

# 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

## Beware of False Doctrine

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

My text today comes from Matthew 16:1-12: **"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but**



**can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign**

**be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed. And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto**

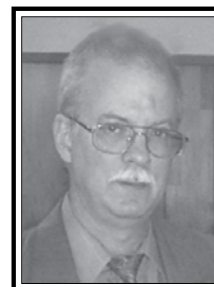
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## An Exposition of John 3:16

By Lucien J. LeSage Jr.  
of Pride, Louisiana

Many times men will quote one verse from the Bible and develop a doctrine without examining that verse in the light of its context. One such verse is John 3:16. Let me say up front that I believe John 3:16 with all my heart. I absolutely believe that **"...God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** My faith rests in Jesus Christ and Him alone.

Before we examine the context of John 3:16, I would like to point out that Jesus said in another place that unless a man repents he will perish. **"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"** (Luke 13:3). He said also, **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and**



**believe the gospel"** (Mark 1:15).

So let us now look at the context of John 3:16. A thing to remember is the setting of the text. What was the time and who was it spoken to? In the case of John 3:16, John the apostle is telling us what Jesus said to a particular man. The setting is when Jesus had gone up to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover and had thrown the money changers out of the temple (see John chapter 2). Many of the Jewish religious leaders were upset with Him and wanted a sign by which He did these things.

So Jesus is in Jerusalem for the Passover and a certain man came to Him by night. Who was this man? Well he was no ordinary

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## The Servant of the Lord

By Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 – 2002)

**"O LORD, truly I am thy servant; and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds"** (Ps. 116:16).

The psalmist was not a make-believe servant of the Lord. He asserts: **"I am thy servant,"** not was or will be. Jehovah had loosed him from the bonds of death (Ps. 116:8). Every person serves a better Master whose yoke is



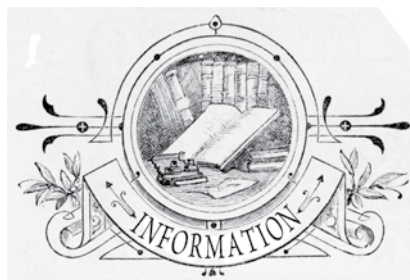
easy and whose burden is light. A person freed from bondage is bound to serve his Master all the days of his life.

The Hebrew word (*ebed*) translated "servant" means "doer, tiller, or slave." In the New Testament the Greek word (*doulos*) means

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## September 5, 2019 Volume XXXIX, Number 9

Whole Number 482

Editor: Christopher Cockrell

Staff: Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Kiser, Virginia Cockrell

THE BEREBA BAPTIST BANNER (UPS 546470) is published monthly for \$6.00 per year by the authority of the Berea Baptist Church, 3881 Highway 363, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855. Periodical Publication postage paid at Mantachie, Mississippi.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEREBA BAPTIST BANNER, P. O. Box 39, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855-0039.

LOCATION OF PUBLISHING CHURCH: Our church is located on state highway 363 about one mile south of Mantachie, Mississippi. Readers are always welcome to visit our services.

CHURCH PHONE: 1-662-282-7794.

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One year.....\$6.00  
Two years.....\$10.00  
Five years.....\$24.00

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - FOREIGN One Year \$45

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1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strength-en His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer 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.

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### HEED THE CROW OF THE TOP ROOSTER

It seems the editor's thoughts are still dwelling on the chicken pen this month. Raising chickens is educational from many stand points, one of which is the many Biblical lessons we can learn from them.

In a flock of chickens you can have several roosters, but only one will be the "top rooster." It is the same for hens, but we might look at it in a later installment after the editor gets through pecking and scratching on this thought. The top rooster (or cock for a year or older and cockerel for less than a year for you chicken folk who want the proper names) is the shepherd and overseer of his flock. He is responsible for the protection and well being of his flock. If necessary he will defend it with his life. On occasions he even has to break up fights between flock members. Sounds a lot like a pastor of a Baptist church, does it not?

When danger from outside predators lurks the rooster usually alerts his flock to the impending danger by gnarring. It has a much different sound than the usual early morning crow at or just before sunrise. If you have ever seen this in action it is quite impressive. When a dark shadow moves across the yard he will give this hair raising sound and hens and roosters alike start running for cover (As a side note, don't have your ear less than a foot from a full grown rooster when he makes this sound, hair raising indeed!). As comparison to the pastor, when

he sees outside danger (or inside) from those that would harm or scatter the flock, he preaches (or warns) his flock. He stands in the pulpit and preaches against sin and wrong doing. It is his job as the pastor (or top rooster).

Of course there are always some in the flock who are slow to react or heed the rooster's warning, and as a result end up as a hearty meal for a hawk or owl. Many members have not heeded the warning from the pastor and have fallen into sinful habits that have lasting effects.

If a rooster does not sound the alarm he is in danger, not only from the predator, but from the master as well. A rooster that does not do his job is bound to be supper for someone. A pastor that does not warn his flock of sin is no different. His Master requires a strict obedience in keeping His flock. **"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, ..."** (Acts 20:28), (John 21:15-17; I Peter 5:2).

The question we have to ask ourselves is, do we listen to the "top rooster." Do we listen to our pastor and heed the warnings he gives from the Holy Scriptures? Remember, failure to listen has consequences. For some, those consequences might be loss of rewards, or chastisement. If you're a chicken it might be original or extra crispy.



A facsimile of the Editor working on the next issue.

# Beware of False

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**them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."**

In this passage, the Lord ordered the disciples to, **"take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."** This seems to be a rather trivial thing to be worried about, and the disciples were probably initially puzzled by the Lord's use of words. If you read the context preceding our text passage, you find that the gospel according to Matthew, relates the miracle of the "feeding of the four thousand" in the previous chapter. Then, in the events related in our text, we find that the disciples had **"..forgotten to take bread."** So, when the Lord warned them concerning the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the disciples came to the conclusion that they had failed the Lord (and themselves), and the Lord was warning them because they had forgotten to bring any bread

with them: **"..It is because we have taken no bread."** Of course, as we read on, our text passage reveals to us that the disciples made a mistake that was common to them (and to all men), in that they were interpreting the teachings and warnings of the Lord in a physical fashion, when He had a lesson for them to learn in a spiritual fashion. The disciples mistakenly thought that the Lord was disappointed in them, or that he thought they would starve, because they did not bring bread with them. As the Lord reminded them, "Did they not remember that the Lord had just fed four thousand with only seven loaves and a few small fishes? Was there even the remotest possibility that the disciples would ever starve, so long as they accompanied the Lord Jesus Christ?" Rather, the lesson that the Lord had for the disciples – the warning that He declared unto them, or, we might say, the commandment that He issued unto them – was meant to be understood in a spiritual fashion, and concerned the dangers that the Pharisees and Sadducees (and those like them), presented unto those that would follow and obey Jesus Christ. In our text passage, the Lord explains things this way, and the disciples finally understood, **"How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"** (Matt. 16:11-12). The Lord used the recent miracle of abundance of bread, along with the disciples current lack of bread – they were thinking of food and bread! – to warn the disciples about the leaven and the bread of

the teachings and the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Now, I want to warn us all to "beware of false doctrine." I want us all to be reminded of the dangers of false doctrine, and I want us all to be reminded about just how prevalent that false doctrine is. The Lord Jesus used "leaven" as a metaphor for "false doctrine." As we consider His use of words, I believe we will find that (as always) His comparison, or His figure of speech, is quite fitting. In the Scriptures, even particularly in the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Gospels, we find that leaven often represents sin. I believe this is so, because leaven portrays many of the insidious characteristics of sin. Of course, I am not saying that leaven itself is sin; or that we should only eat foods which are without leaven. I am only saying (as the Lord also teaches) that the characteristics of leaven – which are useful in baking bread – and the effects which leaven has on the meal into which it is inserted, are very similar in the way that sin works, and the effects that sin has on men, the character of men, or even the teachings and doctrines of men.

Just like leaven, sin can seem insignificant to men, when compared to the whole. The leaven incorporated into the meal or the flour, may seem small or of little account when compared to the whole. And yet, it will have an effect! Just like leaven, sin tends to permeate the whole, and, if successful, will spread throughout the lump of flour or meal. The sins that spread through men can be found, originally, in Adam, but now are everywhere. The sin of the "false doctrine" that the Pharisees and Sadducees promoted, might have seemed small, but it spread quickly – just as leaven will in the flour. In the end, just like

leaven, sin – or in this case "false doctrine" – will have an effect on the entirety of the flour or meal, and will inevitably transform the lump. Surely, "false doctrine" is dangerous! It is insidious! It at first seems unimportant, small, or maybe even a radical fringe element that only could be believed by apostate or imposters. But then, it gains a foothold, it begins to spread and its influence is felt more and more. In the end, the entire lump of flour or meal – the entire church, or maybe even Christianity in its entirety – will be transformed into something that is was not at first.

So, what I will now attempt to do, is to show you two main false doctrines that are obviously present in the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Maybe this is why the Lord mentioned only the Pharisees and the Sadducees – He meant to focus on the primary false doctrine that each promoted – Jesus as the Christ, and the resurrection of the dead. Further, I want us to consider how the church of Christ is even under attack today, because of the very false doctrine (leaven) that began, in this age, with the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

## THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES DENIED THE CHRIST

The Pharisees and Sadducees wanted to see a **"sign from heaven."** In other words, they did not, and would not, believe that Jesus of Nazareth was/is the Christ. The Lord replies by condemning the generation in which He lived. He points to the fact that they could use the signs of nature to predict the weather – but they could not, and would not, bear witness to the mighty deeds of Jesus, and deduce that He was the Christ! And then, Jesus tells them, **"A wicked and**

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**adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed"** (Matt. 16:4).

The majority of the Jews, and the majority of their leaders and teachers were constant in their denials of Jesus as the Christ. In fact, even the folks of His own country rejected Him: **"And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief"** (Matt. 13:54-58). Do you see how these Jews tried to use the logic of man's own reason to disprove the deity of Christ? Do you see how they tried to keep men from believing on Jesus? Well, this is something that the leaders of the Jews spent a lot of time doing. They were constantly promoting false doctrine. Therefore, the Lord Jesus would cry out to His disciples, **"...Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."**

The Pharisees expended a lot of effort and time in seeking to refute the claims of Jesus Christ. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ never did rely only on His own word to

prove that He was the Christ; but, He allowed that John the Baptist was His witness, that the Father was His Witness, and that His own works bore witness that He was the Christ. One time, after He had given sight to the blind man at the pool of Siloam – on the Sabbath Day – the Pharisees had this to say about Jesus: **"Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day..."** (John 9:16). The Pharisees were constantly trying to catch Jesus up in His words or in His deeds to seek to prove that He was not the Christ.

But, despite all of their efforts, Jesus was, without exception, proved to be the Christ, the Son of God. However, Jesus Christ was still careful to remind His own disciples to beware of false doctrine.

## THE LEAVEN DENIED THE RESURRECTION

Though the Pharisees did believe in the resurrection, the Scriptures are plain in proving that the Sadducees denied the truth of the resurrection. Therefore, I believe that I am correct in using this denial as an evidence of the leaven of the false doctrine of the Sadducees.

We read about this denial of the resurrection on the part of the Sadducees, and how that the Lord Jesus refuted their leaven, in Matthew 22:23-33: **"The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the**

**second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine."**

The Lord Jesus, of course, was very adept at turning the words of men against themselves. The Sadducees thought that they could use the law and words of Moses to refute the doctrine of the resurrection. So, they thought they could prove that there was no resurrection, by proving that this woman which had (lawfully) been the wife of multiple men, would not be able to (lawfully) determine who it was that would be her husband in the resurrection. However, the Lord Jesus Christ accuses them of not knowing the Scriptures; and then, in a parallel account, Jesus refers to Moses this way: **"Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him."** (Luke 20:37-38). Do you see how Jesus took the words of Moses, the man that they were trying to use to refute the doctrine of the resurrection, and He used those words of Mo-

ses to prove the very doctrine that they were denying?

Do you see how prevalent and deeply engrained the leaven of false doctrine was in the days of Jesus Christ?

