicans.

Church membership is not synonymous with salvation. You can be a church member like Judas and still be a devil. The Bible speaks frequently of false professors or hypocrites. James 1:26 speaks of some who **"seem to be religious."** Some in the churches today, like the members of the Sardis church in Revelation,

have a name to live and are dead spiritually (Rev. 3:1).

### A FORM OF GODLINESS

Paul told young Timothy: **"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away"** (II Tim. 3:5). He indicates in these words that a person can be called a Christian, be baptized into a church, and make a religious show while never being converted. These persons assume a form of godliness to have respectability in the business world, but they will not submit to the power of it, which would take away their sins. A form of godliness is a very different thing from the power of it. You can have the form and be wholly destitute of the power.

Modern day religion seems to exercise little power over the lives of its adherents. The Bible teaches Christians not to conform to the world, yet most professed believers look like the world, dress like the world, smell like the world, and talk like the world. The preaching of the Word of the Living God does not even have enough power to keep most church members awake during the sermon. The members of the Apostolic churches laid down their lives for Christ. Modern church people will not even live for Him. In spite of all of its buildings and rituals, the modern church is powerless!

A form of godliness without real godliness, can do the world no good. It cannot convert the unconverted, check the divorce rate, curb immorality, stop modernism, eradicate heresy, terminate the rapid spread of Communism, or lower the crime rate. The church will never influence a lost world by bringing the sacrifice of fools to worship.

Does a person really go to church on Sunday to be instructed out

of God's Word by the minister? How many come just to see if the preacher will approve of their conduct and endorse their preconceived plans? How many church members change their way of living after the Sunday morning sermon is delivered? Nearly all go to church knowing full well they will keep walking according to the course of this world no matter what the minister preaches! Such people pretend to have some zeal for religious ceremonies, but they are void of the living, saving power of Christ upon their souls. They are religious but lost.

### PROFESS TO KNOW HIM

To Titus the Apostle wrote: **"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate"** (Titus 1:16).

Here Paul warns Titus of false professors. He points out in the church some who in word and tongue profess to know God, yet their lives indicate they have rejected Him. Their practice contradicts their religious profession. They live as though they never knew Him.

They say they believe in prayer, but they never pray. They claim to believe in giving to Christ's cause, yet continually rob God of His tithes and offerings. They profess to believe in witnessing to the lost, but they never witness to anyone.

What about such people? Are they God's elect? Are they real believers in Christ? The answer of found in I John 2:4, which says: **"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."** Such people are abominable, disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

### HEARERS ONLY

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# The Real Rascal

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I read in James 1:22-24 these words: **“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”**

The Jews heard the Old Testament Scriptures read every Sabbath day (Acts 15:21). It was to just such hearers of the Word that Christ said: **“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”** (Matt. 23:33). These Pharisees thought they were Heaven-bound, yet all the while they were Hell-bound.

Those who think hearing a sermon occasionally is sufficient for salvation are self-deceived. James said: **“Deceiving your own selves.”** The minister is not deceived; the church is not deceived; the world is not deceived. The hearer has deceived himself. Jesus Christ said: **“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man. . .”** (Matt. 7:26).

Ezekiel spoke of some people who were hearers only. He wrote: **“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness”** (Ezek. 33:31).

Some in our generation take pleasure in hearing the Word. The Bible tells us old wicked Herod heard John the Baptist preach gladly (Mark 6:20). A sermon is

good amusement to some people. But while it gratifies their itching ears, it does not sanctify their corrupt natures. Their listening to God's Word is all a sham, a jest, and a pretension.

Thousands of church members hear the Word each Sunday, but they refuse to do what it says. Why do pastors have trouble getting people to Sunday school, to the worship hour, to choir practice, to the church business meeting? Why is there always an uproar in the church? The answer is simple enough for all to see. Members who are false professors will not do what the Scriptures say. In character they are abominable before God, disobedient to His law, and worthless to those good works, which He demands.

Do you know the real reason ministers are quitting the ministry? Do you know why so many pastors resign their churches and move on often? It is because the churches are filled with unsaved people. Preachers find it is impossible to keep the sheep and the goats happy and working together in the church. They discover you cannot teach a lost person the Scriptures, nor can you get him to do what Christ commanded.

## FAITH WITHOUT WORKS

Too many church members claim to have faith in Christ but have no works to prove their faith. What is it worth to say: “I believe in Christ,” then do nothing for Christ? Such useless, fruitless faith is no faith at all. It is like an apple tree that never bears apples, or a clock that never tells time, or a car that has no wheels.

