

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

The Church at Ephesus

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 – 2002)

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them



liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless

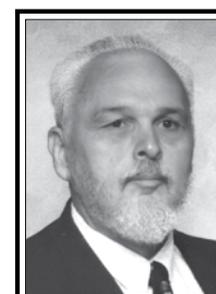
I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;

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You Cannot Whip Him

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

Let us consider the greatest of subjects – God in all His sovereignty. In this article we shall explore a simple, direct and yet eloquent message that, I am told, was preached many years ago. But first a few comments must be made about something with which some may be unfamiliar and others may have almost forgotten. There was a time when the public schools of these



United States sponsored two important ceremonies for their graduating senior classes. Commencement exercises, to my knowledge, are still held in most schools belonging to the taxpayers. But in the days before liberal and godless psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists and the ACLU told

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"Let God"

By Nathaniel Hille
of Caldwell, Kansas

Have you ever heard such a statement? "Let God!" It is the standard cry from many pulpits today that sinners must "Let God into their hearts," or that sinners must "Let God save them." It is astounding to this preacher that such a statement is uttered out of any mouth, but especially from those that claim to be His ministers. One would think that such who have degrees and spend



hours in the Word of God would see that for finite man to LET an infinite God do something, anything, everything would be quite absurd!

Let us think about this statement for a moment: "Let God." If God is all-powerful, and He is, then how can man "let" God

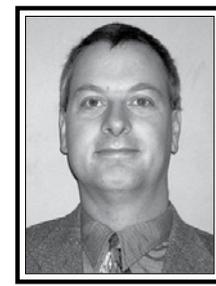
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God Is All You Need

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

It seems that we have a lot of needs in this life. I know that some of our needs are basic and essential to all living men. However, some of our so-called "needs" are really nothing more than our wants and desires, which encroach upon us in this life. The truth is, since



the day God gave you Jesus Christ as your Saviour (or rather, made you to know the fact that you were given unto the Lord Jesus), you have had all that you need. If you are a child of God, and if you were lying somewhere – sick, naked, without a possession in this world, and ready to

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Be good within; do good without.

When a candle is alight within a lantern it sheds a light all around; but if the lantern be dark within it is of no use to those outside.

It is the same with men. Have light in yourselves.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

November 5, 2014
Volume XXXIV, Number 11
Whole Number 424

Editor: Christopher Cockrell
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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.

PUBLICATION POLICIES: All matter for publication should be sent to the editor. All manuscripts are to be typed and double spaced. All such material becomes the property of BBB and will not be returned unless requested by the writer. We reserve the right to edit and condense all materials sent to us for publication.

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY with paid circulation in most states in the U.S.A. and some foreign countries.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - U.S.

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - FOREIGN One Year \$45

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BUNDLES TO ONE ADDRESS: These are sent for \$4 per paper for a year. An example: 10 papers for one year at \$40 or 20 papers for one year at \$80.00.

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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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

Ephesus

(Continued from page 237) ♦

or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:1-7).

When the Apostle John was exiled to the small island of Patmos, he saw a vision of the glorified Son of man on the Lord's Day. The ascended Christ revealed to John things to come. On this occasion Christ commissioned him to write what he saw **"in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea"** (Rev. 1:11).

All too many times we are prone to pass quickly over these seven letters of Christ to His seven churches in our study of the book of Revelation. Therefore, I plan to discuss these seven letters at length, praying that the Holy Spirit shall be our teacher. Let us direct our attention to Christ's epistle to the church in the city of Ephesus. In this brief epistle Christ did not address the church universal, or the churches in Ephesus, or the diocese of Ephesus. Rather, He sent this letter to the one local church which met in the city of Ephesus.

THE CHURCH (v. 1)

The church at Ephesus was founded by the Apostle Paul. He

arrived in the city of Ephesus about A. D. 58. He re-immersed twelve disciples who had been baptized by Apollos (Acts 19:1-7). For three months after this he addressed the Jews in their synagogue concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 19:8). Due to severe opposition, he separated his converts and organized them into a church (Acts 19:9). Paul went on preaching for two years after this (Acts 19:10). Many were converted and added to the church (Acts 19:10-20). Finally, violent opposition forced Paul to leave for Macedonia (Acts 19:21-20:1).

The apostle left Timothy at Ephesus to labor with the church (I Tim. 1:2-3). So far as we know Paul never returned to visit with this church, although he did meet with the elders of the church at Miletus, a town a few miles from Ephesus. At the meeting in Miletus he warned the elders of the Ephesian church of the coming of false teachers (Acts 20:28-32). It would seem from the letter dictated by the Son of God and transmitted by His servant John some 38 years later (A. D. 96) that the church gave earnest heed to Paul's warning. Christ praised them for their doctrinal purity.

THE CITY (V. 1)

Ephesus was situated upon the river Cayster on the side of a hill and was much celebrated for its local scenery. It was between Smyrna and Miletus, not far from the Icarian Sea. This very old city was believed to have been founded by the Amazons. It was the capital of Ionia. Under the Romans it was the capital of the entire province of Asia and bore the title "the first and greatest metropolis of Asia." It was here the Apostle John lived

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Ephesus

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in his latter years before he was exiled to Patmos, and who after the death of Domitian returned to this city.

The chief ornament of the place was the famous temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world. It is said to have taken 220 years in building at the expense of all Asia. It was made of shining marble. Its dimensions were 342 feet long and 164 feet wide. It was supported by 127 columns of Parisian marble, each single shaft being 60 feet long. In the center of the temple, concealed by curtains, stood the image of the goddess Diana. In this place could be heard the shouts of thousands of devotees, **"Great is Diana of the Ephesians"** (Acts 19:28).

Ephesus was also noted for its magnificent theater (Acts 19:29) which seated about 50,000 people, the largest seating capacity in the Greek world. Close to this theater was the magnificent stadium in which the races were run, the gladiatorial combats were fought and where large crowds satisfied their lust for blood watching the death struggles between man and beast in the arena. Here was where great gatherings settled public questions (Acts 19:29).

THE CHRIST (v. 1)

The message to the Ephesian church is a message directly from Christ, the great Head of the church. Note the language in verse 1: **"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."** Here Christ is seen possessing full knowledge of both pastor and people. He is revealed as the only one competent to criticize and condemn His

church.

There is a twofold description of Christ given here which corresponds to His message to the church. First, it is written that He **"holdeth the seven stars in his right hand."** The meaning of the seven stars is given in Revelation 1:20: **"The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches."** By the word angel (Greek AGGELOS--messenger) I understand the pastor or messenger of the church. This must be the correct view for the following reasons: (1) Real angels are not overcomers; (2) There was no way John could have written to spirit beings; (3) A spirit being could not have been subject to rebuke and heresies and called upon to repent; (4) Angels do not preach in our churches as messengers of Heaven.

What an encouragement it is to know that Christ holds His pastors in His right hand! It means pastors are very near the heart of Jesus Christ. Christ is in absolute control of their ministry. He holds them fast so no one can pluck them out of His name (John 10:28; Isa. 49:16). Preacher brethren, Christ will always keep us near His heart and never forsake us. Therefore, it behooves us not to forsake Him and leave the ministry because of its discouragements and lack of appreciation. Let us ever be nearer to Christ than ever our people---even in the right hand of Jesus Christ.

The second description of Christ is that He **"walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."** Revelation 1:20 says: **"The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."** Walking expresses Christ's unwearied activity among His churches on earth.

In our dispensation Christ is not working through Israel or some evangelistic association. Rather, He is working in and through His churches. He is in their midst to engage in constant and vigilant supervision of all their activities. He is there to guard them from internal and external evils. He remains among them in spite of their faults, failures and follies.

THE COMMENDATION (vv. 2-3, 6)

The Master always commends before He complains. He began their commendation by saying: **"I know thy works, and thy labor. . ."** He emphatically knows their works and labors. The Ephesian Church was a working church. She was constantly seeing people saved and added to the church. She was engaged in Christianizing pagans and Jews and the overthrow of the black arts. She did not merely have profession, desire, and good intention; she spent herself for Christ. This church was a veritable beehive.

All too many churches are satisfied with holding their own. The members are content to meet on Sunday and sing hymns and do nothing else. The saints come dragging in to occupy the same seats in the church they have for many years. The pastor does not know what he would do without them; but when he considers their spiritually dead condition, he often wonders what to do with them.

What do modern-day churchgoers really know about laboring for Christ? Is it not true that a few drops of rain can keep them from church? What real experience have we had in laboring for souls, agonizing in prayer, or earnestly contending for the faith? Do we not need to strive more about works and

less about words? Are not all too many church members laboring to have a good time rather than laboring for Jesus Christ? God help us to be like the Ephesian Church. **"Let us not be weary in well doing"** (Gal. 6:9).

". . .and thy patience. . ." This was a church which ran the Christian race with patience (Heb. 12:1). Jesus Christ valued their waiting as well as their working. They did not grow weary in well doing even though they saw little results. They believed they would reap a great harvest if they fainted not. They were willing to remain behind while others ran ahead. They knew how to bear up under the burdens of service and suffering.

Christ commended them for requiring a regenerated church membership: **". . .thou canst not bear them which are evil. . ."** They could not endure or tolerate heretics. They had no sympathy with either their doctrine or their unscriptural practices; they utterly opposed them and denied them church membership.

This church was careful about who preached in its pulpit: **". . .and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."** No one preached in this pulpit who was disloyal to Christ and His gospel of grace (I John 4:1; Tit. 3:10; II Cor. 11:13-15). They put such characters to the test, and after their examination they found them to be religious liars. It made no difference to this church how wise, scholarly, or influential such preachers were. Unless they were true to the teachings of Jesus Christ, they could not preach in their pulpit nor hold membership in their church.

Please note the description

Ephesus

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of false teachers given here by Christ. He said they are “liars.” The religious world may call them “great scholars” and “deep thinkers.” How our churches today need to realize this truth! Much of what we call liberal is lying, for any deviation from Christ and His doctrines is lying. **“No lie is of the truth”** (I John 2:21), and we are commanded to **“hate every false way”** (Ps. 119:104, 128). Let us be careful not to entertain doctors of damnation instead of doctors of divinity. To do so is to entertain devils unawares.

This orthodox church hated the deeds of heretics: **“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.”** They were in complete sympathy with Jesus Christ in this matter. Churches should hate the deeds of all heretics who are engaged in the work of ruining lives and damning souls to Hell. Whatever Christ disapproves of we should also disapprove.

Who were the Nicolaitanes? This question does not have an easy answer. Ireneus and other church fathers thought the term was derived from Nicolas, one of the deacons ordained by the church at Jerusalem (Acts 6:5). Other writers of great antiquity say this religious group claimed him as their leader to gain proselytes through the influence of his name. Others claim that this is the same as the teaching of Balaam. These people associate the resemblance of etymology in the names. “Balaam” means “lord of the people” or “destroyer of the people.” “Nicolas” means “conqueror of the people.” The symbolical meaning of the names does compare, but I doubt this

view is correct as it seems fanciful and forced.