## THE LEAVEN IS STILL PRESENT TODAY

For the remainder of this sermon, I want us to take what we have learned about the false doctrine and leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and apply it to our religious world today. Do you realize that the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is still present today? Now, it is no wonder that false doctrine exists in the world today. Mankind is inherently evil and depraved. Therefore, every system of doctrine or religion that he develops, will also be inherently evil and depraved. Even though these men and women of the religions of the world may do some good from time to time – such as charitable work, moral endeavors – still, these man-made religions cannot gain salvation for any man; nor does our God in Heaven have respect unto them and their ways.

But, do you realize that, even within the ranks of so-called Christianity, there is ample proof that the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is still at work today. To illustrate this point, let me direct your attention to the parables of Matthew 13. There, in the middle of these parables, Jesus Christ says this: **"Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened"** (Matt. 13:33). I believe that these Pharisees and Sadducees and scribes and lawyers and chief priests of the days of Jesus Christ, are comparable to this woman of this parable. They took the leaven

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# Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of  
Plant City, Florida



## SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON - BIBLE SURVEY #5 NEW TESTAMENT

TEXT: Acts 1:1

DEVOTIONAL READING: John 20:30-31

SUGGESTED HYMN: Books of the New Testament

AIM: An Over-View of the New Testament

INTRODUCTION—In this lesson, we are going to look at the New Testament. In Acts 1:1, Luke tells us that he wrote the Gospel of Luke to a man named Theophilus. Luke tells us that the Gospel was a treatise or letter, that spoke of **“...all that Jesus began both to do and teach.”** Let us observe then the New Testament in some divisions:

I. THE GOSPELS: The word “gospel” means “a good message.” Luke 2:10-11, tells us that the “good news” is that the Savior has come. Remember, Luke wrote in Acts 1:1, that the gospel of Luke was what Jesus began both to do and teach. Thus, the 4 Gospels tell us what Jesus began to do and teach.

1. BOOKS—The Gospel contains 4 books and each presents Christ Jesus in a different way: Matthew—King, Mark—Servant, Luke—Son of Man, John—Son of God.

II. ACTS: The book of Acts stands alone. There are some erroneous thoughts concerning this book. It is NOT the acts of the Apostles, but rather the acts of the Holy Spirit through the Lord’s church because it is a book of the ACTION of the Holy Spirit working through the Lord’s church. Since the gospels contain what Jesus began to do and teach, the book of Acts is what Jesus continued to do.

III. THE EPISTLES: The word epistle simply means letters. These are letters that individual men wrote unto others as the Holy Spirit of God inspired them to do. We divide this into 2 groups: Paul’s epistles & general epistles. Since the book of Acts is what Jesus continued to do, the epistles are what Christ Jesus continued to teach

1. PAUL’S EPISTLES: Paul is the human author of more books of the Bible than any other writer. Paul wrote to the Lord’s church at different locations, as well as individuals and people. The books contained herein are: Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, & Hebrews.<sup>1</sup>

2. GENERAL EPISTLES: We call these the general epistles because there are 4 authors to these 7 books; each bearing the names of the individual author. Though these books are small in size comparatively, they are packed with wonderful truths that Jesus continued to teach God’s people. The books of the general epistles are James, I & II Peter, I, II, & III John, & Jude.

IV. REVELATION: Rev. 1:1—the full title of this book is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Some erroneously call it the revelation of John. It reveals nothing concerning John and everything concerning Christ. Revelation is what Jesus is going to do.

1. The book of Revelation has three parts—Rev. 1:19

A. The things which thou hast seen (past tense)—Rev. 1:1-20.

B. The things which are (present tense)—Rev. 2:1-3:22.

C. The things which shall be (future tense)—Rev. 4:1-22:21.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS: God has given us these books. We read previously how that the world could not contain the books of all that Jesus has done. But these are written so that you might believe and believing you might have eternal life.

VI. IMPORTANT: I Corinthians 13:10—**“But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”** It should be noted that God’s Word has been “perfected” or completed. There are no more revelations, there are no more Holy Spirit inspirations. There are no more truths to be revealed. While others are receiving dreams, visions, hearing voices, the Bible declares that these things do NOT come from God. Rather, God speaks to His people through His written Word. Therefore, it is so important that we know what God’s Word says so we do not err. **“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God”** (Matt. 22:29).

### NOTES

1. We believe that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews. There are some who do not. We make no contention of this, for we know that regardless of the human author, the Holy Spirit is the true author.

(Nathaniel Hille is pastor of the Bible Baptist Church of Plant City, Florida.)

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of false doctrine, and, even at the beginnings of the church of Jesus Christ, they were willing to hide that leaven within the people. And, that leaven, though it was very small and inconspicuous, and though it was ably refuted by Christ and the Apostles; still, that leaven of false doctrine would forever oppose and even begin to permeate, the churches of Christ, and the people of God.

As evidence of the deadly and pervasive nature of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, let me illustrate the ongoing presence of both of the heretical doctrines that we have mentioned thus far.

Notice, that in John’s Epistle, he combats these same errors, and this same leaven that was promoted by the Pharisees: **“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby**

**know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world”** (I John 4:1-3). The errors, lies and hypocrisy of the Pharisees, would continue into the time of John the Beloved – and they continue even today! In the next chapter, John says this: **“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him”** (I John 5:1).

And then, we notice that the lies and hypocrisy of the Sadducees were also continued. Notice, in particular, how Paul had to fight against the denials that many men presented against the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the future res-

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urrection of the dead in Christ. We read in I Corinthians 15, how Paul lays the basis of the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and how that resurrection was proven by many witnesses. And then, we read in I Corinthians 15:12-23: **"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."** Oh, how Paul and the others must fight against the wicked and destructive leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and the others that would follow them! And, these things are still true today.

In fact, today the presence and effect of that leaven is more prevalent than ever. So much so, in fact, that today I believe the parable of the leaven is just about fulfilled:

**"...The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened"** (Matt. 13:33). Today, the Kingdom of God on this earth – which most compare to Christianity – is nearly fully **"leavened."** In other words, there is not much of Truth or Value in Christianity today. And, Christianity today, is not any longer of any use to Christ – but, instead, Christianity today is being used by the Devil. And why not? It is his doctrine that has permeated the world of Christianity.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me say one more thing: We could conclude, from the actions and teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees, that they also denied the church of Jesus Christ. Remember, just before the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ, there was a man named John, who was sent from God, to prepare a people for the Lord. Those of us who are Baptists today – or maybe I should say it this way: Baptists have historically contended that John the Baptist was preparing the materials (men and women) from which Jesus Christ would build His church. But, we find that when John the Baptist was busy doing what it was that God sent him to do, the Pharisees and Sadducees opposed him – just as they would later oppose Jesus Christ. We read in Matthew 3:7-10: **"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up chil-**

**dren unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."**

And then, later, Jesus would refer to the fact that the scribes and Pharisees and chief priests and elders had rejected the preaching and the baptism of John the Baptist: **"And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things... For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him"** (Matt 21:23-27, 32).

I only refer you to these passages concerning John the Baptist, so you would see that the religious leader of the Jews, by and large, did not submit to scriptural baptism during either the ministry of John the Baptist, or the ministry of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they were saying, basically, that they did not believe in being disciples

of Christ. And, in doing so, they therefore wholeheartedly rejected the importance of the church of Jesus Christ.

This is a false doctrine, and a leaven, that would continue on into the age of the church of Jesus Christ. In fact, was not Saul of Tarsus an agent of the Jewish religion, who was sent out for the express purpose of destroying the church of Jesus Christ? At one point, Paul the Apostle said this about his past actions: **"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."** (Gal. 1:13-14). The Jews not only rejected John the Baptist, and then Jesus Christ, but they also rejected the church that Jesus built.

The point I am trying to make, here at the conclusion of my sermon, is this: just as there were Pharisees and Sadducees and Jews of all sorts that were opposed to the church of Jesus Christ in the days of Christ and of the Apostles; even so, there are today, amongst the ranks of even religious Christianity, that will oppose the true and necessary teachings of the local church. You know, in reality, logically speaking, it should have been the religious Jews that accepted the teachings of John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the disciples of Christ. But, instead, those that were educated and most studious in the Scriptures, were exactly the ones that primarily rejected the gospel of Christ and the church of Jesus. And, absolutely, the same is true today. Those folks who ought to

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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).



## GLADWIN GETAWAY

Each year my family and I pack up the car and head north for a summer getaway. We do not head to the upper peninsula or even to the lakes, but rather to the tiny town of Gladwin, Michigan.

We started this tradition 20 years ago when my wife and I were dating. We had been together just a few months when her family invited me to tag along to what they called a "Bible Conference." Having been raised Catholic, I had never heard of such a thing. I was quite smitten, so I happily went along. When we arrived in Gladwin, we pulled into the long gravel driveway of a campground facility. I began to wonder just what in the world I had signed up for.

We did not leave that campground for three days. All of our meals and comforts were provided for. We had all we needed and spent the weekend worshipping the Lord in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). The Lord brought me to the exact place I needed to be.

It was here that I began to truly cherish this precious relationship I had with God, by His grace. It was here that I realized I did not need a television or a cell phone signal to find contentment. It was here that I first "heard" peace.

II Peter 1:2-4 says, **"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain**

**unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."**

My wife and I celebrate 14 years of marriage this week. I consider our relationship to be a precious gift from God which succeeds only through an humble search for His purpose for us. We have struggled together, yet we have grown deeply. We have cried, and we have loved truly. We have hurt, but we have been healed completely. We, along with our three children, now return to our favorite summer destination with innumerable joyful memories that have been made in this place. It is the rejuvenation we need each year, and the place that still helps me refocus my purpose as a child of the King.

Philippians 4:7 tells us, **"...the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."** Do you know of this peace, dear reader? A peace so deeply felt can hardly be described in words. The preceding verse here in Philippians makes clear that this peace can only be experienced when all of our petitions are made known unto the Lord by prayer and supplication (request). As this cannot be done from afar, I urge you this day to **"...come boldly**

**unto the throne of grace"** (Heb. 4:16). Seclude yourself away from the world that you might **"...obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"** (Heb. 4:16). May you prioritize your own "getaway" from the world for fellowship with the Lord.

(Joseph Sidders is pastor of the Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Temperance, Michigan.)



## Beware of False

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know better, are exactly the ones that are rejecting the church of Jesus Christ and the true gospel of Jesus Christ. (See I Cor. 18-31).

So, all that I want to say to you, is "beware of false doctrine." Just as in the days of Jesus Christ, it is still present today. There are plenty of people, institutions, governments, denominations, and religions out there today that will deny that the Lord Jesus is the Christ. They will deny that He is the only way to Heaven. They will deny His deity. They will deny His virgin birth. They will deny His impeccable nature. They will even deny His sovereignty in salvation. These same folks will oftentimes deny the resurrection. They will deny that there is an afterlife. They will deny that there is such a thing as rising from the dead. They will even deny that Jesus Christ ever arose bodily from the grave. But, these are all false doctrine – they will only serve to leaven the whole lump of humanity.

And, as far as the church of Jesus Christ is concerned, let us continue to contend for the pure and spotless bride of Christ. Let us not allow the false doctrine of even those that call themselves Baptists, to detract from the glory of the church of Christ. Let us continue to preach and teach the importance of the New Testa-

ment church of Jesus Christ. Despite the attacks of others, and the accusations of some, let us seek to glorify God in the church of Jesus. Again, "beware of false doctrine."

(Paul Stepp is pastor of the Indore Baptist Church of Indore, West Virginia.)



## Servant of the Lord

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"servant" or "bond slave." A servant is one who serves the Lord.

### CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

The eternal Son of God was chosen in the before-time covenant to be the obedient servant of Jehovah. This required great condescension on the part of One who was equal with God and in the form of God. The Father said of the Son: **"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles"** (Isa. 42:1). This verse is quoted in the New Testament and applied to Jesus Christ (Matt. 12:17-18). As a man, Christ was the servant of Jehovah.

Old Testament prophecy foretold the Messiah would be a servant: **"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high"** (Isa. 52:13). Again in Isaiah 53:11 the Father calls Christ **"my righteous servant."** Speaking by the mouth of Zechariah, the Father denominated Christ **"my servant the BRANCH"** (Zech. 3:8 cf. Isa. 43:10; 42:1).