Works are the natural fruit of faith. Faith is first, but works must follow, or there is no proof that faith exists. True faith is something real, vital, living that affects one's whole life. James

makes works the true test of real faith: **“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone”** (Jas. 2:17).

## THE DEVIL'S DECEIVED DUPES

To the Corinthian church members Paul declared: **“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”** (I Cor. 6:9-10).

The person who belongs to the church and imagines he can live like the Devil all his life, is terribly deceived. If you think you can habitually live in sin and go to Heaven when you die, you are deceived by vain words. If you believe you can put every thing before God and be an inheritor in God's kingdom, you are one of the Devil deceived dupes. If you feel you can habitually stay drunk and die in Jesus Christ, you are greatly in the dark about spiritual things. Do not be deceived! The Bible says such persons shall not inherit God's kingdom.

How calamitous for a church member to die deceived about his salvation. How disastrous for a man to be a member of the Baptist church, attend some of its services, support its program, and die in his sins and go to Hell. A great funeral eulogy by a preacher cannot deliver a lost church member from eternal darkness. A burial in a Christian cemetery cannot relieve the torment of everlasting fire.

Think of a minister on earth saying that the deceased church member is in Heaven with the saints, angels, and God, when in

reality he is in the fire of Hell with sinners, demons, and the Devil. Think of a tombstone over his remains in the graveyard, which reads: “Asleep in Jesus,” when in truth this poor soul has no rest day nor night in the everlasting fire. Think of a family on earth drying their tears and saying: “He is better off now than we are,” when he is weeping and wailing in the furnace of fire. But such is the future fate of all hypocrites in the church who have never been born again.

## WHAT A RASCAL!

Here is a man who makes no profession of faith. He does not belong to any church. He owns no Bible. He never prays to God or pays anything to the church. He is wrong in all of this, but he is not hypocritical. He is consistent with what he claims to be.

Here is another man who professes to know Christ as Savior. He claims to believe the Bible, yet he never goes to church, never prays, and never does anything for God. He is inconsistent. His practice contradicts his profession. I say the biggest rascal in the world is this man. He is a hypocrite, a wolf in sheep clothing, a counterfeit, and a neat imitation of a Christian. He is a stage player in religion. He acts the part of one that he neither is nor may be, neither is nor would be. God will create a special place in Hell for false professors! They will receive the greater condemnation (Matt. 23:14).

## WORKS WITHOUT FAITH

Jesus declared: **“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in**

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# The Real Rascal

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**thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity**" (Matt. 7:21-23).

It is not enough to call yourself a Christian and be a member of a church, which wears the name of Christ. Judas and Caiaphas uttered prophecy but were never saved. Judas and the Jewish exorcists cast out devils though they were never born again. A person can cast out devils and be a devil himself. You can be baptized, you can join the church, you can live the best you can, and you can do many wonderful works, and still not be recognized by Christ as one of His elect. You can claim to be a worker of miracles and still be a worker of iniquity.

Are you doing all kinds of religious works believing these will bring you to Heaven at last? Salvation does not consist of the good works, which we have done, but it rests upon the good work, which Christ did at Calvary. Those who really trust Christ for salvation will show their faith by their works. But to rest upon works without heart-felt faith in the Savior is to be deceived and to miss Heaven as far as Hell is from Heaven.

## SOME GO OUT

In I John 2:19 I find these words: **"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."**

John makes it plain that not all professors of salvation are possessors of salvation. There

are spurious church members. These will sooner or later prove themselves to be false professors. They prove this by going out from the fellowship of the local church. They leave because they had no vital sympathy with the church of Christ.

It is clear from I John 2:19 that a truly converted person will remain in doctrine and association with the church. John even says there can be no doubt about this. True regenerate men do not depart from the essential Christian faith, or the associate life of the Christian church. Those who depart give evidence they never belonged to the true flock.

Sir, why do you who profess to know Christ stay away from church services? Why blame it on the preacher, the deacons, or some church member? You are to blame for your own conduct. Your disassociation with the Lord's church shows the real condition of your heart. It declares to all you are a false professor. John said true believers do not depart.

You may say: "I have been a backslider for years now. I prosper and have plenty of friends. God has never whipped me for staying away from church. I am eternally secure in Christ."

Sir, do you know why this is the case with you? Notice Hebrews 12:7-8: **"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."** Sir, this is true of you because you are the spurious offspring of another father. To be suffered to go on in sin without a rebuke is a sad sign of alienation from God.