It is best to take the Nicolaitanes as a sect existing in Ephesus and other places (Rev. 2:15) holding the demoralizing doctrines attributed to them. They combined the profession of Christianity with the impurities of paganism. Historians tell us they believed in promiscuous intercourse with women and eating things offered to idols. They abused grace to the disregard of Bible morality. This same idea exists today and remains an awful heresy. It is the terrible delusion that worldliness cannot harm a child of God.

THE COMPLAINT (v. 4)

The Ephesian Church was a sound church doctrinally, but she had one besetting sin. Jesus Christ, the omniscient Examiner of His church, said: **“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”** This church was backslidden, for they had lost much of their early love for Christ. The word **“love”** here expresses “delight, desire, longing, and devotion.” The early and chief love of a church or a Christian is Jesus Christ. Our Savior requires our entire love and is disappointed if He loses any part of it.

This church hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, but they did not love Christ enough! Their love had not turned to hate. They had not lost it completely. Yet they had not that warm, earnest, active love to the Savior as when they were newly converted. Without **“first love”** labor is in vain, faith impotent, hope dead.

There is a great danger that a church may become involved in fighting heresy to the point that they may forget to love Christ enough. A loud cry against

heresy is no proof of real love for Jesus Christ. You can be so sound in the faith until you are sound asleep so far as showing any love for Christ. Does this description fit your church?

THE COUNSEL (v. 5)

The wonderful Counsellor warnstheEphesians: **“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”** If the threatened judgment is to be averted there must be a return to the **“first love”** and the **“first works.”** They must **“remember”** and **“repent.”**

The command to repent is addressed to the whole church! Sometimes a whole church needs to repent. Memory and repentance are the essential factors in the recovery of a backslidden church. They needed to reconstruct, reform and remake their lives on the basis of their conversion experience. Christ commanded them to return to their state of first love.

Christ threatened immediate punishment unless repentance took place. It was repent or else judgment would fall upon them. A loveless and unloving church cannot represent Christ to the world. It matters not how stately their building may be, how many they have in Sunday school, how much their offerings run each year, how educated their pastor is; Christ can do without those who have lost their love for Him. It is not our cleverness, our scholarship, our doings or our doctrines that honor Christ the most; it is our loving Him with a pure heart fervently. A church without love for Christ is a worthless candlestick; Ichabod should be written over the door.

The church in the Book of Revelation is represented by a candlestick. Hence the removal of the candlestick out of his place (the church out of its community) is the extinction of the church itself. This threat had its fulfillment. The Ephesian Church long since ceased to exist and Ephesus itself is in ruin. This letter of Christ to the Ephesian church is still read by Christians around the world, yet there is no Ephesian church member to read it!

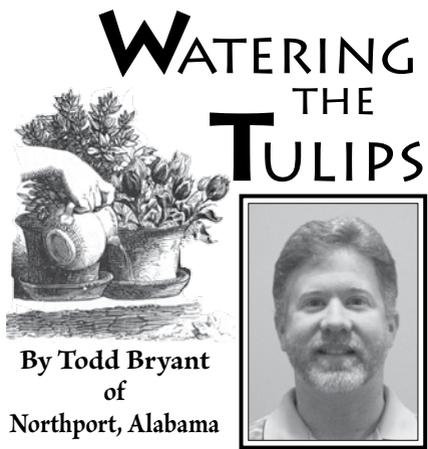
THE COMFORT (v. 7)

The letter concludes with an individual promise to any member who would be faithful: **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God”** (Rev. 2:7).

The overcomer in the Ephesian Church is none other than a born-again believer (I John 5:4-5). The baptized believer is to subdue, fight, vanquish and conquer the world through Christ. The church as a collective body must fight the good fight of faith. They are to struggle to overcome sin and Satan. Verse 7 proves conclusively that the backslider could have become the Ephesian overcomer.

The undefeated church member is promised the privilege of partaking of the tree of life. This verse looks back to the garden of Eden which had the tree of life in the midst. Although not forbidden to do so, Adam and Eve never ate of this tree which gave immortality. Nevertheless, the overcomer shall have that privilege. He can put forth his hand and eat and live forever (Gen. 3:22).





By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama

As the Days of Noah Were

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37-39).

Jesus is coming soon. That is a fact. With events in the Middle East, the dependence between world governments, the universal acceptance of sin and many other factors, we can see that the coming of our Lord is drawing near. For the child of God, this is a time to rejoice. The verse before us illustrates a time very similar to our generation. Folks are not looking for the coming of Christ. Just as the people before the flood were doing, so our generation is carrying on with normal life without any thought that Jesus could return today. Sadly, many of our friends and loved ones will be caught unaware when the Lord returns.

What are a few signs of the coming of Christ? First, scoffers will come in the last days, walking in their own lusts, and saying, **“Where is the promise of his coming”** (II Pet. 3:4)? This is a

description of this day and age. Everywhere you look, people are “walking in their own lusts.” Few people today have any concern for God. Most today never consider that they will stand before a Thrice Holy God and be judged. So many have dismissed any thought that Jesus will return. This is our generation. We are in the last days.

Secondly, Timothy speaks of the **“last days”** and describes them as a time that will be consumed with sins including covetousness, pride, boastfulness, and blasphemy (II Tim. 3:1-4). He says men will lack self control as it relates to sin. He says many will have a **“form of godliness,”** but, it would not be real Christianity. We are in the last days.

Timothy also describes this time by saying, **“they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables”** (II Tim. 4:3-4). The most common brand of “Christianity” today does not know a God Who saves and a depraved man that needs saving. Most of what we see today is merely **“a form of godliness”** without any real root of faith. We are in the last days.

Child of God be encouraged. Your Lord and Savior is soon to return to this Earth. He has promised that He went away to prepare a place for us and that He would return again for us (John 14:2-3). Be watching and waiting for His coming. Be working as well – telling those that are lost that the Day of Judgment is approaching. Tell them that the only way to escape God’s wrath is to flee by faith to Jesus Christ. There is no other hope for mankind.



You Cannot Whip

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us that reading from the Bible and mentioning God was bad for our children and young people – back before Big Brother in Washington started telling local school boards that they could not acknowledge God on taxpayer’s school property – there was a thing called a “Baccalaureate Service.” It was held usually in the school auditorium and was an hour or so when the graduating class was prayed for and “preached to,” generally by one of the local pastors. Ah! What unseen evil was wrought in the hearts and minds of graduating seniors and the general public by hearing a sermon on school property!

The story goes that back in the days of those baccalaureate services, there was a small town in America that did something unusual. For years they had the same pastor preach the baccalaureate sermon. He was pastor to a small congregation made up of that segment of our society now popularly known as an “ethnic minority.” He did not have the advantage of a high degree of education, but he had been to God’s school. His heart as well as his mind was filled with an understanding awe of God and His sovereign majesty. In his simplicity of language he was eloquent beyond the more educated pastors in the town. Perhaps that is why God fixed it so that he was consistently asked to preach to not only the graduating class, but also to most of the town, as it was usual for many people to attend these annual services. As a Black man he seldom had the opportunity to preach to those of other races, but he was awestruck with love and admiration for God and not fearful of those

to whom he would preach each spring at the local school.

The title of his sermon was always the same. Year after year he dared broach the same mighty subject. For the sake of proper grammar and good editorial style, the title of his sermon is the title of this article, “You Cannot Whip Him,” but the old preacher did not give out his sermon title that way. In his simplicity of speech he gave out the title to his annual sermon as “You Cain’t Whup Him.” I wish that I could have heard that sermon. God has blessed that simple thought to my heart since I first heard about the old man’s sermon. (Of course we know that it was no accident that someone told me about the sermon!) Since the day that I heard about it, I have made it my business to preach “You Cain’t Whup Him” in one way or another. Passionate and fervent, simple and yet eloquent, the grizzled old man preached as only a man of his ethnicity who is in love with his Subject can preach. If only across the breadth of America that message would resound today! “You Cain’t Whup Him!” What a subject!

The text of his message was not told to me and I suppose is lost to human history. I have often wondered what text or texts he used. Perhaps he preached from different texts each year. He could have taken his text from the words of King Nebuchadnezzar. After God removed Nebuchadnezzar from being king and put him in the mental ward for seven years, God then gave him his reason back. God did this all without any human reason or virtue in the king. He did it sovereignly because He took pleasure in doing what He did. Nebuchadnezzar learned at least a little in God’s school and gave a report in class.

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You Cannot Whip

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He said that God's "...dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou" (Dan. 4:34, 35)? Nebuchadnezzar testified, "You Cain't Whup Him!" Nebuchadnezzar's words were the fulfillment of prophecy for his dream sent from God was for a purpose. Daniel told him of that purpose beforehand with these words, "...they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:25). Daniel testified that "You Cain't Whup Him." God does as He pleases and according to His intelligent and all-wise plan!

Perhaps he preached another year from a different text and based his message on Daniel's words in chapter 2:20-21: "...Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." The old preacher could have preached from Psalm 59:13 where we read, "...let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah" or from Psalm

103:19 which says, "**The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.**" The old man could have preached from Psalm 148:5-6: "**Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.**" Another text which may have sounded out from that school house may have been Isaiah 14:27: "**For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?**" Perhaps one year the old pastor took his text from Isaiah 46:9, 10 where we read: "**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.**" The old Brother may have preached one year from the text: "**Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will**" (Eph. 1:5). Or perhaps one year his text was Revelation 4:11: "**Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**" There is a myriad of other texts from God's Word that the old preacher may have used. But there is a common theme that runs throughout the passages quoted above: God is sovereign. God does as He pleases. God has a purpose and a plan that He alone formulated before He created the world. God has the ability to carry out that plan and is doing so. In the words of the old preacher,

"You Cain't Whup Him!" The lesson throughout is expressed in Hebrews 12:9, "**Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?**"

"**Be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?**" What an awful thought to unregenerate men and women whether irreligious or professed Christians. The reason that the idea of being in subjection to God is repugnant to the natural man is "**Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be**" (Rom. 8:7). We are thankful that God has His remnant, but our heart-cry is this: Oh that God might be pleased to give repentance and true revival to America! Is it possible that the old man spoke the truth when he proclaimed "You Cain't Whup Him?" Certainly it is possible. Neither Satan, the ACLU, godless men and women in high places of government, nor the religious apathy that surrounds us are a match for God! Hear me! "You Cain't Whup Him!" God can arrest a blasphemer and a persecutor of Christ's congregation and make a disciple and an apostle out of him. Paul learned that and throughout his letters runs the recurring theme of God's absolute sovereignty and predestination of all things. "You Cain't Whup Him" is underneath all of Paul's writings, all of the New Testament and indeed all the Bible. An honest reader cannot read even the first eleven chapters of Genesis without acknowledging that the God of the Bible is omnipotent and sovereign over all things. Besides Nebuchadnezzar,

Jonah learned that "You Cain't Whup Him." Balaam learned it. Pharaoh learned it. The people of Jericho learned it as did those who built the tower in Babel and the scoffers in the days of Noah. Somebody said Noah's hammer rang out "judgment is coming." If it did, perhaps the water splashing against the ark sang "You Cain't Whup Him." The rich man in Hades learned it as did the scoffing thief nailed up with Jesus. Those responsible for the nailing of Jesus Christ to the tree learned it when He resurrected. The Harlot and her Daughters shall learn it and if Lucifer himself does not yet know it, he shall because "You Cain't Whup Him."