Christ emptied Himself of the manifestation of His glory (John 17:5) to take upon Himself **"the form of a servant"** (Phil. 2:7). He entirely submitted Himself to the will of the Father (John 6:38). He even submitted Himself to the

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# Servant of the Lord

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law (Gal. 4:4) and to His parents (Luke 2:51). The Gospel of Mark presents Christ as the servant of the Lord.

Jesus publicly declared: **“For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth”** (Luke 22:27). The word “serve” here means “service of any kind.” Jesus had just demonstrated this by washing the disciple’s feet (John 13:14-16). The essence of Christ’s ministry on earth is seen in His words: **“I am among you as he that serveth.”** Christ wanted His disciples, not to aim at position and power, but to be humble and to serve one another.

Christ taught that true greatness was in serving: **“...Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”** (Matt. 20:25-28). Christ came to help those in distress. He came to minister to the sick and diseased. He denied Himself both food and rest that He might be serviceable to others. True greatness consists in renouncing greatness itself.

In Mark 9:35 the Lord told how to attain true greatness in the kingdom: **“...If any desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.”** The very essence of greatness in Christ’s kingdom is humility and service. The highest place must be sought by accepting the lowest. The

lowest is the highest---the servant is chief. On the other hand, the highest is the lowest. (Where does this put the pope and big-shot preachers?)

Many things about Jesus Christ show Him to be the servant of Jehovah. He was betrayed for the price of a bondservant (Ex. 21:32). He died in obedience to the Father’s will (Phil. 2:7-8). Presently, He is at the right hand of God making intercession for His people. Christ continues to do service for us.

## MEN WHO WERE SERVANTS OF THE LORD

One cannot read the Bible without seeing the greatest men who ever lived upon the earth were but servants of the Lord. Consider a few verses. We might expect to find in the Bible: “Job, the greatest man of the East” but we do not. We read where God said: **“...my servant Job”** (Job 1:8). **“Abraham his servant”** (Ps. 105:42), not “Abraham the Great.” We find not: “Moses the great lawgiver and leader of Israel,” but rather **“Moses the servant of the LORD”** (Josh. 1:1). We read not of: “Jacob, the father of the Jewish nation,” but of **“O Jacob my servant”** (Isa. 44:1). Note some more. **“...thou art my servant: O Israel”** (Isa. 44:21). **“O Daniel, servant of the living God”** (Dan. 6:20). **“O Zerubbabel, my servant”** (Hag. 2:23).

This truth is not confined to the Old Testament. It is equally noticeable in the New Testament. When Paul addressed the church at Rome he wrote: **“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ”** (Rom. 1:1). The word here translated “servant” is the same that is properly translated “slave” in classic Greek. Most translators would rend it “bondservant.” Paul was not his own; he belonged to Jesus Christ who had chosen

him to serve the interest of His kingdom.

In Paul’s estimation all true Christians are servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. **“For he that in all these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men”** (Rom. 14:18). **“For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant”** (I Cor. 7:22). **“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ”** (Col. 3:24).

The opening words of the Epistle of James are: **“James, a servant of God”** (Jas. 1:1). No place in this letter do we find the words: “James, pastor of the Jerusalem church,” or “James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ.” These things were true (Matt. 13:55; Acts 15:13).

The Book of Jude begins: **“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ”** (Jude 1:1). It does not begin with such things as “the very Right Reverend Jude, D. D.” Peter’s first words in his second letter are **“Simon Peter, a servant”** (II Pet. 1:1). He does not write: “Simon Peter, the first pope of Rome.” In verse 1, of the Book of Revelation, I read: **“...his servant John.”** In writing to the church at Colosse Paul penned these words: **“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ”** (Col. 4:12). Revelation 10:7 speaks of **“his servants the prophets.”**

## SAVED TO SERVE

We are not only elected to salvation, but we are also elected to service: **“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there is no God formed, neither shall there be after me”** (Isa. 43:10). In John 15:16 Christ

said: **“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you.”** The Christian who does not persevere in service to Christ and bear fruit cannot make his calling and election sure. Those who serve God can be assured of salvation: **“The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate”** (Ps. 34:22; cf. Isa. 48:20).

The Lord did not save us merely to keep us out of Hell, nor so we could go to Heaven when we die. We are saved to serve: **“A seed shall serve him”** (Ps. 22:30). Many in this world care nothing for God’s service. Some pretend to begin in it, and then forsake it. But Christ will always have a seed to serve Him even in the darkest times of apostasy (Rom. 9:29).

Before conversion we were **“the servants of sin”** (Rom. 6:17, 20). We were bound to Satan and did his service. In conversion Christ emancipated us from this shameful service: **“Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. . . . But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life”** (Rom. 6:18, 22). The believer ought to be as entirely devoted to God as a slave to his master.

That we are saved to serve the Lord is seen in I Thessalonians 1:9 where they are said to have **“turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”** The Greek word used for “serve” denotes a life of continuous, complete, and wholehearted service to God. The literal connotation of the verb

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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).

## LIFE

Lazarus has been dead for four days. His cold, dead, body is laid in a tomb. His family, especially his sisters, are heartbroken at the loss of their dear brother. He is gone. Death is a separation. It is a very unnatural thing that happens. It seems like the most natural thing. But in the beginning, it was not so. When sin entered the world, death followed. It is most natural for the body, soul, and spirit to be united. But because of sin, death separates the body and soul.

Death also separates the living from the dead. Mary and Martha were upset because their brother was gone. It is a separation of loved ones, a separation of family relations. It feels like a hole is left in your life because of the absence. Life will never be the same since that person is gone. After my Mother passed away, for almost a year, I would grab my phone to send a text, a picture, or to call her about something and then it hit me afresh, she was gone.

Martha rebuked the Lord for not showing up in time to save Lazarus. Jesus responds by telling her Lazarus will rise. She agreed, but the hope of the resurrection and eternal life was no comfort because she knew the truth, but did not rest in the truth. Then, in John 11:25-26, Jesus said, **"...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."** Eternal life. Death does not end eternal life. Eternal life begins when we

believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and are united to Christ by faith. Knowing God through Jesus Christ is eternal life. Death is not the end of life because those who believe in Christ, even though the body dies, the soul lives. Better still, the body will be raised and reunited with the soul. Whosoever believes in Christ shall never die.

When they arrive at the tomb, and Jesus says to roll away the stone door of the tomb, Martha reminds Jesus that it is too late. His body has already been dead so long, it stinks with corruption and decay. But when Jesus called for Lazarus, he came out of the grave. Jesus is the resurrection. Jesus is life. Lazarus' soul was reunited with his body and he lived.

Death is the great separator, but the sting of death has been taken away by the life of Christ. Jesus Christ defeated death, when He died and rose again. Death separates, but what a glorious truth in the gospel, that the soul goes on to be with Jesus and the body of death will be raised and glorified. For the Christian, the separation of a child of God is only temporary. One day, at the resurrection, body and soul will be reunited. Loved ones will be reunited. The family of God will be gathered, and never again experience the pain of death.

(Doug Newell IV is pastor of the Buffalo Valley Baptist Church of Clay, West Virginia.)



# Servant of the Lord

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is "to serve as a slave." No man is truly converted until he learns to put himself wholly in subjection to God (cf. Heb. 9:14).

## TO SERVE IS TO FOLLOW CHRIST

Our Savior taught: **"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour"** (John 12:26). The Greek word for "serve" (*diakoneo*) here signifies the service of a personal attendant, not that of a bondservant. In the service of Christ we must follow Him. We must profess His name, receive His truth, and catch the spirit of the law of His life. We should walk in His footsteps and do as He did. We must not look for crowns, kingdoms, honor, and riches. Like our Master, we must be content with a cross (Matt. 16:24; Rom. 8:17).

## HOW TO SERVE

First, we are to serve faithfully: **"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord"** (Matt. 25:21). Let us not be idle or inactive. Let us be true to our Master's interests. The Lord does not require that His servant be popular or successful, but He does require that they be found faithful (I Cor. 4:2; Rev. 17:14). A faithful servant will be made a ruler.

Second, we are required to serve continually. King Darius said to Daniel: **"Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee"** (Dan. 6:16, 20). There is no vacation or holiday in serving God. There is never a time to slack off a bit or quit. It is

incumbent upon us to serve Christ **"In holiness and righteousness. . . all the days of our life"** (Luke 1:75). As the fire never went out on the altar of burnt offering, so Christians ought to continually be engaged in the service of Christ.

Third, we are to serve acceptably: **"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear"** (Heb. 12:28). The service here is not the service of a bondservant, but the willing service of a worshipper (*latreuo*). Service without reverence for God's majesty and hatred of sin is not acceptable.

Fourth, we are commanded to serve the Lord with fear and rejoicing: **"Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling"** (Ps. 2:11). **"With fear"** means let reverence and humility be mingled with your service. There must be holy fear mixed with a Christian's joy. Fear without joy is torment, and joy without fear is presumption.

## OUR SERVICE NEVER CEASES

Truly we are to serve our Lord all the days of our life on earth. Many Scriptures command this. Death only ends our service to our God so far as this life is concerned. When we cease to serve the Lord in His temple below (His church, Eph. 2:21), we then go to serve Him in the temple above: **"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. . ."** (Rev. 7:15). The disembodied state is not a state of inactivity. **"Day and night"** denotes the constancy and uninterrupted of the service of the departed saints. This is an allusion to the priests and Levites who served day and night. In the

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present state we are incapable of this continual worship, but when the spirit is separated from the body there is no weariness in our service in this never-ending Sabbath. No coldness of feeling, no deadness of soul, no lack of love, no languishing of affection, and no distress of soul. What a day!

The chief characteristic of the millennium is that His servants serve Him: **“Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him”** (Ps. 72:11). **“...all dominions shall serve and obey him”** (Dan. 7:27). The confusion of tongues of Babel will be reversed so as to permit universal service to earth’s rightful King: **“For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent”** (Zeph. 3:9).

What will be the employment of the saints in the ages to come (Eph. 2:7). The chief characteristic of the eternal state is service: **“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him”** (Rev. 22:3). Much time will be given to fellowship and testimony, for singing and playing the harps of gold. But there shall be much time spent in service to God and the Lamb without cessation, without flaw, and without one legal thought. What better way to spend eternity? There is no higher privilege on earth or in Heaven than serving God.

## THE BLESSINGS PROMISED TO HIS SERVANTS

First, we have been given authority in His church to serve Him while He is away in Heaven: **“For the Son of man is as a man**

**taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch”** (Mark 13:34). We must not show we are unworthy of the trust Christ reposed on us. We must not say of any work which needs to be done, **“This is no business of mine.”** No task must be too small or too large. His servants must not abuse this authority. We must do everything well which is to be done in His house.

Second, we are promised divine deliverance in time of trouble. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had Shadrack, Meshach, and Abed-nego, **“servants of the most high God”** (Dan. 3:26), cast into a burning furnace for refusing to worship his golden idol. But they came out unharmed and without the smell of smoke in their clothing. The king then declared: **“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God”** (Dan. 3:28).

Third, we shall be blessed of God: **“Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh shall find so doing”** (Luke 12:43). The Lord’s “blessed” carries a benediction through eternity. Honors of earth become dim at the grave.

Fourth, the Lord will take vengeance on those who shed the blood of His servants: **“Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed”** (Ps. 79:10). **“For true and righteous**

**are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand”** (Rev. 19:2). Those who have intoxicated themselves with the blood of the Lord’s servants shall have blood to drink.

## CONCLUSION

1. The servant is never above his Lord (Matt. 20:24-25). When we have done our best we can only say: **“We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do”** (Luke 17:10). Eliphaz asked: **“Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?”** (Job 22:2-3).

2. Nature serves the most High: **“For all are thy servants”** (Ps. 119:91). The angels of Heaven are “servants” of God (Job 4:18; Ps. 103:20-21). Only man says: **“It is vain to serve God”** (Mal. 3:14). Nature and the elect angels serve and honor God more than mankind. Thank God for the few men and women who still spend their happiest hours in serving Christ. Who ever repented of serving the Lord too well?