## CONCLUSION

In my lifetime I have seen a good many lost church members come

to see their condition and be saved by God. Could it be today that you are religious but lost? Maybe you are a preacher, or a deacon, or a Bible teacher but unredeemed. It is better to admit your condition here, than to hear Christ say at the judgment: **"Depart from me ye workers of iniquity."** I know it will take courage to publicly admit your plight, but it will take

more courage to die in your sins and face the fire of Hell.

Do not despair. There is salvation even for lost church members. If God could save Saul of Tarsus, He can save you. The Bible says: **"...All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto me..."** (Matt. 12:31). This



**THE BIBLE AND OTHER NEWSPAPER**

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

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

## JUDGE: CHRISTIAN PARENTS WHO DO NOT LIKE NEW TRANSGENDER POLICY CAN PULL THEIR CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL

CH--A U.S. federal judge ruled last week that students have the right to use the restrooms, locker rooms and showers of those of the opposite gender in a public school, and that parents who do not like the policy can pull their children out of school. The case in Oregon arose when Dallas High School in Dallas, Ore., adopted a new policy allowing transgender students to use gender-specific facilities that correspond with their self-identified gender and not their birth gender. A group of parents then sued, saying their beliefs and Christian faith prevent their children from using the restroom and undressing in the presence of the opposite sex. But in his ruling, U.S. District Judge Marco Hernandez -- a nominee of President Obama -- said the transgender students have the right to use gender-specific facilities. The school has a female student who identifies as a boy and wishes to use male restrooms, dressing rooms

and showers. "Forcing transgender students to use facilities inconsistent with their gender identity would undoubtedly harm those students and prevent them from equally accessing educational opportunities and resources," Hernandez wrote. "Such an injunction or District policy would punish transgender students for their gender nonconformity and constitute a form of sex-stereotyping." If the parents do not like their new policy, the judge added, they can withdraw their children. "It is within Parent Plaintiffs' right to remove their children from Dallas High School if they disapprove of transgender student access to facilities," he wrote. "Once the parents have chosen to send their children to school, however, their liberty interest in their children's education is severely diminished."

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## MILITARY BIBLE DISPLAY AT CENTER OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY TUSSLE

RNS--A Bible placed on a memorial table at a Wyoming Air Force base is at the center of an

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# Bible & the Newspaper

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ongoing battle over what constitutes religious liberty and what violates it. In response to demands by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, Col. Stacy J. Huser, commander of the 90th Missile Wing at F.E. Warren Air Force Base near Cheyenne, Wyo., recently ordered that a Bible be removed from the base's "Missing Man" table. The table, a POW/MIA memorial common in military base dining halls, hospitals and ceremonies since the Vietnam War, is set for a meal in honor of prisoners of war, the missing in action and the fallen. A Bible is traditionally placed on the table. Huser said in a media statement that the Bible was removed to increase "the sense of belonging for all our Airmen; a large part of that effort is ensuring the religious and nonreligious feel included and cared for."

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## TENN. SCHOOLS MUST DISPLAY 'IN GOD WE TRUST' ACCORDING TO NEW LAW

CH--Students heading back to school in Tennessee in the coming weeks will be greeted by more than new teachers and old friends. They will also see "In God We Trust" displayed prominently in their schools. A bill requiring the national motto to be displayed in a prominent place was signed into law in April, meaning the 2018-19 school year is the first one to be impacted by the new rule. The law defines "prominent place" as a "school entry way, cafeteria, or common area where students are likely to see the national motto." The phrase "may take the form of, but is not limited to, a mounted plaque or student artwork." The bill was sponsored by Republican Rep. Susan Lynn. "Our national motto is on our money. It is on our license plates. It is part of our national anthem," she told The

Tennessean. "Our national motto and founding documents are the cornerstone of freedom and we should teach our children about these things." Reaction to the new law has been mixed.

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## LOW-COST ABORTIONS ON EVERY COLLEGE CAMPUS IS GOAL OF CALIFORNIA BILL

CH--A California bill that would require universities to offer free or low-cost abortion pills to students represents not only a dangerous threat to the unborn but the nation, says the pro-life group Live Action. Under the proposed law, California public universities must offer "abortion by medication techniques" – that is, the abortion pill RU-486 and other similar medication. The bill is Senate Bill 320. The pill can be used at up to 10 weeks after pregnancy – a time when the baby has a beating heart, arms, and legs. Additionally, 22 women have died after taking the pill. More than 400,000 female students are in California's public university system, says the bill, which would require the college's health centers to carry the pill.