Men and women may graduate from high school, from college or university and attend various commencement exercises, but most have never understood in their hearts the substance of the old man's sermon, "You Cain't Whup Him." Only the regenerated can learn the lesson of God's absolute sovereignty as taught in His school. Even in the selection of those who are allowed to matriculate in God's school, God is sovereign. Most men and women go through life, read their Bibles and attend what passes for preaching these days and yet never hear with their inner ears – never perceive in their hearts – this great truth that God is sovereign. Some are willing to use the term and claim to believe in God's sovereign majesty, but not in the matter of salvation. Their god is not able to overcome the all-powerful and sovereign free will of man. They come up with all kinds of excuses to circumvent the fact that God is in control of all things – even in control of whom He saves. Not many are willing to preach that unregenerate humans

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You Cannot Whip

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are in active rebellion against God. Today, in most places, as one man said, "Preacher-ettes preach sermon-ettes and produce Christian-ettes." Easy-believe-ism and decisional-regeneration-ism (free-will-ism) are based on a false understanding of God and a false diagnosis of man's condition. Therefore most preachers prescribe a panacea – a home remedy that will not and does not and cannot raise spiritually dead sinners. But let those who are assured that they are numbered among God's remnant "**according to the election of grace**" follow the instructions to "**lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet...**" (See Rom. 11:5, Heb. 12:12-13). Remember the title of the old preacher's sermon, "You Cain't Whup Him." Our Lord Jesus Christ is going to return and straighten out the mess that we sinful men have made of His world. Let us not chafe at or be bitter because of what God is doing in His world. Kings (and presidents) rule not simply because of electoral majorities and not even because of corrupt Chicago political machines. Behind the scenes Lord God Jehovah of the Bible, ruler over all things, is bringing to pass His sovereign plan. It was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that his experience was "**..to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men**" (Dan. 4:17). Surely the children of God have eyes to see that "the basest of men" who rule over us are better than sinful Americans deserve. Thank God that we

Americans are not experiencing the full fury of His righteous justice – not yet. But we know this: not a sparrow falls to the ground "**without your Father**" (Matt. 10:29). (That does not just mean without your Father knowing about it, it means what it says: "**without your Father.**") God is in control of all the tiny details of His creation which go to make up what we consider to be major events. Those of His children who understand these things can be encouraged and confident. We are in the battle on God's side and can glory in the knowledge that there is nothing that can "whup Him." "**Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee**" (Jer. 32:17).



"Let God"

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do anything? Think of all the things that God has done! Did He do any of these things because man permitted Him to do them? Did God not speak and the world and all that there is came into existence, including man? "**FOR BY HIM were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers—all things were created BY HIM, and for him; And he is before all things, and BY HIM all things consist**" (Col.1:16-17) [Emp. NH]. Are we to believe that God spoke the world into existence because man permitted God to do so? Am I to believe that the almighty, all-powerful, sovereign God was allowed by man to create the human race? Such is illogical and irrational.

How could man (who was not yet in existence) permit himself to be created?

Yet, something just as illogical and irrational is being advocated by those who claim to be God's messengers: "Let God come into your hearts," or "Let God save you." Such a statement as this, even the concept, cannot be found anywhere in in Scriptures. Furthermore, this statement implies that God—the almighty One, the only "**Potentate**" (I Tim. 6:15), had at some point been dethroned, overthrown, or resigned from the throne upon which He sits. However, we have no record of this in Scripture; no indication of it—rather the opposite! God has again and again throughout the Scriptures assured His people that He is in control! "**But our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased**" (Ps. 115:3).

Can God do as He pleases? Or is he beholden to man? Can God do whatsoever He wills, or must he act according to the desire of man? Does not common sense and personal experience teach us that God is not restricted? The God who breathed life into man is now in need of that man's permission to operate! This is the God of whom it is said that death could not possibly hold Him, "**Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it**" (Acts 2:24). Death could not hold the Christ (God in the flesh); Death had no power over Him! Yet, we are told that "**death reigned**" over man (Rom. 5:14,17). Does it seem logical and reasonable that man, who is reigned over by death must LET GOD who has power over death?

Yet, many preachers insist that God wants to save you,



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

A lot of folks today have the King Agrippa complex. Remember him? He was the one who was almost persuaded to become a Christian. The fact is, you are either saved or lost. If you are almost saved, then you are really completely lost.

but He cannot until man lets Him. How absurd! Mad is the man who preaches that finite man must LET, PERMIT, or ALLOW, the Infinite One do anything. I contend that God is all-powerful. I contend that God is in control! I contend that "**.. he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou**" (Dan. 4:35)? I contend even as Paul did that God is able to save as He sees fit "**For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion**" (Rom. 9:15).

Honestly, do you really think that a God who needs your permission to save you, can truly and actually save you from your sins? NO! If God needs man to "let," "permit," "allow" Him to do something, anything, everything...He would no longer be God; man would now be God. Man would be in charge of salvation, yea everything. Is this a God that can save? A God that must be "allowed" by man? NO!

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“Let God”

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You are in need of an all-mighty God. You need Jesus: **“Wherefore, HE IS ABLE also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”** (Heb. 7:25) [Emp. NH]. You must come to God through Jesus Christ—come to Him that you might be saved. Come to Him who said, **“..All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”** (Matt. 28:18). Do NOT “LET GOD save you” or “LET GOD come into your heart.” Rather, come to Him and He will save you, **“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). **“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”** (Matt. 11:28). AMEN! Maran-atha!



God Is All You

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take your last breath on this earth – as long as you have God, you have all you need. A child of God in such a desperate situation is in a far better situation than the richest, most well-adorned, and prosperous unsaved man who has ever lived.

Certainly, it seems that the world at large is obsessed with the accumulation of “things.” Without a doubt, this passion for the accumulation and possession of earthly and temporal things, has afflicted many of the children of God. An interesting (and terrible) dilemma that faces the children of God is that the more we have of the wants and desires of this life, the less we have of God. One

would think that it is not possible to have or accumulate too much; but, in reality, though our God is always with us, too much of the world in our possession can come between us and our God. I am not saying that it is necessary for us to sell all of our possessions and live our lives as hermits in the mountains. But, I am saying that the world will do its best (and our flesh will contribute to this harmful situation) to sever our hearts and minds from that close relationship with Jesus Christ, which is the sincere desire of the inner man.

I recently came across the following saying: “When all you have is God, then you have all you need.” We do not purposely seek out desperate situations; but, when these situations arise, we are made to realize the importance of having God in our lives. More than all riches of the earth, our God should be the center of our lives. **“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”** (Matt. 6:19-21). More than all the joys and happiness of this life, our God should be the joy of our lives. **“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”** (Ps. 16:11). More than all plans, intents, and desires of the flesh, our God should be the focus of our purposes. **“Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas**

ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:13-15). God is all you and I need. The existence of God in our lives ought to dominate our very existence in this life.

Let me briefly give you three ways in which God should dominate our lives, and be “All that we need.”

GODLY AMBITION

God should be our “ambition.” It used to be that all men had ambitions in this life. Though it seems that many men and women are willing to just idle their way through this life now; it ought to be that men and women would demonstrate some measure of ambition in this life – some desire or intent to better themselves, and do something worthwhile with their lives. Ambition can be a good thing for individuals, and for society as a whole. However, it is the nature of man, that he will give himself wholeheartedly to the things of the flesh, and will allow the desires of the world to consume his ambitions. In the end – left unchecked by the rules and laws of a moral society – the ambitions of men will normally devolve to the pursuit of the wretched sins and degradations of this life.

The Word of God, though, reminds us that our ambitions ought to be godly – we should aspire to greatness in the Word and Service of God! Rather than seeking out and aspiring to greatness in this life, the child of God should aspire to greatness in the things of God. **“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing**

rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Heb. 11:24-26). Moses is an example of a godly man who had the opportunity to pursue worldly ambitions to achieve a great place in this world. However, Moses preferred the ambitions that come from God, and the desire to be a faithful servant to God. His ambition was to lead the people of God, not to lead the worldly Egyptians.

Let me refer you to a Parable of the Lord Jesus Christ. We read in Luke 16:8, **“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”** In this parable of the unjust steward, the Lord Jesus is not so much commending the unjust steward (or the “children of this world”), as He is condemning the typical ambitions of the “children of light.” Matthew Henry said about this passage, “Worldly men in the choice of their object are foolish; but in their activity, and perseverance, they are often wiser than believers.” Would to God that the Christian’s ambition to love and serve God was as great as the worldly man’s ambition to satisfy his carnal desires!

Without doubt, the desires for riches and possessions in this life should be curbed by an appetite and ambition in the things and the Words of God. **“Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith”** (Prov. 15:16). Our ambitions are evident in the goals and the plans that we make. God

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is all you need. Some will say that “God should be a part of your plans.” Not unlike the infamous phrase, “Let God be your Co-pilot,” this phrase just does not go far enough. Rather than being a “part” of the plans of the child of God, the Lord Jesus Christ should be the “centerpiece” of the plans of the child of God. In fact, it is in our best interest to allow that God is in control, and to trust in Him to both devise and implement our life’s course.

GODLY ATTITUDE

God should be seen in our “attitude.” Since the vast majority of the men in this world are the servants of the devil, it is no wonder that the attitudes and behaviors of the worldly man is contrary to the Word of God. But, as the children of God who are merely passing through this world below, we should demonstrate an attitude that represents the Saviour that we follow and serve. Our attitude is very important: we do what we do, and we say what we say; but, with what attitude? Are we a people who will go about grudgingly serving the Lord? Or, are we a people who will happily and joyfully participate in the fulfilling of God’s will here on this earth?

I believe that the character of a man is visible through his words and deeds. And, I think – very often – that the character of a man will make or break his service unto God. **“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and**

love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:22-24). Oh, that the Lord would help His people to have our eyes to be **“single,”** and focused upon Jesus Christ! He is all we need! How bright our lives are when we gaze upon Jesus Christ and His Word! How dark, muddled, and dangerous our lives are when we allow **“mammon”** to intervene!