3. The greatest privilege a man can have on earth is to be a servant of God and others. Half-hearted service will not do. Some people’s service is like the Pharisee’s prayer, the traitor’s kiss, the sacrifice of Cain, the feast of Jezebel, the oblations of Ananias, and the tears of Esau.

4. We cannot escape service of some sort. Some lord will have rule over us. Romans 6:16 says: **“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience**

**unto righteousness?”** Has Christ loosed you from the bond of sin and self? then **“Serve the LORD with gladness”** (Ps. 100:2).



## John 3:16

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man, but a Pharisee, whose name was Nicodemus, and a religious ruler of the people (John 3:1). And a master of Israel as Jesus confirmed in John 3:10. Not just a teacher in Israel but of Israel. This same master of Israel, being a member of the Sanhedrin, came to Jesus by night probably so no one would see him, but it also illustrates the darkness that the Pharisees were in at this time.

Now the text of John 3:16 says, **“For God so loved...”** The word “for” looks back to what was said to Nicodemus before Jesus makes this statement. Well, what did Jesus tell Nicodemus before that? **“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”** (John 3:14-15). Now let us examine what Jesus is referring to. Certainly Nicodemus knew of the Old Testament narrative concerning the serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness. But let us examine it for a moment. And remember Nicodemus, being a teacher of Israel, certainly knew what Jesus was referring to even if he did not know what and who it was picturing.

Concerning the serpent in the wilderness: Israel was murmuring against the Lord, and the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, which bit them so that some of the people

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# Brief Truths

By Randy Johnson of  
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"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13).



## THANK GOD FOR SALVATION!

**"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"** (Acts 15:18).

The one single error many make when thinking about God is understanding that God is omniscient, God knows everything, and this is an eternal knowledge. Also, many people do not recognize God as being truly sovereign and that means He is in control of everything. Isaiah wrote these words about God in Isaiah 46:9-10, **"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."** This means God knows everything and there is nothing He does not know, and if something is God's counsel or God's work then He not only knew it but ordained it before the world began.

One of God's most graceful works is salvation, salvation is the work of God not the work of man. I know some people believe that salvation is in man's hands but that is impossible, because God would never trust the accomplishment of His works in the hands of man. **"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"** (Rom. 3:11-12).

Man cannot preach a simple sermon without God's power, nor can man accomplish anything without God's power. God knew before the world that salvation was needed, God also elected a remnant of mankind that would be saved. **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love"** (Eph. 1:4). Notice this election was done **"before the foundation of the world"**, not in time, nor did God look into the future and see who would believe, all unprovable myths preached by man seeking to do what only God can do. God elected Jesus to die on the cross for sinners long before there were any sinners. **"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done"** (Acts 4:27-28). What was God's counsel, what did God **"determined before to be done?"** It was the crucifixion of His own eternal Son Jesus, **"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"** (Acts 2:23).

Also known unto God before the foundation of the world was His elect, His chosen children. **"These words spake Jesus, and**

**lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee...As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him... And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent"** (John 17:1-3). If God knew all His works before the foundation of the world, then did not God have to know these elect He gave to Jesus and sent Jesus to die for and save. Jesus Himself said this promise, **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"** (John 6:37). Jesus went on to promise in verse 39, **"that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing."** Jesus went on to say, **"That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none"** (John 18:9). There is only one-way God can accomplish His ordained will and that is He accomplishes it. **"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"** (Acts 15:18). This is absolute fact that God saves sinners and He chose them before the world ever began. Therefore, I must stand in awe and say **"Thank You Lord for my salvation."** If you are lost this should weigh heavy on your heart, if not the Holy Spirit has not convicted you. But if it does weigh heavy on your heart then read these verses, **"And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"** (Acts 16:30-31).

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## John 3:16

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died and others were perishing from their poisonous bites. It was the serpent in the garden which enticed man to fall into sin, and thereby, he inflicted a mortal wound on man. Here, we have man being bitten by sin, and some have perished and others are perishing. So why was a serpent lifted up for men to look on and be healed? Notice from the Scriptures in Numbers 21:9 that Moses did not place one of the fiery serpents which had bitten the people on a pole, but rather MADE a serpent of brass and placed it on a pole. **"And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived"** (Num. 21:8-9).

Now, God gave the Law to Israel and commanded them to keep it. May I now ask, what is sin? **"For sin is the transgression of the law"** (I John 3:4). All those that were bitten were told to look to the serpent of brass that was lifted up on a pole. Who looked? Those that were bitten looked. Did they know they were bitten? Well, yes otherwise why look. Did they know the serious nature of the bite? Well of course, because Numbers 21:6 says **"much people of Israel died."** One thing for sure, those that looked did not play with the fiery serpents. They knew the serious nature of their condition. They were about to perish. The people

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

## 1. Could you please explain I Corinthians 15:45?

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**“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” (Gen. 2:7).**

Every funeral I have ever preached I used I Corinthians 15:35-58 at the graveside service. It is a wonderful and beautiful picture of the Body, Soul, and Spirit, and how the dead (elect) are raised up and what Christ has done for the elect of God's people as seen in (vv. 45-49).

This is Adam the first man God made and that Moses records in Genesis 2:7, the same man that Paul refers to as well in I Corinthians 15:45. God breathed life into Adam and he became alive, a living soul.

John Gill states; “...when God breathed life into the earthly mass, or lump; and being animated with a rational soul, it became an animal body, or a living creature; and so the apostle proves, from the first man that was upon earth, that there is a natural, or animal body; a body animated by a soul, and which was supported by eating and drinking, by sleep and rest; and was capable of dying, and should die, in case of sin; and which was the state of it in its first creation, whilst in innocence, and before the fall; and this is all he meant to prove by this

Scripture...”

The last Adam is Jesus Christ, of course, and it seems that Paul in (v. 45) is answering the two questions put forth in (v. 35). He is showing that the resurrection body of Jesus Christ is the prototype (pattern or example). Paul begins by quoting 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.”**

The last Adam as we have already stated is Jesus Christ. **“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:19-21).**

Paul is saying that through the first Adam we received our natural bodies, but through the last Adam we receive our spiritual bodies in the resurrection. Adam's body was the prototype (pattern or example) of the natural, Christ's body of the resurrection. We (God's elect) will bear the image of His body fit for heaven (Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20-21; I John 3:1-3) as we have born the image of Adam's on earth.

John Gill again states concerning the last part of (v. 45), “...as it subsists in the divine person of the Son of God, their bodies will be quickened at the last day, and made like unto it, spiritual bodies; also because he lives in his body


as a spiritual one, they shall live in theirs as spiritual ones: and so the apostle shows, that there is a spiritual, as well as an animal body; that as the first man's body, even before the fall, was an animal or natural one; the last Adam's body upon his resurrection is a spiritual and life giving one...”

I, for one, can hardly wait to be changed and be like He is, Praise the Lord. I pray the lost will come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, so they can experience such a glorious time as well. God Bless!

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I Corinthians 15:45 states: **“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”**

I Corinthians chapter fifteen is the most comprehensive chapter in the Bible that deals with the subject of the resurrection. The verse under consideration is dealing specifically with the contrast between the bodies of the first and second Adams. The verse is part of an answer and explanation to the question posed in I Corinthians 15:35: **“But some man will say, How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come?”**

The first part of I Corinthians 15:45 refers back to the creation account of the body of the first man, Adam, as recorded in Genesis 2:7. Adam was a direct creation of God whose body was made from the earth and then was animated by God breathing into

him the breath of life and making him a living soul. Though Adam's body was pronounced good (Gen. 1:31), it was not immutable or impeccable. When Adam fell into sin by way of willful rebellion against the law of God, the entire human race which was seminally in Adam, was plunged into sin. Romans 5:12 declares: **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”** Adam was the Federal Head and representative of all mankind. All men inherit a totally depraved and sinful nature from their parents at conception. It is important to note that Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, believed in the literal creation account recorded in Genesis. The Holy Spirit moved Paul to affirm that Adam was the first man created by God and the first one to commit a willful sin. Adam died spiritually the moment he sinned just as God had warned and promised. His physical body died 930 years later. Because of Adam's sin all men are the subjects of spiritual and physical death. All men are the partakers of Adam's nature by way of natural generation.

By way of contrast the last or second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, was made a quickening spirit. Jesus Christ is the giver of spiritual and eternal life. The Lord Jesus Christ existed as the eternally begotten Son of God prior to His incarnation. The Lord Jesus is eternally one with the Father and the Holy Spirit as they exist in essence as the Holy Trinity. Thus, the spiritual life and essence of Jesus Christ is as eternal as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus is referred to in the last Adam in I

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# The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. "What would a wise man do?" according to Scripture?

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Charles Spurgeon defined wisdom as "the right use of knowledge." This definition rightly separates wisdom from knowledge, which is simply an accumulation of acquired information. Wisdom is defined by Merriam Webster as: "an ABILITY to discern inner qualities and relationships..." The Oxford English Dictionary says: "CAPACITY of judging rightly in matters relating to life and conduct; SOUNDNESS of judgment in the CHOICE of means and ends..." (tms emphasis in all definitions). Selah! Think about it!

Wisdom is more a matter of evaluating information, and making sound judgments; more, how to process it and move forward with proper actions. For a Christian, the ultimate definition is, of course found in Scripture. **"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding"** (Prov. 9:10). **"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding"** (Prov. 4:7). Do you understand? If you truly understand, then you are indeed a wise man, because only through wisdom will any man ever take God into account and

find the truth behind every bit of knowledge, every worthwhile action, every moment of reality. The fear of God is a reverence that acknowledges God as an important imperative in all of our actions. As I have studied God's Word for sermons over the years, the Wayne County definition of wisdom has boiled down to: "thinking like God." Selah!

So, what would a wise man do? Surely a wise man would realize first of all, that he is lost and undone in his natural state. Nothing in this world can give him peace from a sense of impending judgment from the unknown God.

The first thing a wise man would do is recognize the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of his heart that constantly reassures him that he is "ok." But the one thing the heart is incapable of, is delivering that peace. **"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. 3:16-18). **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it"** (Jer. 17:9)?

The second thing a wise man would do is to pray for salvation. **"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart"** (Jer. 29:11-13). A wise man would turn to the last hope of

fallen man. **"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God"** (Joel 2:12-13). **"But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. ...if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee"** (Deut. 4:29-31). Selah! Think about it!

The third thing a wise man would do is read the Bible. **"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. ...I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee"** (Ps. 119:1-2, 7-10). Only in the Bible will any man find the ability to properly weigh this world and make prudent judgments and righteously live in a manner pleasing to God, our Creator. The promise of this wisdom is to those that read God's Word. **"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. ...More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward"** (Ps. 19:7, 10-11).

The fourth thing a wise man would do is desire service in the kingdom of God. **"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"** (Matt. 4:17-19). Build your house upon the Rock (Matt. 7:24-27).

The fifth thing a wise man would do is find the Lord's landmark Baptist church in their community and put their family under the gospel of sovereign grace. **"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God"** (Eph. 3:10). Find one like the first Baptist church of Smyrna. **"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death"** (Rev. 2:8-11).

If unmarried, the sixth thing a wise man would do is pray to God for a wise woman to share his life with. **"Who can find a virtuous**

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# Forum Question #1

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Corinthians 15:45 because He is the only person of the Godhead to be considered as the Federal Head of the elect that the Father gave Him in the covenant of grace before the world began. Jesus is also the only person of the Holy Trinity to become a man in order to identify and act as Surety for His people. The body of Jesus Christ did not come into being by way of natural generation. Miraculously, the Holy Spirit overshadowed the virgin womb of Mary to conceive and prepare the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the Lord Jesus was conceived by spiritual generation. When Mary questioned the angel about how she could bear a son without ever having known a man sexually, Luke 1:35 reveals: **"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."** The nature and body of Jesus Christ was born without sin, and He, as God manifest in the flesh, is the only person who never sinned in thought, motive, word, or deed. He lived a perfect, holy, impeccable, and spiritual life. Before the foundation of the world, Jesus Christ agreed to have all of the elect's sins imputed to Him and pay the ransom price of His own blood to redeem them. Christ offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice to put away the sin and condemnation of His people. The primary purpose of the physical body of Jesus Christ is revealed in Hebrews 10: **"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou**

**wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me...Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will O God...Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"** (Heb. 10:5, 7, 9-10, 14).