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## ATHEIST GROUP: 'FOR GOD AND COUNTRY' PATCHES ON SHERIFF UNIFORMS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

CH--A national atheist organization is urging an Ohio sheriff's office to remove "For God and Country" patches from officer uniforms, asserting they are unconstitutional. The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter Aug. 8 to the Shelby County, Ohio, Sheriff's Office after it received a complaint about the patches. "It is inappropriate and unconstitutional for the Shelby County Sheriff's Office to promote or endorse religion," the letter from FFRF co-president Annie Laurie Gaylor reads. "Anyone viewing these patches would understand the Sheriff's Office to

be endorsing religion and belief in a god. We request that these patches be removed." The patches display an American flag with the words "For God" at the top and "And Country" at the bottom. A FFRF press release said "government employees can worship, pray, or read any religious text they wish when acting in their personal capacities" "But they are not permitted to provide prestige to their personal religion through the machinery of a government office," the press release added. "Sheriffs and deputies take an oath to uphold our godless and entirely secular constitution and must keep their personal religious views out of law enforcement."

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## GENDER-NEUTRAL RESTROOMS ARE THE ONLY OPTION AT THESE NEW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CH--A handful of schools in the Kansas City area have abandoned the traditional bathroom design and will offer students gender-neutral restrooms this school year, with boys and girls using stalls adjacent to one another. The wall outside the restroom features boys and girls symbols, according to The Kansas City Star. It is being offered at two new elementary schools and at renovated restrooms at a high school. The inside of the bathrooms look different than traditional stalls seen at schools, restaurants and stores. Each stall is an individual "room," with floor-to-ceiling walls and a lockable door. Boys and girls wash their hands at the same sink in a common area, allowing teachers to stand in the common area and monitor students, the newspaper said.

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## PENNSYLVANIA GRAND JURY FINDS EVIDENCE THAT HUNDREDS OF PRIESTS HAVE COMMITTED CHILD MOLESTATION

Fox News reports that a grand jury in Pennsylvania has found hundreds of Catholic priests in the state have committed acts of child molestation dating as far back as the 1940s. According to the grand jury report which was released on Tuesday, the jury reviewed around 250 thousand pages of in house church documents which "contained credible allegations against over three hundred predator priests." The document went on to say, "over one thousand child victims were identifiable, from the church's own records. We believe that the real number - of children whose records were lost, or who were afraid ever to come forward - is in the thousands." Additionally, it is notable that most of the cases it appears that the churches had a strategy for handling these situations when they arose. The grand jury called this strategy "a playbook for concealing the truth." Sadly, the grand jury found that as a result of various attempts to conceal these crimes by the Catholic churches in question, many of the cases were too old to be prosecuted. The grand jury wrote "we are sick over all the crimes that will go unpunished and uncompensated."

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## INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS BRITISH MAGISTRATE, FIRED FOR CHRISTIAN VIEWS ON SAME-SEX ADOPTION, APPEALS DISMISSAL

CH--After losing his job for saying a child's "best interest" is to be raised by a mother and father, Richard Page, a Christian magistrate in London will appeal the government's decision to dismiss him. Page was suspended and then later fired from his job as a non-executive director at Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust in March 2016. He said he was dismissed after he told the BBC in a 2015 television

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# Bible & the Newspaper

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interview that he believed an adopted child should be placed in the care of a mother and father over that of a same-sex couple “as God and nature intended.” “It would appear no longer possible to be a Christian, to state what the Bible actually says and what the Church has believed for 2,000 years, and maintain a role in public life in today’s Britain,” he said, “My seat on the NHS Trust came as a result of my long service in mental health and total commitment to the NHS – none of that has changed.”