The Bible often speaks of the conversation of men. And, this conversation is a picture of the lives that we live before the world. **“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel”** (Phil. 1:27). In this regard, the meaning is really not just the words (or conversation) which you exchange with others. Rather, the word **“conversation”** typically refers to the manner of life that we live. Our very lives should be an **“adornment”** to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which has saved us.

Though difficult times will come upon us, our attitude must not be downhearted, sorrowful, or weary. Though there will be times when we will struggle, sorrow, and cry out; still, the overall tenor of the demeanor and attitude of the child of God, should be one of peace, joy, and happiness in the Lord. Sorrow will come upon us, but sorrow must not consume us. We have much to do in the cause of Christ; let us not be weary in well-doing! Let us not be grudging or unfaithful or hesitant or lethargic in our service unto the Lord. I pray God that my attitude (and yours) would be such that other folks would comment on our fair



and even temperament, and the joy and peace in our demeanor. In the end, as long as we have God, we have all that we need.

GODLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

God should be the theme of our “accomplishments.” The world rates our accomplishments based upon the amount of money we have in the banks, or the amount of possessions that we have in our hands, or the amount of power and prestige we have amongst other men. However, the accomplishments which should matter most to the child of God are those accomplishments which are the results of godly and heavenly ambitions and attitudes. One time, the Lord spoke to Joshua about the successes that he desired in this life: **“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD**

it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong

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and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Josh. 1:1-9). In this passage, the Lord reminds Joshua of the noble ambitions that he has as the leader of the Children of Israel. And, in this passage, the Lord reminds Joshua that **“good success”** and **“prosperous”** times and ways, are contingent upon Joshua (and the others) being faithful unto God and His Word. Are not these accomplishments of Joshua far greater than the accomplishments of mortal and carnal men? Are not these accomplishments of Joshua based upon the will and purpose and strength of God, rather than the will, purpose, and strength of mere mortal and carnal men? History gives acclaim to the accomplishments of other famous generals and leaders, and famously records the campaigns and victories of the generals and warriors of the world. But, what

Joshua accomplished in the Land of Canaan was nothing short of brilliant, because he worked under the leadership of God, and sought to accomplish the will and purpose of the God of Israel.

God is all you need. God is all I need. And, God should be evident in our accomplishments on this earth. Whatever earthly possessions we have in this life, we should be ready to use them in the service and cause of Christ. Paul told Timothy, **“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life”** (I Tim. 6:17-19). Indeed, what better use could we ever devise for our possessions in this life than to use them as we serve the Lord and our fellow saints in this life? What greater accomplishment is there, than to be a blessing unto God’s people, and to exalt Jesus Christ in this life?

In the end, godly accomplishments in this life, will result in heavenly rewards in the life to come. James said, **“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him”** (James 1:12). After enduring the temptations and trials of this life, the child of God will **“receive the crown of life,”** which is far better than the greatest of earthly crowns or earthly rewards!

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abun-

dant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at

the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (I Pet. 1:3-9). What more do we need, than the salvation of our souls? What more can we desire, than to love, serve, and wait for our Lord and Saviour in this life; and to worship, praise, and rejoice in His presence in the life to come? Wherever God is, there you will find your happiness and peace. God is all you need.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



Saul and the Witch of Endor

The account of King Saul’s visit to the witch of Endor has puzzled and perplexed students of the Scriptures for centuries. All must agree that the passage in I Samuel 28:1-25 is unique and unparalleled. A mere reading of it raises a number of questions. Was the king a saved man, or a lost man? Why did Saul go to a witch? Did the witch actually have the power to raise up the disembodied spirit of Samuel? Was it really Samuel who appeared to Saul, or was it a demon impersonating Samuel? Can the departed spirits come back and communicate with the living? In this study I will seek to answer these questions.

Before going into the story of Saul and the witch, I believe it would be well to first of all answer the question: Was Saul saved or unsaved? It appears from the Biblical revelation that King

Saul was a saved person, although a very disobedient one in his latter years. That he was saved can be seen from the following facts: (1) God chose Saul to be king over the united kingdom of Israel (I Sam. 9:17, 10:1, 24). I find it hard to believe that God would have chosen an unregenerate man to rule over His people. (2) Saul was empowered by the Holy Spirit to utter prophecy (I Sam. 10:6, 10-13). In almost all cases, those empowered by the Spirit to utter prophecy were saved. (3) I Samuel 10:9 says that God gave Saul **“another heart.”** To me, this suggests regeneration. (4) I Samuel 28:19 declares that the spirit of Saul would join the spirit of Samuel in the spiritland the next day. Unless

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we take the position that Samuel and Jonathan were lost, we must conclude that Saul was saved.

SAUL'S DESPAIRING CONDITION (vv. 1-6)

The events leading up to his visit with the witch are important. Violent warfare was raging between the Philistines and the Israelites (I Sam. 28:1). Preparations were being made for a decisive battle on the plains of Jezreel the next day. This battle would decide the fate of Israel and her king. The Philistines had encamped to the north of the plains of Jezreel at Shunem (Josh. 19:18; II Kings 4:8; I Sam. 28:4), a village on the slope of a range called "Little Hermon." On the opposite side to the south, on the rise of Mount Gilboa near the spring of Jezreel, was Saul's army. These armies were facing each other with the plains between them.

The King of Israel was in no condition to go out to battle the next day. He was overcome by fright at the sight of the army of the Philistines. David had refused to help him and was still a fugitive. From the spiritual standpoint, the king had gone from bad to worse and was a God-forsaken man. His friend and companion, the Prophet Samuel, was dead and buried (I Sam. 28:3). All the ordinary channels of revelation were closed to him because of his willful disobedience. **"And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets"** (I Sam. 28:6).

Human history has failed to record a despair deeper or more tragic than Saul's. His spirit failed and his heart sank. His guilty conscience made him shiver and

shake like a leaf in the wind. His iniquities had separated him from his God, and his sins had hid God's face so that He would not hear. How awful the scene! A fearful heart and a silent Heaven! What a sorrowful plight for a man to be in who was once empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a companion of the prophets! How he needed to repent in this dark hour! It would have saved thousands of Israelites from a bloody slaughter. It would have saved the nation of Israel from defeat and humiliation.

SAUL CONSULTS A WITCH (vv. 7-11)

He remembered the timely messages of the prophet Samuel during the earlier days of his reign, and now, even though the man of God was dead and buried, Saul felt that he must find some way to communicate with him. Since he cannot move Heaven he will try to move Hell. Since his knocks at the doors of Heaven go unanswered, he is determined to knock at the gate of Hell. His craze for help is like the passions of a madman. He clutched like a drowning man at a straw. Having forsaken the living God by a sinful life, he will now turn to the dead for relief.

The king during most of his reign had banished witches, necromancers, and wizards from his kingdom. In doing this he was obeying the law of Jehovah (Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9-12). The Mosaic Law demanded the death penalty for such evil persons (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:27). The Lord had said: **"And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people"** (Lev. 20:6). Nevertheless, Saul is soon to violate the law of his kingdom and to suffer the

fearful consequences.

While the law against witches had been strictly enforced by Saul, it would seem that at least one woman who lived in the secluded spot in the Little Hermon mountain had escaped the executioners of the king. His servants told him of her whereabouts (I Sam. 28:7). Saul disguised himself in the clothing worn by the common people, took two servants, and sought a secret meeting with this witch at Endor (I Sam. 28:8). To reach her hiding place it was necessary for Saul to pass around the camp of the Philistines by keeping to the east of the plains of Jezreel. It was a dark and perilous night for Saul as he crossed the valley to the adjoining Little Hermon and climbed the rugged path to Endor.

The witch did not recognize Saul at first, but she knew from his voice that he was an Israelite. She reminded her unknown visitor that Saul had driven from his land all witches and wizards (I Sam. 28:8-9). Saul took an oath that no harm would come to her because of her actions (I Sam. 28:10). So the woman said, **"Whom shall I bring up unto thee?"** And he said, **"Bring me up Samuel"** (I Sam. 28:11).

THE WITCH FRIGHTENED OUT OF HER WITS (vv. 12-14)

"And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: And the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul." She may have inferred that Samuel would have answered the call of none inferior to the king. Or it may have been the divining demon told her it was really Samuel.

"And the king said unto her, Be not afraid; for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto

Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth." The word "gods" in this verse is *Elohim* in the Hebrew. This is the word for the Supreme Being throughout the Bible. Here it is used in a general sense of a supernatural appearance of the spirit of Samuel. Rotherham probably gives the best translation when he renders it: "A god saw I coming up out of the earth."

Was not the witch expecting to see at least a divining demon who would impersonate the prophet Samuel? Then why did she scream when she saw it was Samuel? Something had happened which greatly shocked and surprised the witch. What was it? It was the actual appearance of the spirit of the deceased prophet! She screamed out in horror! If she had done what she pretended she could do, the appearance would have been routine. But the unexpected happened---the only time in the Bible---a departed spirit actually appeared to communicate with the living!

Many able commentators and expositors do not believe that Samuel actually appeared. Men like John Gill, Matthew Henry, J. R. Graves, W. B. Riley take this position. But it seems to me that the Divine chronicle leaves no doubt that Samuel was really raised. Verse 12 says that the woman saw Samuel. Verse 14 says that Saul perceived it was Samuel. Verse 15 says that Samuel spoke to Saul. In verses 16 to 19 Samuel is seen rebuking Saul. Verse 20 says that Saul was afraid because of the words of Samuel. To deny that it was Samuel in my opinion is to impeach the integrity of the Word of God.

There is no hint that either the woman or a demon impersonated Samuel. After the appearance of Samuel the woman had no role

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Recently there has been an increase in "Christian" movies. Is it wrong to promote and go see these movies? - Email



There is a broad range that would fall under the Christian movie genre. From modern Hollywood putting their spin on Bible characters, to Charlton Heston portraying Moses or Ben Hur, to the inspirational movies on Hallmark television, etc. Like any other grab bag, there is some good and a lot of bad out there. A parallel could be drawn between "Christian" books and "Christian" movies. Each one is going to have to be judged, and ultimately stand or fall on their own merits or demerits. Start with the Bible as our inerrant guide and the books that do not teach what It teaches; that do not tell the stories that It tells, makes those books useless, and even deceitful and dangerous. The moving pictures must be judged on those same criteria. Selah! Think about it!

Some are obvious, that should be avoided and denounced, such as the recent Hollywood offerings concerning the flood and Noah. But that does not mean these great stories should not be told in epic proportions in both print and video media. The Creation Museum (among others) has put out many documentary films that are both informative and entertaining.