All the elect in time must be regenerated by the Holy Spirit and given the gifts of repentance and faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. At the very moment they are regenerated they are said to be quickened or made spiritually alive in Christ. At that moment the elect receive a spiritual and holy nature which is identified in Colossians 1:27 as **"...Christ in you, the hope of glory."** By virtue of our spiritual union with Jesus Christ we will ultimately be completely conformed to the image of Jesus Christ in glorification by His spiritual power. Philippians 3:20-21 describes it thusly: **"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."**

Thus, we inherit our sinful nature and corrupt body from the first Adam. However, as God's elect we receive our spiritual nature and glorified body from the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 15:49 states: **"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we**

**shall also bear the image of the heavenly."**

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**"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit"** (I Cor. 15:45).

The Apostle Paul is referencing from 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."** In the context of this 15<sup>th</sup> chapter, there is a comparison between the natural and supernatural. Our text verse kind of turns the corner, and reveals the POWER that can generate such a transformation from mortal to immortal that will culminate in the familiar closing verses. **"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory"** (I Cor. 15:50-54). Selah! Think about it!

You see, all the first Adam could do was perpetuate the Status Quo. If he had not fallen after Eve, Adam could have perpetuated life, since he was created a living soul. **"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"** (Gen. 2:17). Once Adam fell into a depraved, dichotomous creature state (no spirit), he was only capable of perpetuating death, as evidenced in Genesis 5:1-5: **"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; ... And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: ... And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died."** And as we read on, Seth died... Enos died... all of Adam's children died (...excepting the extraordinary Enoch! ...a picture of the coming raptured saint generation that also will not perish!). This perpetuating status of the first Adam (man) is even hinted at (awfully) in Genesis 3:22, **"And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever."**

What a miserable existence that would be to live perpetually in a fallen state. Selah! Think about it! Simply put, there was no regenerating power (quickening) in the Tree of Life, merely the gift of extending existing life. The "making alive" power can only come through the Second Adam (man), Jesus Christ. The Apostle in this revealing verse goes beyond Adam's gift of "living" and shows the miraculous power of Jesus

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## Forum Question #1

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Christ, our Lord to give life and to empower with life whomsoever He will. **"...I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham"** (Matt. 3:9). **"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"** (II Cor. 3:17). **"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"** (John 6:63). Selah! Think about it!

The doctrine of federal headship is taught in this verse, and ratifies Romans 5:14-15, 17: **"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, ...For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. ...For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."** What is meant by this doctrine, is the essence of the contrast of the two Adams. We are born sinners because of our natural father, Adam, and we are reborn as pure and holy saints, because of our adoption by our heavenly Father, through the work and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. **"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him"** (John 17:1-2). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP

## Forum Question #2

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**woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. ... Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised"** (Pro. 31:10-12, 30). Selah! Think about it! Let us attain unto true wisdom and start "thinking like God would!" That would be wise!

MATTHEW STEPP



Man by nature is void of spiritual wisdom due to his total depravity. Thus he is unable to understand or discern spiritual things as I Corinthians 2:14 declares: **"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."** Ephesians 4:18 reveals: **"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."** As a result the natural man cannot and will not choose that which is wise, right, holy, and good. His depraved nature determines his sinful choices, rendering him entirely unable to please God. Romans 8:7-8 explains why: **"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."** Every moral faculty of man is included in his fleshly nature including his deceitful heart (Jer. 17:9); carnal mind; and perverted will (John 5:40; 6:44).

Spiritual wisdom must come from outside of the natural man since he has no ability to please God. God is the source of all spiritual wisdom and He distributes it to His elect according to the good pleasure of His will (Read Ephesians 1:3-12). The Holy Spirit of God regenerates the elect and immediately gives them the wisdom to repent and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 1:30-31 declares: **"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."** The first thing the wise man does is believe the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the moment he exercises the gift of saving faith the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is imputed to him in justification. So first and foremost a wise man believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of God takes up residence in the elect at the moment of regeneration and immediately begins the progressive work of sanctification through the application of the truth of the Word of God. A wise man is one who loves and obeys the truth of the Word of God. The entire Book of Proverbs is full of characteristics of the wise man in whom God the Holy Spirit is working, leading, and sanctifying. I would urge the questioner to use the Strong's Concordance and look up and read all the verses

where the words wisdom and wise are used, especially in the Book of Proverbs.

Here is just a sampling of what a wise man would do:

He would hear, hearken, and obey the instructions in the Word (1:2-6). He would consistently search, hide, cry for, and incline his ear unto wisdom (2:1-7). He will trust the Lord in everything rather than his own ideas and feelings (3:5-8). He will listen to the instruction of his parents (4:1-13). He will beware of whorish and immoral women and avoid them (5:1-13). He will observe the work ethic, ambition, and persistence of the ant and strive to be the best worker he can be to avoid being a sluggard (6:6-11). He will not listen to the enticements of ungodly, whorish women (7:1-27). He will listen to the instruction of Wisdom personified in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in Proverbs 8, desiring wisdom more than anything the world has to offer (8:6-19); and keeping the ways of Christ (8:32-36). He will fear and reverence the Lord (9:10-12). He will strive to be a blessing and an encouragement to his parents (10:1-9). He will be a witness and a soul winner (11:30). There are many more examples in Proverbs that demonstrate what a wise man does and how he lives his life in accordance with God's revealed will.

Finally, a wise man will bridle his tongue, live right, and have a good attitude. James 3:13-18 states: **"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew 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**

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## Forum #2

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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. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." According to these verses a man of wisdom does not have a critical spirit, does not run his mouth against others, is not envious, does not stir up strife, but is peaceable, gentle, approachable, merciful, and full of good works. May God help us all to apply the truth of these verses so that we may demonstrate wisdom!

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Jesus said to be wise as a serpent. **"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"** (Matt. 10:16).

Paul said in order to become wise a man must become a fool, if man seemeth to be wise in this world. **"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise"** (I Cor. 3:18).

If we are to follow Scripture then I believe a wise man would listen to God and not only listen

to Him, but do what He says:

**"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels"** (Prov. 1:5).

**"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. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"** (James 1:22-25).

There are many Scriptures that show what a "wise man" should do. So I will list a few of them in hopes that you, dear reader, will take a closer look at them, and that we all can learn how to obey them more than we do.

**"A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident"** (Prov. 14:16).

**"The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it"** (Prov. 16:14).

**"A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength"** (Prov. 24:5).

**"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock"** (Matt. 7:24).

**"What would a wise man do?"** He would build his house upon the Rock. In other words a "wise man" would put all his faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock of our Salvation. God Bless!

ROGER REED



## John 3:16

(Continued from page 11) ♦

came to Moses and said, **"We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us"** (Numbers 21:7). And Moses prayed for the people in an intercessory manner and that is when the Lord told him, **"Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live."** Notice that the people recognized what the real problem was for they said **"we have sinned."**

The only thing that those who were bitten (and knew they were bitten) could do was to look. They were not told to try and kill the serpents and besides they were already bitten and knew it. They were not told to say some "sinner's prayer." They were not told to run for their lives and what good would that do for they were already bitten and perishing. They were not told to manufacture some ointment for their wounds. They were not told to minister to others. They were not told to fight the fiery serpents. They were not told to make an offering to the serpent on the pole. They were not even told to pray to the serpent on the pole. They were not told to look to Moses. They were not told to look at their wounds. (taken from A. W. Pink's exposition of John's gospel). They were only to look at the serpent on the pole and behold it and be healed of the bite. It did not matter how many times they were bitten, just look, just look. **"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else"** (Isa. 45:22).

The serpent was a reminder and an emblem of the curse of sin and **"the sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."** And we read that **"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"** (Gal. 3:13). In II Corinthians 5:21 we read, **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."** And remember Moses was commanded to make a fiery serpent. And what did Paul say concerning Jesus Christ? **"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men"** (Phil. 2:7).

Brass is a symbol of judgment and sin is to be and must be judged. Christ received that judgment in the place of sinners. So the narrative of the serpent being lifted up in the wilderness is a picture of substitution. It is a picture of Christ being raised up in a substitutionary or vicarious manner and the sins of the redeemed being placed upon Him. **"For he hath made him to be sin for us..."**

It is in this context that Jesus says what He says to Nicodemus. It is those that have repentance for their sins (for **"we have sinned"** as the people said to Moses) which are told **"that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** To believe on Him as their substitute, and why? Because they have been bitten with sin and know they are perishing. For those that find themselves in that condition I can say, **"believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt**

♦ (Continued on page 17)



# Light Contemplations

By Luke Austin  
of Cadillac, Michigan

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD" (Psalm 107:43).

## BIBLICAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE TIMES IN WHICH WE LIVE

As a friend of mine says, I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but permit me a few biblical observations of the times in which we live.

Even the most isolated cannot help but notice the ever increasing divisions in our country. Case in point, an individual of the Amish persuasion told me how troubling our world is becoming, and I told him he does not know the half of it. As Jesus said, a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Mark 3:24), and how "our kingdom" is divided against itself.

Consider the ever widening gap between left and right. What was once a vote for more union influence or less government involvement has become a vote for the life or death of children in the womb, for the sustaining or loss of constitutional rights. The intent of this piece is not primarily to address politics. Both sides are corrupt and that is as far as we will delve into that subject. But only a fool would deny that this country is tearing itself apart. How did we get here? While most would point to the other party I would offer a different perspective. One that has been offered before and ignored by most. The rejection of God has put this country on a path to the judgment of God. Without having an intricate knowledge of our country before my time I can only surmise by the history books, but I think if I were to put my finger on the beginning of the problem I

would point to the 60's and the hippie movement. Many today relate the hippies with mantras such as "free love" and "make peace not war." But at the center of this ideology was a casting off of authority. Ultimately to cast off authority is to cast off God's appointed leadership for the present time, and in doing so thereby rejecting God Himself. **"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation"** (Rom. 13:1-2).

Since that time it has been a removal of God from society. The school system's removal of prayer, and the creation replaced by missing links and big bangs. The tearing down of God given institutions like marriage and the home. In approximately 60 years church attendance has been transformed from the normal part of society into the place for the backwards and small minded. Much of what is called "church" and the "worship of God" is so watered down and man centered that it is a shadow of worship. It has become a coffee social club with a motivational speaker.

I have heard it said that if this nation does not turn we are headed for judgment. I hate to be the bearer of bad news folks, but we are in the midst of judgment. Romans 1:18 says that the wrath of God is revealed and goes on to show

the judgments of God. These are the ones that profess themselves to be wise, that change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man. Because of this casting off of God He gives them over to the uncleanness of their own hearts. His judgment is to allow mankind to do what is in his heart. Sodomy, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. Every single symptom listed here is running rampant in our country today. We are living smack dab in the middle of God's judgment. It is not coming, it is already here.

What will you do? Where will you run when God pours out His wrath in those final judgments of the book of Revelation? There is a safe place. **"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Thess. 5:9). Do you understand the Son of God died upon the cross to save you from your sins and spare you of the wrath and condemnation of God? **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"** (John 3:36) I can in all honesty say it is sad to see this country fall, but I am just passing through looking for that heavenly country. I know, come what may, Jesus is my Saviour and I am safe from the wrath to come on earth and in eternity. Can you say that? Repent of your sins and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(Luke Austin is a member of the Cadillac Baptist Church of Cadillac, Michigan.)



## John 3:16

(Continued from page 16) ♦

**be saved."** In Numbers the ones that looked had repentance for they said, **"we have sinned."** I can tell the heavy laden sinner to look to Christ and you will not perish. Just look in faith to Him as your substitute, otherwise you will perish and die in your sins. He told the religious Jews, **"for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"** (John 8:24).