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## CHINA SHUTTING DOWN CHURCHES, SEIZING BIBLES IN ‘AMBITIOUS NEW EFFORT’ TO ERADICATE RELIGION

CH--China is in the midst of an “ambitious new effort” to lessen or even eradicate the influence of Christianity and religion from the country, according to an investigation by the Associated Press. An in-depth story by AP described churches being shut down, Bibles being seized and restrictions being placed on other religions, too. Crescents have been removed from mosques and Tibetan children removed from Buddhist temples and placed in public schools. In recent months, Chinese authorities have: Shut down hundreds of Christian house churches. Seized Bibles and forced e-commerce retailers to stop selling Bibles. Prevented children from attending church in some areas. Raided church meetings and interrogated hundreds of Christians from one congregation. The AP story further said that under Xi, Christians “are seeing their freedoms shrink dramatically even as the country undergoes a religious revival.” Experts said Xi is “waging the most severe systematic suppression of Christianity in the country since religious freedom was written into

the Chinese constitution in 1982,” according to AP. The goal is to “Sinicize” the nation’s religions with “Chinese characteristics.” First among these is loyalty to the Communist Party. “Xi is a closet Maoist -- he is very anxious about thought control,” Willy Lam of the Chinese University of Hong Kong told AP. “He definitely does not want people to be faithful members of the church, because then people would profess their allegiance to the church rather than to the party, or more exactly, to Xi himself.”



## The Short Pews



Brief Articles  
by Curtis Pugh  
(1944 - 2018)

### HOW DID YOU GET YOUR HONEST AND GOOD HEART?

Only men and women with “an honest and good heart” receive the Word of God and are saved. Jesus said that. The Lord Jesus explained the parable of the four kinds of soil in these words. **“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 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 8:11-15). Notice the last sentence in that quotation. The people portrayed as **“good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”** The question we propose to ask – and answer – is this: how does a sinner get “an honest and good heart?” How did you get yours?

Honesty and honest Bible interpretation makes it clear that no man or woman was born with “an honest and good heart.” The Bible records the words of God as saying, **“...the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth...”** (Gen. 8:21). Jeremiah wrote, **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it”** (Jer. 17:9)? The Lord Jesus Himself said, **“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders”** (Mark 7:21). These verses make it clear: neither you nor I were born naturally with “an honest and good heart”! If none of us were born with “an honest and good heart” then none of us were born with the ability to qualify as “good ground.” Since only those classed by Jesus as “good ground” hear the Word, keep it and bring forth fruit, none of us can do those things. No man in his natural state can be saved apart from God somehow working in him – producing in him “an honest and good heart.”

Again we say, not being born naturally with “an honest and good heart” means that no man in his natural condition can hear the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Such a person will not and indeed cannot receive the Word. That is exactly what

Paul wrote: **“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). Lacking two things (1) “an honest and good heart” and (2) the Holy Spirit, the natural man first of all will not receive the things revealed by the Spirit and second, he cannot – he doest not have the ability to receive the Word in a spiritually profitable way. So man as he is born the first time – the natural man – is hopeless and helpless except that God move in and change him from his natural state.

Some would argue with these words claiming that man is not hopeless or helpless. They claim that the natural man can do this or that or the other thing and bring about his own spiritual change. Some even teach that if a lost sinner will do this or that thing he will be born again. According to them man can bring about his own spiritual birth. But once again we quote the Words of God as penned by Paul: **“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world”** (Eph. 2:12). Now either the natural man is hopeless to remedy his spiritual condition, or he is not. Paul told the congregation in Ephesus that as lost Gentiles they existed **“having no hope.”** They were ignorant of the Gospel, and were not even Jews to whom the Old Testament promises were made. But even the hope of the Jews was imperfect and needed to be replaced. **“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the**

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# The Short Pews

(Continued from page 22) ♦

**which we draw nigh unto God**" (Heb. 7:19). So then it is clear that in himself the natural man has no hope in himself. He is helpless to do anything about his spiritual condition. He is dead spiritually and cannot make himself alive. Furthermore the Lord Jesus made it perfectly clear that the new birth – the implantation of spiritual life – is a work of the Holy Spirit when He said, **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit"** (John 3:6-8).

Thus far we have shown from the Scriptures that people in their natural state – as they were born naturally – do not have "an honest and good heart." Thus they are not "good ground" – the only ground in Jesus' parable that profits from the Word of God. Since only the "good ground" people are saved, the natural man must somehow be given "an honest and good heart" if he is to be saved.

The Bible makes it clear that no one can change his heart from an evil one to a good one – one that can hear the Word and bring forth fruit that lasts. Jeremiah's two-fold question and conclusion proves that the sinner cannot do good. He cannot do that which is wholly good. He cannot change his evil heart into one that does only good. Jeremiah wrote: **"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil"** (Jer. 13:23). Even Israel, God's chosen

earthly nation was marked with sin and could not themselves do anything to change or remove it. It is written of them, **"For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD"** (Jer. 2:22). So it is with all mankind. Of rebellious Israel Isaiah wrote, **".. the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment"** (Isa. 1:5-6). Is there any reason to think that modern men – Jews or Gentiles – are any different from their ancestors? Paul's indictment sums up the natural man's condition. He wrote: **"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes"** (Rom. 3:10-18).