I wrote a book recently on

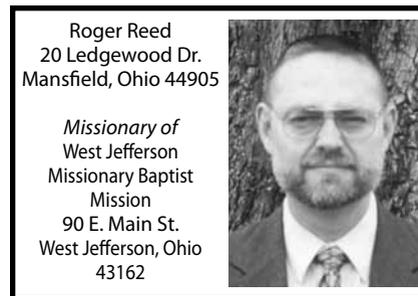
the flood and the parallels that must be drawn to our current generation that I would love to see put on the big screen and shown to as many folk in this world as possible! Beloved, there is nothing wrong with the moving pictures; there is something wrong with the moving picture industry in America, as a whole! If a Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Independent, Missionary Baptist child of God could be put in charge of producing a ream of movies on the Bible characters- what stories they could tell! To bring Jeremiah, Nehemiah, John the Baptist and the Apostle Paul to life on the big screen would thrill and inspire our generation and God would certainly be glorified. Selah! Think about it!

But, as God has not raised up that person (our fault, our lack of zeal, perhaps?), the Christian movie industry has been dominated by Arminians in their natural state of salvation by works. So virtually all movies have that distasteful slant in their story. The recently released movie "God's Not Dead" was a very good production showing a real-life scenario of how evolution can still be battled by both college students and church members. But, again, it was flawed by the easy believism philosophy that must be pointed out and defined to our younger generation.

The writing and printing of books has always been available to our Baptist authors and teachers, by reason of economics. But now, with the visual media expanding in so many areas,

perhaps it is coming within the reach of some of our technology-talented younger generation. **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him"** (Col. 3:16-17). It amazes me what one can do with just an iphone, much less the available resources of putting moving images to the glory of God.

Focus on the Family has done a fairly good job of bringing the biographies of famous Christians from years gone by to life, both on radio dramatics and also via the less expensive animated video (cartoon) genre. The Hallmark movie channel has the ability and aspires to touch our hearts with moral, relevant stories. How well it accomplishes that goal, again, cannot be an across the board endorsement or condemnation. Some are good; some are not. Some stick to conservative, fundamental Christian values; some are liberal and have an agenda that should be discerned and avoided. As always, parents should take a leadership role in what their children watch and see. **"As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God. ."** (I Thess. 2:11-13). Selah! Think about it! MATTHEW STEPP



The first thing we would suggest before we answer this question (which I have pondered much since we received it) is sit down and talk about it with your pastor.

With that said, the Scripture that comes to mind is Colossians chapter 2, especially (Colossians 2:16), **"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days."** But one needs to study the whole chapter to understand what Paul is talking about.

But to answer the question, my answer is no, it is not wrong, in my opinion to watch these movies, but I would caution on how you promote them. I like movies, but I hate the sin and corruption that Hollywood has promoted in film making, so I do not watch those. But I find it refreshing to know that there are Christians out there that are trying to make wholesome family movies.

The problem I have run into in the past is a lot of hypocrisy when it comes to going to the movies or buying a DVD to take home and watch. Is there a difference in going to the movie or buying a DVD? I personally do not think so. There are many Brethren out there who would not watch a single movie and never go to the picture show, or even buy a DVD regardless of what it was about. I commend them for it; most of them who would not watch movies do not even have a TV or they have a TV to watch

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. In the gospels Christ spoke “render therefore unto to Caesar?” If the government (Caesar) requires us to hand over our guns (swords, i.e. Luke 22:36) would we be wrong to refuse? - Mississippi

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Strictly speaking, the things we are to render unto Caesar in the context of Matthew 22:19-22 has to do with taxes, not guns. Jesus did instruct the disciples to buy a sword in Luke 22:36. I believe that every man has a right to defend himself, his family, and his property. However, the cause of Christianity has never counted on guns and ammo, but on the power of Almighty God. Ultimately, I am going to depend upon the Lord to direct my steps and protect my family.

Since the second amendment of the Constitution of the United States gives me the personal right to own and bear arms, the government would be in the wrong to attempt to take away my liberty. If it ever comes to the place that socialism and communism overrun our government, you better hold on to your guns because there will be a revolt. I will fight for my inalienable rights and my liberties much like our American forefathers did when they resisted British tyranny and oppression. I hope that day never comes, but I fear it may be approaching faster than many think. Hopefully the Lord will return soon (Titus 2:14).

TOM ROSS

Would it be wrong for us to refuse to pay taxes, or pay tribute? I now look to the Scriptures for guidance in questions like this. God never gives us opposing commands to follow. “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” (Rom. 13:1). Why do men despise government? Maybe because of the lack of Christian intelligence, God set them there, it is God’s doing.

“Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (Rom. 13:2). When the government decides to take guns, God’s Word says to obey the ordinance of God, if we disobey we will receive judgment from those we have disobeyed.

“For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom. 13:4). When laws are made to take away guns it would behoove the child of God to obey. I have done some research and have found

only a hand full of countries that have laws stating no civilians can have firearms in their possession. Most countries allow firearms for “home protection” and hunting purposes.

I want everybody to understand something, Jesus said to love thy neighbor, that love works no ill to thy neighbor, and to over come evil with good. Christian means to be Christ like, when did Christ refuse to obey the law?

When is having faith that God is in control of all things, all things (Ephesians chapter 1), not good enough, is God not able? When will we fully put our trust in Him to protect us from all harm and to be submissive to His will in our lives in this world. “**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose**” (Rom. 8:28). Let it be known that my understanding of this has not always been seated in the Scriptures. I have in the past used emotions and been led by my flesh to argue the opposite, and you will find others who will also. I now firmly believe that we are to arm ourselves with the mind of Christ, and you can have my sword of the Spirit when you pry my cold dead fingers from it, which is our only offensive weapon.

MIKE DEWITT

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Actually, there are two basic liberties that I would like to consider: 1) Religious liberty and 2) Civil liberty. The Bible is very clear on religious liberty that “..

we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). As John Leland put it in the 18th century: “Every man must give account of himself to God, and therefore every man ought to be at liberty to serve God in a way that he can best reconcile to his conscience. If government can answer for individuals at the day of judgment, let men be controlled by it in religious matters; otherwise, let men be free. ...It would be sinful for a man to surrender that to man which is to be kept sacred for God.”

When personal religious liberty is taken from us, the Bible clearly gives us only two options: 1) Stand for the truth, trusting God to deliver us: “**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up**” (Dan. 3:16-18). 2) Flee: “**But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come**” (Matt. 10:23).

But personal civil liberty has different connotations and thereby separate resources. Government is not the chiefest nor primary institution established by God. The family is by far the elder! Our duties and responsibilities to this original base of society, will trump and exceed our duties to our government when they clash discordantly. Note the response

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Forum #1

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preaching videos and that is it, and they do not have any kind of cable or satellite service. Then there are others who would not dare go to the movies but would buy the DVD, hypocrisy. You might hide that from others, but not God!

We are not going to defend ourselves here or get into a debate whether it is okay or not, because all would agree that you cannot, in this day and age, turn on the TV without seeing some kind of embarrassing show or commercial.

The one thing, though, I would caution on with even Christian movies is the Arminian overtones. The story line may be great but they are going to stick in the Free Will doctrine somewhere, but there is no religion outside of true Baptists that believe any different. If you want to promote that kind of movie make sure you tell who ever what to expect. I would love to see some true Baptist come along and tell a Bible story that was correct and Scriptural. I have even watched the History channel when they had some religious show on and they definitely do not have it right. What they do have is a bunch of unsaved professors trying to tell us what the Bible says. They are always wrong, but they do have a degree, I do not!

The other thing is, whether the movie was made by a true Christian or Hollywood. But even at that there are Christian movies I will not watch. For example, "The Passion of the Christ," the new movie "Noah" in fact any movie trying to portray Christ should not be seen, no one can take the place of Christ, and I do not want to see them try. The

History channel came out with a movie a few years ago about "Noah and the Ark," I did not see it but someone told me while the ark was floating about Noah was on the deck of the ark and here came a ship that had Lot in it. Really, are you serious, where is that in the Bible? The last movie that just came out "Noah" some friends went to see and they said the only thing accurate was they built an ark and there was a flood, other than that it was all fantasy. I have a 15 page article that tells why a Christian should NOT see "The Passion of the Christ!" It is too disgusting to talk about and I would question any Christian that has seen it! I did a lot of research on this movie and read many articles about it when it came out at the theaters.

But I believe there are good Christian movies out there, again that are refreshing and are good clean entertainment. God Bless!

ROGER REED

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It would be wrong for me personally because I rarely go to movies. I can not in good conscience recommend something I have never seen. As a general rule even the best theatrical productions of men are flawed when it comes to Christian themes. Most of the time there are glaring inconsistencies that do not line up with the Scriptures. With that said, if there is even a shred of Gospel truth that God may be pleased to use to arrest the attention of the lost my prayer is that the Lord will

lead them to seek out the truth of the Scriptures. I think all of us would be better served if we would "unplug" more and simply get alone with God to read and memorize the Scriptures, pray, and meditate. **"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper"** (Psa. 1:1-3).

TOM ROSS

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Good question, and here is Christian liberty exercised. I personally find some of these movies entertaining and also very instructive. I suppose there are others who are very much against them. I find no fault in them that will not watch these movies. Some of these movies have a good message, and the creators of some of these movies have a desire to please God. Have my children seen some of these movies? The answer is "yes." I use a lot of the situations in these movies as learning moments. I have stopped the movies and discussed what and why I believe this to be true or false.

MIKE DEWITT



Forum #2

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of the Hebrew midwives when ordered by the Egyptian regime to murder the sons of these Hebrew families. **"But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. ...Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses"** (Ex. 1:17, 20-21). Witness God's blessing of these "rebellious" women! God considered their rejection of "Caesar's commands" to be the righteous action! Selah! Think about it!

"And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: ...But she...hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof" (Jos. 2:3-6). Again, God blesses this higher regard of the sanctity of life instead of a blind obedience to an oppressive tyrant's demands! In I Samuel 16:2 the LORD gives His prophet an "out" by instructing him to purposely deceive the manipulations of another unreasonable autocrat: **"And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD."** Sacrifice, Samuel, as an outward act of righteousness, but ALSO perform the "rebellious"

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Forum #2

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action of anointing a king to replace the current despot! Take to the underground resistance and surreptitiously work to see a righteous king upon the throne, that will protect your freedoms and promote the common welfare!

In defending the name of Christ, Christians are to turn the other cheek and suffer persecution for His name's sake, but in defending our families (and ultimately good government), we are to stand with John Dickinson and the American revolutionaries: "Kings or parliaments could not give the rights essential to happiness... They are not annexed to us by parchments and seals. They are created in us by the decrees of Providence, which establish the laws of our nature. They are born with us; exist with us; and cannot be taken from us by any human power, without taking our lives. In short, they are founded on the immutable maxims of reason and justice." Selah! Think about it!