Now another point about the context of all this, and it is a very important one. Why does the sinner now look? Why does he now see himself in such an undone condition? Evidently he now sees something that he did not see before. But why now? Well, let us go back to the context of John 3:16. When Jesus spoke of the serpent in the wilderness He began that verse with the word **"and."** Also in the verse before that He also used the word **"and"** in its beginning. So Jesus had related to Nicodemus something before all of this. Please note that this was the beginning of Jesus' words to this religious Pharisee. A man who thought he was what he was by his own effort. A man who thought he was right with God by his own religious activity and self-righteousness and yet was dead spiritually. And what was it that Jesus brought up first? Being born of the Spirit! He said a man must **"be born again"** or "from above" as the Greek word means. If you look up the tense of that, it is passive and past tense. The person that is born from above is passive in the matter, and Jesus explained it exactly that way in terms that even a child can understand. **"Marvel not that I**

♦ (Continued on page 18)



# John 3:16

(Continued from page 17) ♦

**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 3:7-8). So Jesus likened the Spirit to the wind that blows where it wants and when it wants and how strong it wants. It cannot be seen but only the sound of its activity can be heard. Just as men do not direct the wind, so also the Holy Spirit is absolutely sovereign in His work. It is the sovereign work of the Spirit of God that Jesus brings up to Nicodemus first. All of his religious self-righteousness availed him nothing unless the Spirit of God would move upon him. It is after the Spirit moves and has done His work that we see the evidence of it by repentance and faith in the sinner. These are given in regeneration to a spiritually dead sinner. We sing a song in many churches that has in its lyrics, "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down." That is exactly what Jesus was telling religious and lost Nicodemus. He needed the quickening power of the Holy Spirit or he would never see or perceive the Kingdom of God. You see the Bible is very clear that all men are dead in trespasses and sins. Paul said, **"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."** He went on to say a few verses later in Ephesians chapter two, **"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)"** (See Ephesians

2:1-5). In the natural realm when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, did Lazarus cooperate with Jesus or was he passive in the matter? So how do men have saving faith one may ask? Well, it is by the **"fruit of the Spirit"** according to Galatians 5:22. So we see that without the Spirit all is vain and He is sovereign in His doings. As Jesus said, **"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will"** (John 5:21).

So I ask, is faith a necessity? Absolutely it is. Without repentance and faith men are not saved. **"Repent ye, and believe the gospel."** But that repentance and receiving of Christ by faith is the result of being born of God. Listen to the words of John in chapter one. **"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"** (John 1:11-13). Again, the ones that were born of God were passive. Notice not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God. Without the Holy Spirit men cannot please God. Paul tells us, **"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."** And Jesus told Nicodemus **"that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."** Would not repentance and faith in His Son be pleasing to God? Yet we are told that those in the flesh

(born of the flesh) cannot please God. How very true then are the lyrics, "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down."

One last point to make about John 3:16 and its context. Nicodemus was a Jew and a teacher of Israel. John Gill said, "The Jews had a notion that when Messiah came that the Gentiles should have no benefit or advantage by Him, only the Israelites; so far should they be from it, that, according to their sense, the most dreadful judgments, calamities, and curses, should befall them; yea, hell and eternal damnation." The serpent on the pole was for the Israelites to look to. The Egyptians had no dealing in the matter. On the annual day of atonement it was the sins of the children of Israel that were confessed and put on the head of the scapegoat (see Leviticus 16:21). But that was for the nation of Israel. It was a lamb that was slain for each household on the night of the Passover. All these are types of Jesus Christ and His work as our high priest. **"For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us"** (I Cor. 5:7).

So Jesus is telling this religious Jew that God so loved Jews and Gentiles (the world) that whether Jew or Gentile all who believe in Jesus as their substitute as pictured by the serpent on the pole **"should not perish, but have everlasting life."** It is all men without distinction. They are the whosoever of John 3:16. John Gill says the Lord is telling Nicodemus, "But I tell you, God so loved the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, that He gave His only begotten Son; to, and for them, as well as for the Jews; to be a covenant of the people, the Gentiles, the Saviour of them,

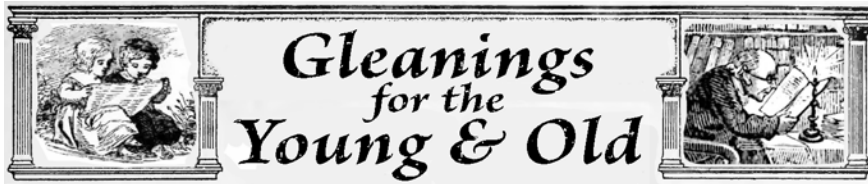
and a sacrifice for them... and yet such is His love to the Gentiles, as well as Jews, that He has given Him, in human nature, up, into the hands of men, and of justice, and to death itself." (See Romans 11:12-15 where the word "world" is used to refer to the Gentiles.) **"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved"** (John 3:17). **"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation"** (II Cor. 5:19). **"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin"** (Rom. 4:8).

A last thought on Nicodemus if I may. He did come to Jesus seeking His knowledge. He even said **"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."** At this time Nicodemus needed to be born again and it seems by God's sovereign grace the Spirit did move on Nicodemus at some later time for we read that Nicodemus appears to be defending Jesus in John 7:50-51, and then we read the following concerning the burial of Jesus. **"And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight"** (John 19:39). I truly believe that the Lord in a sovereign way saved Nicodemus.

To those lost in their sins I can say, **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."**

(Lucien LeSage is a member of the Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs, Louisiana.)





## WASTED SUNSHINE

by Grace Middlebrook

Ruth Morrison was sitting at her sewing-machine in Mrs. Whitney's pleasant work-room. Oh how she longed for that machine, and how weary she was of it now ! She felt so thankful when Mrs. Whitney proposed its purchase and advanced most of the money; and today she hated its constant click, her feet were tired as if in a treadmill, and she wished she never need touch it again. She had thought that when it was paid for she should be perfectly happy, but last week made the last payment, and she never valued it so little. She did not know how often poor human nature tires of possessions really gained; how often rich men sell as soon as it is finished the house they have spent years in building.

She was almost sorry that she could not go back to the time when she had thirty-seven and a half cents a day for plain sewing; though, to be sure, cotton cloth was only twelve and a half cents a yard. So she leaned back in the chair and sighed, and wondered when Mrs. Whitney's visitor would go, and she would come back and baste some more work. The library door opened, and as little Alice Whitney came slowly in she heard the visitor say, "Did you know that after Mr. Carroll's death his widow kept the house darkened for a whole year, even the wooden shutters 'bowed,' and burned gas? What a waste of gas!"

"What a waste of sunshine;" and the door closed again. What did Mrs. Whitney mean? Waste

sunshine? Gas for a whole year, burned all day long, would be a great expense; but who pays for sunshine? How could you waste it? And during the whole day Ruth pondered over the question. Yet she did not like to ask an explanation of Mrs. Whitney, lest she should seem to be a listener.

At night Ruth asked her mother, a quiet but wise woman, how you can waste sunshine. She thought for a moment. "Ruth, I once heard in a sermon that, of all the beautiful things that God ever made, light is the most beautiful. And sunshine is the brightest earthly light. So I suppose it is one of God's most precious gifts, and as we waste whatever we throw away, if we throw away sunshine by burning gas in the daytime, I am sure we waste it, and God will hold us responsible for it. You know it is mentioned as a special kindness that God makes the sun to arise on the unjust."

"Well, I am sure I do not waste sunshine. I almost wish I could. I wish my room was not on the west side, or I had blinds or something to keep out the sun;" and Ruth threw her hat down on the white bed over which the shadows of the leaves of the old apple-tree were dancing, and drew down the green paper curtains, and shut out dancing leaves and cool shadows, and threw away the last bright hour of light.

The next day she went to Mrs. Field's. She was a neighbor of Mrs. Whitney's, and her hired man brought over Ruth's sewing-machine, and she began another day's work. Why had she never noticed before how Mrs. Field

wasted sunshine? It was a bright September morning; but how cold and cheerless was the bed-room where she was to work. Every blind was closed. The slats of one half of the blind, nearest the sewing-machine, were turned a little. Mrs. Field came in, wrapped in a warm shawl, and complaining of being chilly. She sent her daughter to dust the parlor, saying, "Don't open the blinds, for the flies will come in." "But, mother, I can not see to dust." "Well, open them just as little as possible, and shut them up the minute you get through. I do not want the sun to strike the carpet." So she called Margaret to make up a fire in the air-tight stove, and the sun tried in vain all day long to enter those south windows and warm the dreary rooms.

Wednesday and Thursday she worked at Mrs. Anderson's. It was a small house but cheerful and light. And yet Mrs. Anderson would not let Clara go down street without her veil, for last summer she was freckled when she was at the sea-shore; and even Harry, only five years old, must wear gloves when he went out to dig in the yard. And Ruth pitied the poor pale faced children, and wondered how Mrs. Anderson could waste so much sunshine.

On Friday she went to Mrs. Reynolds's, a very rich widow, living in an elegant house, built by her kind husband just before his death. The rooms were large, the curtains light and cheerful, the children fresh and rosy, and Ruth thought, "Here no sunshine is wanting." And yet before night, when she went into Miss Clara's room, she changed her opinion. Miss Clara was the only invalid in the family. A fall in babyhood, hardly noticed at the time, had produced incurable spinal disease. It was a beautiful room. The carpet

was of the different shades of oak, blended in a mossy pattern, soft as velvet. The furniture was all covered with rich green damask. The bedstead was carved till the graceful points almost touched the frescoed ceiling, where flowers seemed dropping from the quaint medallions. And yet it was a dreary room, in spite of the beautiful pictures and statuettes that looked almost supernatural in the dim shadows of the room. It wanted nothing but sunshine, and that it could never have. Both windows looked directly north. Never had the sunshine nestled in the moss of the carpet; it could never quiver over the green lounges, dark as oak-woods in June; it could never make the statuettes almost translucent, as if an angel had crept within the marble. In the midst of all this wealth of art and skill of artistic workmen, Ruth thought poor Miss Clara would be better off in the little south-west bedroom, where the sun rested all day long. Even in Mrs. Reynolds's house there was not enough sunshine.

Saturday morning Ruth felt glad to remember that she had no engagement, that she might help her mother, and perhaps go into the woods and see if she could cheat the watching squirrels out of a few chestnuts. But poor Mrs. Daniels came in to beg Ruth to come, even for two hours if she could spare no more, just to help, finish her dress for to-morrow. Ruth, though not contented or cheerful, was rarely disobliging, and asked her mother if she could spare her. "Oh, yes, child; I think I shall work easier if I know poor Mrs. Daniels is going to have that dress finished. It was bought in the spring, and now the summer is gone. Do help her now, and perhaps it will be ready for next

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# For the Young & Old

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summer." "Poor Mrs. Daniels!" thought Ruth; "they are not as poor as we. She has good sale carpets, and we have nothing but one rag carpet; her husband is still living and earns good wages, and mother has been a widow so many years, and yet she looks younger than Mrs. Daniels." Before the dress was done, Ruth understood why even her mother always said poor Mrs. Daniels. "I wish I could be as chirk as your mother," said the anxious woman, "and rise above my troubles as she does. We went to school together, and we have always been neighbors, but I never saw her fretting. When I was young and my children were growing up, I thought I had a dreadful hard time. The boys tore their clothes and plagued the girls, and the girls wanted to do fancy work, and hated to wash dishes, and I thought how nice it would be when they all grew up; and now they have grown up and scattered, and the house seems still and lonesome. Ned is an engineer, and every time I hear the cars whistle I think, 'Perhaps they are running over Ned,' and Fanny lives in Nebraska, and I do not suppose I shall ever see her again; and Maria's children have the whooping cough, and one of them has weak lungs, and I expect she will go into a decline; and, now I can not see them all the time, I worry ten times more than when I was on the watch every minute lest they should set themselves on fire or get drowned in a wash-tub. The fact is, your mother never seems to worry. She always seems to live in the full sunshine, and I am walking always in the shade. And I am too old now to walk anywhere else." Yes, Ruth knew that her mother's path was as

the shining light, though she had known little worldly prosperity.