So it is clear: first of all, man was not naturally born with a heart that qualifies him as "good ground." Secondly, he cannot do anything about his sinful condition. He cannot change his heart. He cannot make himself "good ground." He cannot produce in himself "an honest and good heart." Unless and until God the

Holy Spirit moves in, regenerating the spiritually dead sinner (see Ephesians 2:5, Colossians 2:13) and creating a new heart in him, the sinner cannot be saved. God has promised to someday do for all Israel what He does for individual sinners now. He said, **"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"** (Ezek. 36:26). In that day all Israel shall have "an honest and good heart" – a heart that will hear the Word and bring forth lasting fruit – evidence of their new hearts.

This change in the inner man – the heart if you please, is not only spoken of as God putting a new heart within the sinner; it is also spoken of as God opening the heart in such a way as to enable the heart to receive the Word profitably. An example of this is recorded for us in Acts 16:14 where we read: **"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."** Today's popular religion says "open your heart's door and let Jesus come in." The Bible says it is God who opens the heart in such a way that the person receives the Word. The Bible also speaks of this operation of God as being a circumcision of the heart. Paul wrote: **"But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God"** (Rom. 2:29). The true children of God – spiritual Israel – are those who have experienced a "circumcision" of the heart. Stephen stated the truth about the unbelieving Jews of his day,

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## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

### Financial Report

7-1-2018 to 7-31-2018

Beginning Balance .....	\$429.09
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
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
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
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	200.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	100.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR .....	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Indianapolis, IN ..	110.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	108.00
Anonymous .....	1,410.00
Dividing checks .....	0.00
Sub Total .....	\$3,420.50
TOTAL .....	\$3,849.59

<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	490.00
Postage .....	575.82
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.90
Supplies .....	0.00
Dividing checks .....	0.00
Bank Charge .....	13.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,554.72
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$294.87



## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

### Financial Report

7-1-2018 to 7-31-2018

Beginning Balance .....	\$1,410.15
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Calvary B. C., Sumas, WA .....	200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY .....	200.00
.....	625.00
TOTAL .....	2,035.15
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	363.98
Program production .....	195.00
Bank charge .....	10.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	568.98
Interest .....	+01
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$1,466.18

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder Roger Reed has written a book titled *My Years as a New Testament Baptist Preacher*. The book was written for young men (not necessarily young in age) called to the gospel ministry. They will be offered free to anyone who emails him at: pstrreed@aol.com or it can be requested by mail at: West Jefferson Baptist Mission, 90 E. Main Street, West Jefferson Ohio 43162-1206. Please include your mailing address with your request.

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The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is seeking a pastor. Please contact Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228 for more information.

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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.

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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.

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

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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 Short Pews

(Continued from page 23) ♦

saying to them, **“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). Unbelievers need a circumcision of the heart!

So it is that in order for a sinner to have “an honest and good heart” he or she must experience an operation of God upon them. Paul called it quickening: a spiritually dead sinner being made alive. He wrote this in Ephesians 2:5: **“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together**

**with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).”** And again in Colossians 2:13 he wrote: **“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”**

The Lord Jesus in speaking to Nicodemus told him, **“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit”** (John 3:6-8). In these words Jesus spoke of regeneration – the work of God

which gives life to the spiritually dead sinner – working in him “an honest and good heart.”

All glory to the Lamb that was slain! It is God who works in sinners who by their natural birth are unable to contribute anything to their own salvation. That is what grace is all about. God bestows upon the sinner all that he lacks – all that he must have – in order to be saved. Paul summed it up this way: **“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it”** (I Cor. 4:7)? Are you able to receive the Word of God in a spiritually profitable way? It is God who gave you that ability by quickening you. Have you a new heart? It is the gift of God. Has your heart experienced a spiritual circumcision? That, too, is the work of God in the sinner apart from any merit or action of the spiritually dead sinner. All that you have, spiritually-speaking, comes from God. The flesh can only reproduce more flesh: only **“that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”** Give all the glory for the salvation of sinners to God – including your own salvation if you are saved. All the glory belongs rightly to Him! Do you insist that you did something in order to be quickened – to be born again? Have you such confidence in the flesh? Then you are not circumcised in the heart for Paul wrote these words: **“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). The confidence and the boasting of God’s children is in Him and not in ourselves. Selah!



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