How will we know? **"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: ...Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour"** (Rom. 13:3, 7). God has ordained government, but He has not ordained that all government be GOOD government. Pharaoh and Egypt were such a case. **"And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. As yet exaltest thou**

thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go" (Ex. 9:16-17)? When government gets to the point where it intrudes upon our worship of God, or it denies its citizens the ability to live orderly and godly lives, it loses its right to demand our total respect, **"..honour to whom honour."** Selah! Think about it!

"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." So states the Second Amendment of our constitution. This is considered a fundamental right by most Americans, and rightly so. Sometimes we overlook the militia part of the amendment, as we assert the individual right to bear arms. But, down through the millennia of the ages, free societies have protected themselves with collectively armed citizens that individually knew how to use the weapons of their times. The nation of slaves, that was the children of Israel exiting Egypt were taught by Jehovah how to manufacture and wield weapons during their 40-year Exodus, to battle the inhabitants of the promised land (Exodus 17:9).

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8). More than just "bringing home the bacon" is meant by this passage. If the western frontiersman had neglected his training and marksmanship, then his family would be killed by enemies that considered him a "tenderfoot". Protection of our families is a NECESSARY and VITAL part of being a husband and father (in particular). Whether that protection comes from a rifle hanging over the front door, or the prudent purchase of a house

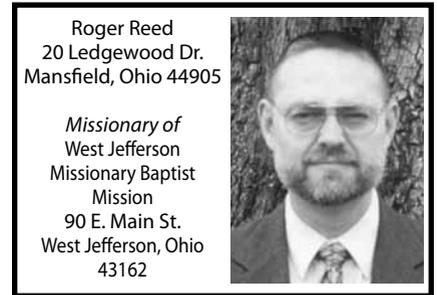
on the RIGHT side of the tracks in a well-policed neighborhood. Selah! Think about it!

But what if the neighborhood (America) becomes TOO well policed? What if the policies of the government put our families at risk by elevating criminal rights and restricting the rights of law-abiding citizens to reasonably defend themselves from increasingly dangerous times and towns? Does our responsibility to our families default to the ungodly government? NO! We would be **"worse than an infidel!"**

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). When the loss of our liberty becomes untenable, God's people will rise in rebellion of that tyranny! "... whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government." **"But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over**

Israel" (Judges 14:4). Just as God gave our forefathers "an occasion" for the American Revolution via the oppression of King George III, **"And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause"** (I Sam. 17:29)? Losing our right (and God-given mandate) to defend our families is such a cause! Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



This is a good question and one easy for me to answer since I have a few guns; I also have a concealed carry license. In fact, I just asked a good preacher friend of mine the same question and I do not believe he would mind if I gave the answer he gave me. Of course my memory is not as good as it used to be and it might not be verbatim, but it will be close.

As long as we have The Constitution of the United States we have a law that states: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Beloved, that is a law, and under that law, and as long as we have that law it would not be wrong for us to REFUSE to give up or handover our guns.

And though it sounds rough and tough, what Charlton Heston said, "I'll give you my gun when you pry (or take) it from my cold, dead hands." Is this something a Christian should be going around saying? I do not believe so! We have enough problems being Baptists; I do not believe we need

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Forum #2

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to add to it. But I will use the law to defend my right “to keep and bear Arms”!!

If I go to jail, I do not believe it will be because I was unwilling to give up my guns, but rather because I cease not to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified! God Bless!

ROGER REED



Saul and the Witch

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in what happened. The witch nor her spirit accomplice had nothing whatsoever to do with Samuel's sudden appearance. This incident is the only example in all Scripture where God permitted a deceased person to come back, as a spirit, to hold communication with the living. Others have come back from the dead, not as spirits, but raised persons. What happened in I Samuel 28 was a miracle of God which was never repeated! Evil spirits may impersonate the dead, but they cannot produce them!

“And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself” (v. 14).

SAMUEL'S MESSAGE OF DOOM (vv. 15-20)

“And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have

called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines” (I Sam. 28:15-20).

Saul had hoped for some encouraging words concerning the battle. Instead he has heard a message of gloom and doom. His army would be defeated. He and his sons would die in battle. His dynasty would come to an end and David would take the kingdom. **“Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night”** (I Sam. 28:20).

The witch was terrified by the thought that the king of Israel might be found dead or injured in her home, which would mean certain death for her. She begged him to take some food in order to revive his weakened body. Saul refused at first, but was eventually persuaded by the woman and his two servants to eat a full meal (I Sam. 28:21-25). Shortly he rose up and returned to the camps of his soldiers under the cover of night.

The next day witnessed the fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy. Saul's sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, were killed in the battle. Saul was sore wounded of the archers and fell upon his own sword to end his miserable life (I Sam. 31:1-6). I Chronicles 10:13-14 tells us why Saul died in battle: **“So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; And inquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.”** According to I John 5:18, there is a sin unto physical death in the case of a true believer. I believe that Saul committed that awful sin and God killed him for it.

LESSONS ABOUT THE SPIRITLAND

1. The souls of the righteous exist in another land after their body is buried. The spirit of Samuel existed and was called back by God even though separated from its body. His spirit was brought up from a state of quietness and rest from the Paradise section of Sheol.

2. The spirit of Samuel was knowledgeable. It recognized Saul and spoke with him. We learn from I Samuel 28:15-19 that Samuel not only knew what was happening on earth, but he knew what would happen in the future. He knew of the death of Saul and his sons. He could not have foretold these events unless he had learned them in the spiritland after his death. Hence we learn that the disembodied spirit of a righteous man is after death in a state of increased knowledge.

3. In I Samuel 28:19 the spirit of Samuel told Saul that the next day

he and his sons would die and join him in the spiritland. **“Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.”** This does not mean they will be buried in the same cemetery as some foolishly think. It means that at death the souls of the righteous go to join in holy communion and companionship with other departed spirits.

4. Here we learn the location of Sheol in the Old Testament. It was in the center of the earth. **“And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to BRING ME UP”** (emph. MRC)? It consisted of two compartments separated by the great gulf. On one side was Abraham's bosom or Paradise, and on the other was what we generally call Hell (Luke 16:19-31).

5. The disembodied spirit may wear clothes. Samuel's spirit was **“covered with a mantle”** (I Sam. 28:14). The souls under the altar in Revelation 6:10-11 were given white robes.

6. The spirit of Samuel when it came back seemed to have a very definite form. Saul said, **“What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle.”** Thus it must be that the disembodied spirit greatly resembles our present form.

LESSONS ABOUT SPIRITISM

1. Spiritism is not a modern philosophy. It did not begin with the Fox family of Rochester, New York, in 1848. Spiritism was a common practice in the land of Israel in the days of King Saul. It goes all the way back to the fall of man in Eden. The first materialization of a spirit that ever occurred came when Satan manifested himself as a serpent (Gen. 3).

Well did Kipling write:

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Saul and the Witch

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*"Oh, the road to Endor is the oldest road,
And the craziest road of all.
Straight it runs to the witch's abode
As it did in the days of Saul.
And nothing has changed of the sorrow
in store*

For such as go down on the road to Endor?"

2. Spiritism requires a medium for its manifestation. When Saul wanted to speak to Samuel he sought a female witch who had a divining demon and inquired of her. Today it is still the same. People are still seeking **"For the living to the dead"** (Isa. 8:19). It is strange, if what Spiritualists say is true, that the returning spirit does not speak himself without a medium as in the case of Samuel, whom God raised up for a special purpose. Why must the alleged returning spirits in a seance be shut up to raps on the table, or a rattle of the door? Where is the Scripture for such a thing?

3. Spiritism succeeds better in darkness than in the daylight. Saul went to visit the witch under the cover of darkness (I Sam. 28:8, 25). It is no compliment to any people that the religion which they profess prefers darkness. The more humbuggy one has, the less of the light he can afford to have (John 3:20-21). It would seem some prefer the darkness because in their religion they worship the Prince of Darkness.

4. Spiritism usually has a female as its medium. Saul sought **"a woman that hath a familiar spirit."** Margaret and Kate Fox were women. God's prophets are men, and almost without exception the mediums of spiritism are women! It is well to remember that the Devil attacked Eve instead of Adam. It appears from the Bible that a woman is more responsive to Satanic

influence than a man.

5. Spiritism is the resort of the saddened and God-forsaken as can be seen in the case of Saul. Most of the people who go to spiritualists go because they are overwhelmed with sorrow or saddened by some awful violation of God's law.

6. Spiritism does not have the power to bring back the spirits of the dead. Here is a glaring exposure of the fraudulency of this system. Only by a special miracle of God did Samuel appear. He appeared to the surprise and shock of the female witch. The Bible plainly teaches that the spirits of good persons cannot return to earth to minister in any way to the living. When David's baby died he declared: **"Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me"** (II Sam. 12:23). The same is true of the spirits of the wicked. Abraham told the rich man in Hell: **".neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence"** (Luke 16:26). Spirits cannot return to seance with surviving friends, or make raps, sounds, or signs. The spirits of the dead can no more return to earth than the living can go to the world of the spirits and return to earth.

7. Spiritism leads to despair and death for its disciples as it did in the case of Saul. Witches and wizards never tell troubled souls of the way of salvation by Christ. Hence their followers have no peace of mind and conscience. There is no light of Heaven in a seance. The rappings are unintelligible and the rattlings are empty sounds. No good can come from such things. For a true Christian to dabble in the occult is to engage in a sin for which God will kill him as He did Saul.



Are You A Joy to Your Pastor?

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

When the Lord calls upon your pastor as one who must give an account – not of himself, but of you, what kind of a report will he give? Somebody says, I never heard that my pastor must give an account of anyone other than himself. Somebody else says, I do not believe that! Every man will give an account of himself. Nobody is going to give a report to God about me – not even my pastor. Let us see what the Bible says, shall we? Hebrews 13:17 tells of this very thing. It will not be profitable for you if your pastor is not able to report joyfully about his relationship with you. Here are the words of God in this place: **"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."** A pastor or "bishop" **"must give account."** If your pastor's report about you and your relationship with him is **"with grief"** that will be **"unprofitable for you."**

Perhaps this is a new concept for you. Perhaps that is because the popular notion is that a pastor is supposed to be just a friend, or an errand boy, or a golf partner, or a fishing buddy. Many professing Christians are much like Herod. The Bible says about him: **"...Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and**

heard him gladly" (Mark 6:20). But in the end Herod had John the Baptist beheaded! His loyalties were not first to God and to God's man. It is easy to make much noise about loving God and being on His side, but when it comes down to actual service, not many professors are a joy to their godly pastor. Each God-called pastor has a fearsome responsibility. They have the oversight of the congregation they serve. And each congregation is made up of individuals. A servant they are, but a pastor is not to be a door mat. With responsibility comes accountability and authority. If a man is going to be accountable for something or someone he must have an appropriate degree of authority over the situation. God's pastors have authority to preach the Word and lead the congregation according to the Scriptures. They are overseers or managers under Christ. Thus they each have a congregation to manage, or oversee.