That night Ruth went to her little room, and as she was looking over the clean clothes so nicely arranged by her mother, she thought of all her mother's kindness, of the beauty of her daily life, and she felt that in character she was superior to all the ladies for whom she had worked that week, even to pleasant Mrs. Whitney; and she knew that the whole secret was in her walking with God as a friend. And her conscience told her that God was to her only a far-off, mysterious Being, who, in some distant eternity, would be her awful Judge. She took up her Bible, which opened to the last words of the last prophet of the old dispensation, and with a pang of remorse to feel how glad she was that it was so short a chapter, she began to read, **"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble:..."** (Mal. 4:1). And in the quiet night she shivered as she imagined the glare of that day. She read on: **"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;..."** (Mal. 4:2) "Ah, this must be mother's sunshine, in which Mrs. Daniels says she walks always." But poor Ruth felt that she knew no more of this sunshine than a blind man might know of the glory of awakening day. Though the Sun of righteousness was healing the sorrows and sins of poor guilty creatures in every age, He had never arisen on her. The universe might be full of this sunshine, but she felt only the chill of a starless eternity. It availed nothing to her. And yet she knew it was her own fault. Every sermon, every Sabbath, all her mother's example, seemed

ever to say, **"Come, 'let us walk in the light of the LORD'"** (Isa. 2:5) In all the dreary watches of that long night, the longest of her life, her soul groped in darkness that might be felt. With tears and prayers she begged for mercy, for some rays of the sunshine she had wasted all her life.

The morning crept slowly up, cold and gray, but as the sun arose, joyous even in its first rays, the Lord opened her eyes to behold the love which had chosen her before that sun was kindled, and as the early beams fell on her Bible her whole heart rose in

thankfulness as she read; **"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"** (II Cor. 4:6).

Reader, are you wasting God's sunshine?

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him who sendeth joy and woe;  
The Lord who takes, the Lord who gives,  
Oh! praise Him all that dies or lives.  
(Sabbath at Home, February, 1867).*



**THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER**

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

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

## KENTUCKY BANS ABORTIONS AFTER HEARTBEAT DETECTED

(CH)--Kentucky has just become another state to ban abortions once a heartbeat is detected, which is often around six weeks of pregnancy. The "fetal heartbeat bill" was signed by Republican Governor Matt Bevin. "I am deeply grateful to be governor of a state that so overwhelmingly values the sanctity of human life," he said in a press release. "Kentucky is leading the charge in this vitally important fight for the heart and soul of our great nation." Three other pro-life bills were also signed the same day. Senate Bill 50, also called the Chemical Abortion Reporting Act, states that doctors must inform patients of reversal medication abortions. House Bill 5, the Human Rights of the Unborn Child and Anti-Discrimination Act, forbids abortions based off of sex, race or

perceived disability. And, House Bill 148 looks to the future should Roe v. Wade be overturned and bans all abortions in the state. Bevin had attempted the heartbeat bill earlier this year, but was blocked by Judge David J. Hale, who ruled the law potentially unconstitutional.

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## SCHOOL HELPED AUTISTIC GIRL BECOME TRANSGENDER OVER PARENTS' WISHES, DAD SAYS

(CH)--A Chicago-area father says his daughter's school undermined his parental rights by helping her become transgender, even though she is autistic and has "mental health challenges" that may have contributed to her desires. Jay Keck's daughter attended a school in Hinsdale District #86 in suburban Chicago and only began having desires to be a boy after

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# Bible & the Newspaper

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befriending another transgender classmate. A school-approved psychologist told Keck “it was very clear that our daughter’s sudden transgender identity was driven by her underlying mental health conditions.” But the psychologist “would only share his thoughts off the record because he feared the potential backlash he would receive,” Keck wrote. Because of the school’s position, Keck’s daughter “is more convinced than ever that she is a boy, and that testosterone may be necessary for her to become her authentic self.” “She turned 18 in late June and life-altering, dangerous testosterone injections are just one ‘informed consent form’ away,” Keck wrote. “She can turn to anyone of Illinois’s 17 Planned Parenthood clinics for cheap and easy access. No extensive mental health assessment will be required, and there will be nothing I can do to stop her.”

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## ILLINOIS GOVERNOR SIGNS LAW TO ENSURE LGBT HISTORY IS TAUGHT IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(CH)--The governor of Illinois, J.B. Pritzker, has signed a bill that mandates the teaching of LGBTQ history in all public schools. The law, officially titled “House Bill 246” was introduced by Rep. Anna Moeller in a bid to make the history curriculum more inclusive. The bill states that, “In public schools only, the teaching of history shall include a study of the roles and contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in the history of this country and this State.” The new legislative measure also includes a section which grants the state education department the power to enforce new rules and guidelines that will “ensure the religious neutrality of the textbook block grant program.”

## FEDERAL JUDGE RULES THAT TRANSGENDER STUDENTS CAN CHOOSE WHICH BATHROOM THEY WANT TO USE

(Christian Post)-- A Virginia school district’s policy that bars transgender students from using the bathroom they choose violates the Constitution, a federal judge ruled. The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia ruled that Gloucester County’s School Board policy that prohibited Gavin Grimm, a transgender student, from using the boys’ bathroom violated the 14th Amendment, which grants equal protection of laws, and also violated Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, which says no person can be discriminated against on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities. Judge Arenda Wright Allen also ordered that the school district change Grimm’s transcripts to Grimm’s new identity as male and that the district also pay the student’s attorney fees.

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## ‘IN GOD WE TRUST’ SIGNS TO BE POSTED IN EVERY LOUISIANA SCHOOL THIS YEAR

(CH)--Every school building in Louisiana must display the nation’s motto, “In God We Trust,” under a new law that goes into effect this school year. Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards signed the law last year. It passed the state Senate, 33-6, and the state House, 93-12. Social studies classes also must teach students about the national motto by fifth grade under the new law. The law is popular, even among some administrators.

\*\*\*\*\*

## 16 PERCENT OF CHRISTIANS THINK THE CHURCH SHOULD APOLOGIZE FOR AMERICA’S RACIST PAST

(CH)--According to a new study undertaken by Barna research group, just a tiny fraction of the American church feels obliged to repent of the country’s racist past. In Barna’s latest publication entitled, *Where Do We Go from Here?*, just over 1,500 practicing Christians were asked what they believe should be done to make amends for the decades of racist history that plagued the United States. Respondents were presented with several different answers to choose from, including nothing, “repair the damage,” “repent,” “pursue restitution,” “lament,” and “don’t know.” Shockingly, just 16 percent of American Christians asserted that the Church needed to repent for America’s racist history of slavery and segregation. Among African-American participants, the percentage of those who believe repentance to be the way forward was at 24 percent, whereas among the white respondents it plummeted to just 13 percent. Interestingly, some 26 percent of all respondents indicated they “don’t know” when asked about what the church’s response should be to historical racism, perhaps indicating a lack of insight or understanding on the issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

## JUDGE BLOCKS PRO-LIFE LAW BANNING ABORTION OF BABIES WITH DOWN SYNDROME

(CH)--A federal judge this week blocked three Arkansas pro-life laws from going into effect, including one that would ban abortions targeting unborn babies diagnosed with Down Syndrome. U.S. District Judge Kristine Baker issued a preliminary injunction blocking three laws: Act 493, which bans abortion after 18 weeks; Act 619, which bans abortion if the purpose is to end the life of an unborn baby with Down syndrome; and Act 700, which requires that abortion doctors be board-certified

or board-eligible in obstetrics and gynecology. All were signed into law this year. Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge said she would appeal the injunction. Republican Sen. Jason Rapert, who supported all three laws, criticized the injunction. “It is a sad day in America,” Rapert said, “when our laws protect little kittens and little puppies but it will not protect a little human being in a mother’s womb. It is my intention that someday we will see abortion abolished and no longer used as a form of birth control.”

\*\*\*\*\*

## ‘SCHOOL PRAYER ZONE’ SIGNS SHOWING UP NEAR SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOLS

(CBN News)--As students and parents prepare for a new school year in Richland County, South Carolina, they’ll be greeted by a sign different than usual: one inviting them to pray. The “School Prayer Zone” signs look similar to regular road signs but feature green male and female stick figures praying. II Chronicles 7:14, a verse that tells God’s people to pray, repent and seek Him, is also included in the bottom right corner. Vanessa Frazier, founder and director of *Christ Teens*, brainstormed the idea after working behind the attendance desk in a local high school. Frazier worked with the South Carolina Department of Transportation for three years. The signs are placed on privately owned properties of churches near schools in order to maintain church and state boundaries, making the signs legal. And the word is spreading. People in Florida and California have reached out to Frazier, expressing interest in placing the signs near their schools.

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## VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE IS CRITICIZED FOR SAYING HE PRAYS FOR HIS CRITICS

(CH)--Vice President Mike Pence,

♦ (Continued on page 22)

# Bible & the Newspaper

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who has been routinely criticized for his faith, said he handles such attacks by praying for his critics—which garnered him a few more. “Number one is, spend more time on your knees than on the internet,” Pence said during an Q & A session with Michael Farris, president and CEO of Alliance Defending Freedom. The vice president went on to talk about the power of forgiveness. “As a Christian believer, we’re charged to pray for our loved ones but also pray for our enemies,” Pence said. “You have lots of opportunities in politics to do that. But I would say that forgiveness is a great gift, and my wife and I literally try to work through forgiving people who might speak woefully against us or might mischaracterize who we are and what our family’s all about,” he said. Since taking office Pence has been targeted numerous times for his biblical approach to living.

\*\*\*\*\*

## 40 PERCENT OF WHITE EVANGELICALS SUPPORT THE GREEN NEW DEAL, SURVEY FINDS

(CH)--About four in 10 white evangelicals say they support the “Green New Deal,” according to a survey from NPR and PBS NewsHour of more than 1,300 people. On the Green New Deal, a plan that would address climate change with green initiatives, 63 percent of respondents said they thought it was a “good idea.” Thirty-two percent said the plan was a “bad idea.” Both conservatives and moderate Democrats who say the initiatives would cost tens of trillions of dollars have criticized the plans. The survey also found that 40 percent of white evangelicals in the poll said they think the Green New Deal is a “good idea.” Among white evangelicals, 51 percent said

the plan was a “bad idea.” When looking at party affiliation, 86 percent of Democrats called the plan a “good idea.” Only 26 percent of Republicans said the same. On the re-election of Trump, 66 percent of white evangelicals said they would definitely vote for him in 2020, while 26 percent said they would definitely vote against him.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHICK-FIL-A DETHRONES IN-N-OUT AS AMERICA'S FAVORITE RESTAURANT

(Biblical Recorder)--Chick-fil-A dethroned In-N-Out as America’s favorite fast-food chain according to Market Force’s annual “America’s favorite” survey. Market Force polled 7,600 U.S. consumers. Chick-fil-A finished first in overall score among all fast-food restaurants. Chick-fil-A also topped this year’s American Customer Satisfaction Index, which is another survey of Americans about their favorite restaurants. It’s been a good year for Chick-fil-A, which also became the No. 3 fast-food restaurant in the U.S. in sales. The company’s official corporate purpose is “to glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us and to have a positive influence on all who come into contact with Chick-fil-A.” “Chick-fil-A CEO Dan Cathy said, “We intend to stay the course. We know that it might not be popular with everyone, but thank the Lord, we live in a country where we can share our values and operate on biblical principles. We’ve always put in our lease that we will be closed on Sundays. We’ve had a track record that we were generating more business in six days than the other tenants were generating in seven.”

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## INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS EVIDENCE OF BABYLONIAN CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM UNEARTHED

(CH)--The Babylonian conquest

of Jerusalem more than 2,500 years ago was one of the key moments in biblical history, representing God’s judgment but also His grace and mercy. Now, archaeologists digging in modern-day Jerusalem say they have uncovered “clear” archaeological evidence affirming the account as described in II Kings 25. Researchers from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte uncovered Babylonian-style arrowheads and layers of ash alongside lamps, potsherds and gold and silver jewelry they believe is either a tassel or earring. The discovery is “clear evidence of the Babylonian conquest of the city” dating to 587/586 BC. Significantly, the pottery and lamps were found side-by-side with evidence of the Babylonian siege “represented by burnt wood and ashes.” The items were unearthed at the geographical location the siege would have occurred.