So we ask the question this way: what will your pastor say about you when he is called upon to report to the Lord about you? Will your pastor drop his head before the Lord and say something like this? "Well, Lord, I wish you had not asked me about him. I feel that I failed in ministering to him. Somehow I just could not reach him. He was cantankerous and disagreeable when I first met him and I left him in the same condition. He was worldly minded and never really serious about being faithful to the church. Lord, I guess I failed in that I just could not seem to help him grow and mature in spiritual things." That kind of report given by your pastor **"is unprofitable for you."** It is not unprofitable for your pastor! Do you understand that? It is you that will suffer

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Are You A Joy to

(Continued from page 253) ♦

the loss. Are you building gold, silver, or precious stones upon the foundation – the church of which you are a member? That is what portions of 1 Corinthians chapters 13 and 14 are all about. There Paul wrote: **“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire”** (I Cor. 3:13-15). You may say, “I do not like that.” But those verses are a part of God’s Word! I am sorry to tell you that some Baptists are going to be saved like a man running out of a burning house with nothing but the clothes on his back – and them ruined and singed and smelling like smoke.

Let us imagine that when the Lord calls upon your pastor to give an account and mentions your name your pastor’s face lights up with joy. What if your pastor says, “Lord, I am happy you asked me about this brother (or sister). They were always sweetly reasonable, ready to pitch in and do their part. They never gossiped or bickered with other members. I could always count on them being faithful both in attendance and giving. They prayed earnestly and held up my hands in every battle. They witnessed and invited folk to come and hear the Word preached. In every way, Lord, they were an encouragement and a help.” That will be profitable - not for your pastor, but for you! That is the picture portrayed to us in God’s Word. Will your pastor be joyful when he reports about you? Will

you profit from his report?

This puts things in a different light, does it not? Sound Baptists have always opposed free-lance preachers who operate apart from accountability to a church. The Bible opposes free-lance church members who will not serve Christ together and harmoniously in church capacity. We church members have a higher calling than to be renegades. We are to learn to labor together and to obey those whom God has given the oversight over us. They have our best interests at heart and are placed in their position by a sovereign God. Some Baptists are like Moses’ cousin Korah. Korah rebelled at the idea that his cousin was to rule over him! This man Korah and certain others in Israel rose up against their pastor (Moses) and said, **“Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD”** (Num. 16:3)? Now the Bible does not support the idea of dictator-pastors. But it does not support rebellion either. In fact, **“...rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...”** (I Sam. 15:23). The accusation of Korah and his followers was false. Moses was not a dictator. He was God’s man. He did not aggrandize power and prestige unto himself. In fact, Numbers 12:3 says of him: **“(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth).”** Korah and his crowd were lying rebels! Let us follow God’s leaders: God’s pastors! Let us live so that in the day when our pastor gives an account to God about us, **“they may do it with joy, and not with grief.”**



THE

BIBLE 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.

MISSOURI LAWMAKERS OVERRIDE VETO TO ENACT ABORTION WAIT PERIOD (WNS)--The Missouri state legislature enacted a 72-hour wait period for abortions in early September, overriding Gov. Jay Nixon’s veto from earlier this year. The Democratic governor had previously vetoed the legislation because it did not include exceptions for rape and incest. Missouri passed a 24-hour wait period in 2003 that also did not include rape and incest exceptions. The governor labeled the new bill “extreme and disrespectful” toward women. The law places Missouri in second place for most stringent wait-period laws. North Dakota’s 72-hour wait period, the strictest in the country, does not include weekends or holidays. Utah follows Missouri; its 72-hour wait period allows exceptions for rape, incest, and other extreme circumstances. Missouri’s bill passed with bipartisan support, despite an attempted filibuster by Democratic senators. The vote was 117-44 in the House and 23-7 in the Senate.

AIR FORCE WILL NOT LET ATHEIST AIRMAN SKIP GOD IN ENLISTMENT OATH (WNS)--The Air Force has given an atheist airman until November to take his enlistment oath, which includes the phrase “so help me God.” If he refuses, he will not be allowed to rejoin his unit. Atheist groups have taken up the unnamed airman’s cause, but he may find himself caught in a battle over the separation of powers between the executive and legislative

branches. The American Humanist Association (AHA) has written to inspectors general for the Air Force and Creech Air Force Base in Nevada, arguing the airman’s constitutional rights have been violated. The airman’s terms of service expire in November, and AHA claims his commanding officers rejected his written re-enlistment oath on Aug. 25 because he crossed out the words “so help me God.”

COLORADO STUDENTS SKIP SCHOOL TO SUPPORT REVISIONIST HISTORY COURSE

(WNS)--In an act of protest, students and teachers in Jefferson County, Colo., are skipping school. Students claim they are walking out due to their school board’s planned review of the proposed new AP History curriculum. For the past week, large groups of students at a majority of the district’s 17 high schools have left school, waving flags, banners, and protest signs. “My mom is very proud of me, that I am standing up for what I believe,” 16-year-old Vanessa Ridge said. The new version of AP History deviates radically from its predecessor, omitting key historical figures and events such as Benjamin Franklin, Martin Luther King and D-Day. Instead, it emphasizes oppression, conflict, and America’s more divisive events, effectively sanitizing the record of many of America’s most foundational moments, trends, and notable citizens.

SANDY HOOK COMMISSION
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Bible & the Newspaper

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CALLS FOR HOMESCHOOL OVERSIGHT

(WNS)--A Connecticut government task force wants to give special educators with public schools the power to veto homeschooling parents' education plans. The *Connecticut Post* reports the state has placed increased scrutiny on its roughly 5,000 homeschoolers since the December 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, where 20 students and six educators died. The shooter, Adam Lanza, 20, was diagnosed in 2005 with Asperger's syndrome. High school exacerbated his struggles, which included "extreme anxiety and discomfort with changes, noise, and physical contact with others," a state attorney's report said. Lanza's mother, whom he also killed, began homeschooling him in about 10th grade with the aid of Newtown High School so he could graduate in 2009 with a public school diploma.

COURT ALLOWS TEXAS TO ENFORCE CLOSING OF ABORTION CENTERS

(WNS)--Texas can immediately start enforcing new protections for women and unborn children, a federal appeals court said Oct. 2, overturning another judge's ruling that blocked the regulations days before they were set to take effect. The rules are part of the sweeping abortion reform law called HB2 that Gov. Rick Perry signed in 2013. They require abortion centers in Texas to have hospital-like facilities with operating rooms, air filtration systems, and other standards that are typically mandated in surgical settings. Supporters of the measure said it would protect women's health, but U.S. District Judge Lee Yeakel ruled Aug. 29—three days the regulations were supposed to be implemented—that it created an "impermissible obstacle as applied to all women

seeking a previability abortion."

TEXAS AG: SERMON SUBPOENA IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

(WNS)--Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott on Oct. 15 called on Houston Mayor Annise Parker and City Attorney David Feldman to relent on subpoenas demanding pastors' sermons and private communications.

"Whether you intend it to be so or not, your action is a direct assault on the religious liberty guaranteed by the First Amendment," Abbott wrote in a letter to the city leader. He called on the mayor to avoid even the appearance of intimidation.

The five subpoenaed pastors are part of a group opposing the city in a lawsuit over a petition drive to get an LGBT rights ordinance on the ballot. The detailed subpoena ordered the pastors to hand over all sermons and electronic communications with congregants containing opinions on homosexuality and gender identity.

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, the five pastors, and their Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys joined dozens of other supporters Thursday at Houston's First Baptist Church to demand the city withdraw the subpoenas. "Caesar does not have jurisdiction over the pulpit," Cruz said. "And when you subpoena one pastor, you subpoena every pastor."

Others insisted the case is a crucial test of American protections for religious liberty. "A church should not be required to have the government sign off on their pastor's sermons," the Family Research Council declared, urging supporters to sign a petition of solidarity. By Thursday afternoon, 22,000 people had. Liberty Institute President Kelly Shackelford said the subpoenas resemble the ways Nazis looked for incriminating evidence against preachers under its infamous

Muzzling Order.

Feldman and Parker did backtrack on the subpoenas Wednesday afternoon, claiming they did not know about them. But Feldman, calling the idea that he wants to suppress dissent "ridiculous," maintained the pastors are relevant to the case and said some type of narrowed subpoena will remain.

The city claims the lawsuit is about whether petitioners had enough valid signatures, so any communication about the process is fair game as the city seeks to make its case as to whether petitioners broke the rules. Opponents, though, say the lawsuit is about Feldman misusing his powers to disqualify the petition days after the city secretary found more than enough signatures to get the referendum on the ballot.

Parker and Feldman have yet to defend the subpoena's demand for documented proof of the petition drive's finances, any communications surrounding the arguments that men can use women's bathrooms under the ordinance—an interpretation Parker says is a lie—and four pages of other itemized inquiries.

Such items are irrelevant to the case and amount to harassment, said Alliance Defending Freedom attorney Erik Stanley. ADF argues the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled government can violate a First Amendment freedom through intended or unintended harassment, even if it does not formally treat speech as illegal.

But despite Parker and Feldman's attempt to distance themselves from the documents, the subpoena remains in place. Officials hinted Wednesday that the city would narrow the subpoenas at "an upcoming court hearing"—but none is scheduled, Stanley told me.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS CHINESE CRACKDOWN ON CHURCHES CONTINUES

WITH ARRESTS, DETENTIONS

(WNS)--During a house church service in China's Guangdong province in September, 200 police barged in and arrested more than 100 church members, including children, according to International Christian Concern (ICC). The raid was a surprise for the 170-member Mount Olivet Church of Foshan City, which has been around for nearly 20 years. Most of the congregants were released after about 10 to 20 hours, but 30 people were kept for more than 24 hours. "We do not know exactly why they raided our church," a church member told ICC. "The government does not want us to get together and worship as a church." A detainment notice left by police claimed the church was conducting an illegal gathering and spreading an "evil cult."



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

We have always heard that to get ahead in life depends not on what you know, but who you know. When it comes to salvation, that's right on the bullseye. We are not saved because of what we know about Jesus and the Bible; we are saved because we know the Jesus of the Bible.

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (I John 5:20).

How Bad Off Are We?