\*\*\*\*\*

## PASTOR IS DRAGGED FROM PRAYER GATHERING AND BEATEN BY HINDU RADICALS, REPORT FINDS

(International Christian Concern)--A pastor leading a private prayer meeting in Northern India said he was dragged from the gathering and beaten by radical Hindu nationalists, arrested and taken to jail where the beating continued. The incident was initiated when members of the extremist Bajrang Dal physically attacked and verbally abused several women and two men heading to the gathering in Kanshiram Colony, Uttar Pradesh. The Bajrang Dal, according to the Christian Post, is a youth militant group affiliated with the Vishva Hindu Parishad and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a Hindu extremist umbrella group. Pastor Raju Prasad said the attack continued when the Bajrang Dal dragged him from the home and beat him. Responding

police then arrested the pastor and members of his small fellowship for allegedly converting individuals to Christianity, a crime in many Indian states, including Uttar Pradesh. Pastor Prasad insisted he was only praying when the assault began. The Christians were taken to the Chakeri police station where the militants continued to beat the pastor. After being detained for five hours, police determined no conversions were taking place during the gathering and Pastor Prasad and his members were released. No action was taken against the attackers.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHRISTIANS BEG FOR GOVERNMENT PROTECTION AFTER NIGERIANS KILLED IN COLD BLOOD

(CH)--A Nigerian pastor has been killed in cold blood while traveling along a dangerous stretch of highway with his wife and child. Kaduna pastor Jeremiah Omolara of Living Faith Church was gunned down and his wife was abducted when militants stopped the family’s car on the notorious Abuja-Kaduna Highway Sunday evening. The pastor’s son was miraculously able to escape the brutal assault. The captors, however, are demanding a staggering \$137,500 ransom for the release of Omolara’s wife. The chairperson of the Christian Association of Nigeria’s Kaduna chapter, Joseph Hayab, confirmed the details of the horrific incident and urged security forces to do more to protect the Christian population in light of a spree of additional attacks. Hayab explained, “That tells you that the new trend is to attack us in our homes or in our churches or on the roads. We are just not safe anywhere and we are asking the same question we have been asking: ‘where are our security agencies?’” Hayab continued to plead with security

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# Bible & the Newspaper

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agencies to help the Christian population, which remains under siege from militants, including the fierce Islamic terror organization Boko Haram. "Are we being told tactically that we should defend ourselves?" Hayab asked. "If we start defending ourselves, it means that we no longer have security or we no longer have government. Or is this government only for those they love and they don't care about others?" Boko Haram's vicious war against anything non-Islamic has claimed the lives of more than 30,000 people over the past decade. Indeed, with new links developed with the so-called Islamic State and a rejuvenated mission to kill and destroy, the heavily-armed group appears to be going nowhere anytime soon – unfortunately, this means that the threat to Nigerian Christians is likely to remain extremely high.

\*\*\*\*\*

## FORCED ABORTION IN NORTH KOREA

(Fox News)-- North Korea's horrific practice of forcing women to get abortions deserves more of a spotlight. Forced abortions also are common in China, which is complicit in North Korea's actions. North Korea even practices outright infanticide of babies after birth. "Terrifying reports from female defectors depict undergoing forced abortions after they fled to what they thought was freedom in China, only to be repatriated back to North Korea by authorities in China," Olivia Enos, senior policy analyst for Asian Studies at The Heritage Foundation" said. "Other women from North Korea recount having aborted babies born alive or giving birth in ordinary prison camps only to have border guards smother or drown their babies before their

very eyes," Enos added. Dong Yon Kim, an analyst and journalist for Chosun News-Press, said women "are treated like an animal and have been put through forced abortions and it is done in many ways." "This is inhumane and a serious problem," he said.

\*\*\*\*\*

## FIRES DESTROY SIX CHRISTIAN VILLAGES IN TURKEY, AUTHORITIES SUSPECT ARSON

(CH)--Fires ravaged six Christian villages in southern Turkey. Fires, which many believe were started intentionally, engulfed the villages of Elbegendi, Guzelsu, Dibek, Uckoy, Ucyol, and Dagici along the Turkey-Syria border. According to International Christian Concern, "arson has become a recognized insurgent tactic which targets the agricultural resources of villages." Insurgents in Turkey are believed to have burnt down between 700 and 800 olive trees. In the most recent incident, authorities suspect arson because fire has been a common tool used against farmers in Syria and Iraq as well. 50,000 hectares have

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs is in search of a pastor.

For a statement of faith you can visit the church website at <http://GraceBibleBaptist.webhop.org> or <http://gracebbc.dyndns.org:81/>.

You may contact any of the following for more information: Keith Laurence (225) 664-3557, Lucien LeSage (225) 803-9710, or Charlie Andrews (225) 200-1171.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Grace Landmark Baptist Church of Buckhannon, WV, is seeking a pastor. The church is Sovereign Grace and Landmark in doctrine and practice. Any interested called pastor of like

faith may contact Brother Brad Butcher at (304) 669-4738 or (304) 745-6226.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Stephens Branch Baptist Church of Martin, Kentucky is in need of a pastor. They are an Independent, Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Missionary Baptist church holding to the doctrines of grace and the King James Bible. If you are interested in being considered or would like more information on the church you can call Brother Lonnie Edwards at (859) 629-1413 or write the church at: Stephens Branch Baptist Church, 1025 Stephens Branch Road, Martin, Kentucky 41649.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, Mississippi is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact (662) 282-7794 or Email: [request@bereabaptistchurch.org](mailto:request@bereabaptistchurch.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

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](mailto:gaylenr@rainierconnect.com).

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

The 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.



## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

### Financial Report

7-1-2019 to 7-31-2019

Beginning Balance ..... \$9,398.35

#### RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS ..... 300.00  
 Berea B. C., Stonington, IL ..... 60.00  
 Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX ..... 50.00  
 Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV ..... 200.00  
 Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY ..... 150.00  
 Carol Willett, Georgetown, TX ..... 60.00  
 Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL ..... 25.00  
 Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY ..... 200.00  
 Faith B. C., Lynn, AR ..... 12.50  
 Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME ..... 20.00  
 Grace B. C., Corbin, KY ..... 100.00  
 Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC ..... 50.00  
 Grace Missionary B. C., Temperance, MI ... 50.00  
 Grace Missionary B. C. Tulsa, OK ..... 50.00  
 Indore B. C., Indore, WV ..... 100.00  
 The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC ..... 50.00  
 Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY ..... 35.00  
 Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH ..... 100.00  
 New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN ..... 50.00  
 Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR 300.00  
 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., Silsbee, TX ..... 30.00  
 Victory B. C., Courtland, VA ..... 25.00  
 Subscriptions ..... 48.00  
 Anonymous ..... 670.00  
 Dividing checks ..... 150.00  
 Sub Total ..... \$3,060.50  
 TOTAL ..... \$12,458.85

#### EXPENDITURES:

Printing ..... 490.00  
 Postage ..... 527.12  
 Wages ..... 2,300.00  
 FICA ..... 175.90  
 Dividing checks ..... 150.00  
 Total Expenditures ..... \$3,643.02  
 ENDING BALANCE ..... \$8,815.83



## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

### Financial Report

7-1-2019 to 7-31-2019

Beginning Balance ..... \$2,207.56

#### RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS ..... 225.00  
 Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY ..... 100.00  
 Calvary Ind. B. C., Sumas, WA ..... 100.00  
 Grace B. C., Corbin, KY ..... 100.00  
 ..... 525.00  
 TOTAL ..... 2,732.56

#### EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time ..... 403.98  
 Program production ..... 195.00  
 TOTAL EXPENDITURES ..... 598.98  
 ..... 2,133.58  
 Interest ..... 0.00  
 ENDING BALANCE ..... \$2,133.58



# Bible & the Newspaper

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been burned in the region since May, resulting in a loss of \$50 million. This is just the latest incident causing anxiety for Syriac Christians.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ARCHAEOLOGISTS FIND CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES NEAR SEA OF GALILEE

(CH)--A team of American and Israeli archaeologists have discovered the Church of the Apostles near the Sea of Galilee. The church, which is believed to have been built over the house of disciples Peter and Andrew, also indicates the location of the city of Bethsaida, where Jesus healed a blind man. An archaeological team from Kinneret College in Israel and Nyack College's Center of the Study of Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins has discovered pieces of marble and small gilded glass blocks called tesserae in previous excavations made in the site of el-Araj near the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The site appeared to unoccupied during the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., but recent discoveries of a Roman bathhouse, Roman-era houses, and pottery at the site indicate ancient urbanization and a small city. The team will continue next excavation season to dig at el-Araj to discover more, with the hopes of entirely excavating the church. Thus far, they have only uncovered some of the southern rooms of the church, likely the southern aisle. At the end of this season, they were just beginning to uncover the mosaics of what is likely the nave, the center section of the church. At the end of next season, they expect to be able to publish a preliminary report on our first five seasons and definitely answer the question of the locution of New Testament Bethsaida-Julias.



## Quotes from Brother Ritechus N. Dignation by Joseph Harris

I know this won't set well with some, but here it is. The Lord's got a plan for financing His church and her ministeries. That plan don't include sellin' donuts, holdin' car washes or rafflin' off the family dog. God's plan is called the "Open your wallet and give cheerfully" plan. Church members ought to tithe and give above the tithe for special needs and not go asking the world to support God's work.

\*\*\*

We used to sing a song when I was a kid from the *Heavenly Highway Hymnal* and the first line went like this: "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through." If you are at home in this world, then you might better check whether or not your citizenship is in Heaven.

\*\*\*

It bothers me when professing Christians spend time looking for loopholes that allow them

freedom to indulge in that which is questionable, all under the guise of Christian liberty. They ought to see how far from sin they can get, not cuddle up next to it. It tells me they are focused on themselves and not God.

\*\*\*

You know why sinners don't like to go to church? It gets them too close to God. Gettin' near God gets mighty uncomfortable when you are living for the devil. You can't see anything in the dark, but when the light is turned on, everything appears to the eyes. God's light doesn't pick and choose. When it shines down, the good, the bad and the sinful all show and makes sinners squirm like nightcrawlers on blacktop at noon.

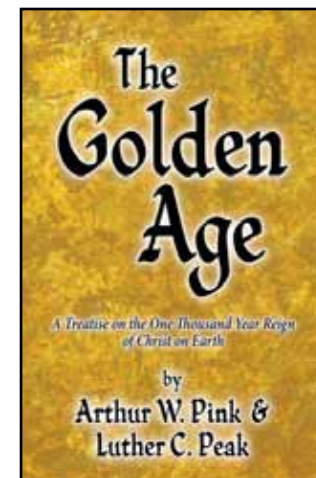
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Years ago some preachers started sayin' the church should engage the culture and make the gospel relevant to the world in order to reach folks. Unfortunately, the church got engaged to the world followed by an unholy marriage. The result was an offspring with no morals, an irreverent attitude and a form of godliness that denies and despises the truth.

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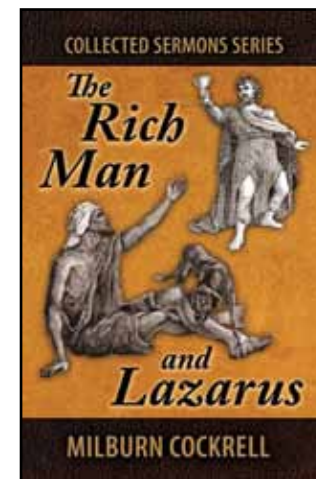
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## Now Available!



We are pleased to announce that *The Golden Age* by Arthur Pink and Luther Peak is available. This book will be sent free to any prisoner that requests it. Retail price \$8.00. Paperback, 87 pages. 50% discount given on orders of five or more.

## Also Available



We are pleased to announce that *The Rich Man and Lazarus* by Milburn Cockrell is available. A simple book dealing with the account given by Christ. This book will be sent free to any prisoner that requests it. Retail price \$4.00. Paperback, 31 pages. 50% discount given on orders of five or more.

(\$5 Flat rate shipping on all bookstore orders).

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