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

We ask the question in our title, "How Bad Off Are We? We mean by that question, how bad off are we as human beings? Much has been preached and printed about man's goodness and his ability. There has been so much of this kind of preaching that the general public believes that there is some kind of a spark of the divine in man that makes him good or at least able to do good. Along with this is the idea that man's will is free to choose to do good. In spite of all the evil of every sort that is in the world around us, some people still think man is basically good. The idea of man's being a free moral agent has been perverted into the popular doctrine of man's free will. That man is a free moral agent is not denied, but that his will is free is quite a different matter. Carried to the extreme as it is today, human beings are viewed as being well able to freely choose whether or not to serve God or their base desires. To most Baptists today, whether or not a person is born again is a matter of his or her choice. Further along in this piece we shall show that man's will has absolutely nothing to do with the new birth. But first, consider this: man, being a pleasure seeking creature seeks those things and activities that please him. Fast cars, boats, motorcycles and the like tickle the fancy of some and so they devote themselves to those things. Others are more in love with sexual pleasure and pursue the gratification of those desires in a myriad of ways. Still others

may love comforts, possessions, wealth, or taste sensations and so devote themselves to these pursuits. Others are devoted to either watching organized sports or to hunting, fishing, etc. as the chief thing in their lives. Many are the idols of lost men and women! In spite of the wicked desires of the natural man, those who try to maintain the free will doctrine claim that man's will is somehow independent of all that is fallen in man. To them, it is as if the desire for pleasure has no bearing upon the choices that the individual makes. We think this is a delusion. We think they have not been shown themselves for if they had, they would say with Job of old, **"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"** (Job 42:5-6). Such hatred of one's self has been the experience of this preacher and we think of all those whom God has made alive spiritually. The modern idea is to love yourself, but when God comes in the new birth, men hate their sinfulness. We say this because spiritual sight accompanies spiritual life. This spiritual kind of seeing resulted in Job's hatred of himself as a sinner and in his repentance or turning to God from sin seeking deliverance. This kind of repentance is an integral part of New Testament gospel preaching. John the Baptist preached repentance (see Matthew 3:2) and after learning of John's imprisonment, the Lord Jesus took up the same message as is clearly stated in Matthew 4:17. Furthermore, Paul preached **"...repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Acts 20:21). Many modern religionists have abandoned the preaching of repentance and substituted mere

intellectual belief. But back to the will. Human reasoning will never settle the matter as to whether or not man's will is absolutely free or not. We suppose that men have debated this issue from time immemorial. Let us hasten to God's Word. Let us agree that regardless of our opinions, our past teaching and our sense of what ought to be, we will allow God's Word to settle the matter. In seeking an answer to just how bad off man is, let us pose the question this way: do lost sinners have the ability to come to Christ in a saving way apart from the new birth? Can lost sinners come to Christ by their own ability? Or, are lost sinners totally unable to do anything toward their new birth? This is the issue. The issue is not whether man has a will or not. The issue is how did the fall of our father Adam affect his posterity. What damage did it do to mankind? Did the fall of Adam affect men's intellects? The answer is obvious if we ask this question: do lost men ever think evil thoughts? Again we ask, did the fall of Adam affect men's affections or emotions? Ask yourself, did you ever love the wrong thing? And so we come to the matter of man's will. Do the fallen sons of Adam ever choose to do the wrong things? And why is that? It must be because the fallen nature of each person affects the intellect, emotions and – yes – even the will of all men.

The prophet wrote, **"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil"** (Jer. 13:23). New Testament teaching agrees, for Paul wrote, **"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see**

another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:21-23). Even the born again ones – the true children of God – find they are not free from their fallen nature and that their fallen nature affects their wills. As much as they desire to do so, they cannot do only good! **"Evil is present"** with or in each human being. Is man's will free, then? If it is, it is not the determining factor for what men do. **"Evil is present."** And evil is present not only in the regenerated child of God, but in the lost sinner as well. So then we must conclude that whatever else you may say, men are bound by that sin nature – that there is something Paul called **"evil"** that is present within each of them. And Paul stated clearly that this **"evil"** keeps even Christians from doing only good. This **"evil"** causes men to exercise their wills toward doing evil. Is this freedom of the will? If the will is affected or influenced or controlled by this **"evil"** then the will is not truly free.

The Holy Spirit through Paul revealed more to us about this **"evil"** that is always present with us. Here are some facts about lost sinners that bear directly on the subject of that **"evil."** He wrote in another place: **"...the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"** (Rom. 8:7-9). This **"carnal mind"** – the natural or lost man's mind – first of all **"is**

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How Bad Off Are

(Continued from page 256) ♦

not subject to the law of God! Men are rebels against God! Secondly, it cannot be subject or submissive for the apostle wrote, **“neither indeed can be.”** Because of this Paul reasons, those who are yet lost in sin **“cannot please God.”** That is a plain and clear statement. Lost sinners can do nothing that pleases God! Argue with that if you will, but if you do, you are arguing with God! We ask these questions: does repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ please God? Obviously the answer is yes. Then, according to the Word of God, the lost man cannot repent and believe for he cannot please God. A man must have the Spirit of God dwelling in him in order to repent and believe. Only those who have been born again by the Holy Spirit of God can please God! With this truth perishes all those humanistic ideas of modern religion that say that God will birth a sinner into His family if they will do this or that or the other thing.

Consider two things: first of all the metaphorical language that describes regeneration as a new birth. Today’s religion, in the main, says that there is something a lost sinner can do to bring about his new birth. Such an idea violates the very concept of a birth. The baby is a participant in its birth, but it is not causative. It is the mother who labors to deliver the infant. The baby does not labor or do anything to birth himself nor is his birth the result of his doing something. The second thing to consider is the parable the Lord told about the lost sheep. Lost sheep do not seek the shepherd nor do lost spiritual sheep seek the Good Shepherd.

It is the Good Shepherd who knows exactly where His lost sheep is and goes to it and brings it successfully back home. And further to this point, God says about lost sinners, **“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God”** (Rom. 3:11). Men may seek after Heaven or seek to escape Hell. They may seek a better life. They may seek to be religious and to have a good reputation, but no lost sinner seeks after God. If they do, God is a liar!

But what about coming to Christ for salvation? Did not Christ Himself invite men to come to Him? Certainly He did. But neither commands to do a thing or invitations imply the ability of a person to obey the command or to avail themselves of an invitation. We may invite someone to a social event knowing full well that they cannot come for one reason or another. They are welcome to come. We have done nothing to keep them from coming. We wish them no evil and would do them good, but their interests for whatever reason will not motivate them to come. Or perhaps they are ill or handicapped in some way so as not to be able to accept the invitation. Except for Jews who are judicially blinded (see II Corinthians 3:14-16) God has done nothing to keep lost sinners from coming to Christ. (Even among the Jews there was in Paul’s day a remnant elected by grace according to Romans 11:5 and we hope that there is such a remnant today). So the issue is not that God keeps sinners from coming to Christ, but rather that sinners lack the ability to come in a saving way to Him. This the Lord Jesus stated in no uncertain terms in John 6:44 where we read, **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me**



draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” A somewhat similar statement by the Lord is found in verse 65 of that same chapter: **“And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”** The word “can” means to have the ability. (The word “may” means to have permission to do something). The Lord Jesus did not say that men did not have permission to come to Him. He said they did not have the ability! Now then this idea may be new to you because so many preachers and religious organizations are built upon the false idea that man has the ability to come to Christ. It is generally believed that lost sinners have the ability to do something in order to bring about their new birth. But it just “Ain’t so!”

In another place Paul tells us why lost men cannot profitably

receive the Word of God. We insert this here because so many people have the idea that if the Word is preached or read, a lost person can reasonably be expected to receive it and profit spiritually from it apart from any special work of God in that individual. Because of this, modern Baptists often depend on especially persuasive preachers whom they call “evangelists” to come and “get folk saved.” But the Bible says that lost sinners will not and cannot receive Bible truth in a spiritually profitable way. Consider this: **“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;**

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comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:12-14). Notice that Paul says that we (true children of God) have received the Spirit of God. Then he says the result of this is that we can (have the ability to) know the things **"freely give to us of God."** May we insert here that things earned or bartered for with God are not freely given. If a sinner can trade his obedience or some deed for the new birth, then the new birth is not freely given! Paul goes on to say that these are the things **"we"** (Paul and his coworkers) preach in words that the Holy Ghost teaches. Then – and here is where most professing Christians want to argue and disagree with God's Word – for next Paul says that the **"natural man"** (unchanged, those not born again) do not receive or will not receive such truth. Why? Because the things of the Spirit, i.e., the message of grace which he calls the things freely given to us, is foolishness to those not born of the Spirit. Then Paul drops the bomb, as we may say. Next he writes, **"neither can he know them."** (Remember, "can" means to have the ability. So God is saying that lost men lack the ability to know the things Paul preached. Why? Because such things are only known by the man that has been born of the Spirit of God, i.e., they are spiritually discerned. A man whose spirit is dead cannot discern the truth of God and so it does him no good spiritually.

Let us close with a brief

recapitulation. We have said these things and furnished Scripture to back up our statements. Lost men do have a will, but that will is not absolutely free. It is subject to the fallen nature of the man. **"Evil is present"** and thus the freedom to do good is foreign to the sinner. Next we noticed that the mind of a lost man is **"enmity against God."** It is not and indeed cannot be subject to God and His law. In light of this a lost man can do nothing to please God. Regardless of his so-called free-will he cannot – he does not have the ability – to please God in any way whatsoever. Next we looked at the fact that no man has the ability to come to Christ except God the Father draws him and those drawn by the Father are promised a blessed resurrection. This last statement proves that this verse does not mean that God tries to draw all men, for all men will not participate in a blessed resurrection. And finally we pointed out that no lost man can profitably receive the Word of God. Paul said that lost people regard the Bible as foolishness! In fact Paul wrote it is impossible for the lost person to understand God's Word: he wrote, **"neither can he know them"** speaking of the things Paul and his coworkers spoke – the **"things of the Spirit of God."** So, a man cannot do good, he cannot please God for he is **"enmity against God."** A lost sinner cannot – does not have the ability – to come in a saving way to Christ. And he cannot understand God's Word in a spiritually profitable way. Could the picture be any blacker? Lost men may not be as bad as they could be, but they are as bad off as they could be! So the answer to our title which is a question is this: lost sinners could not possibly be worse off. In fact, their

spirits are dead. We know this because Paul wrote to the born again children of God in Ephesus saying, **"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"** (Eph. 2:5-9). The new birth is giving life to those who were spiritually dead.

A dead man cannot raise himself from that dead state. A spiritually dead man cannot make his spirit alive for it is dead within him while he lives. Salvation is by grace. It is a gift bestowed upon certain sinners – chosen sinners – in the same fashion as intellectual gifts or musical gifts or artistic gifts are bestowed upon babes while yet in the womb. A great musician may have improved his gift, but he did nothing to get it. Someone else decided that he would be so gifted! John describes for us the new birth which is that gift of spiritual life necessary to salvation and the initial part of it in our experience. He wrote of those who received Christ and told us why they received Him. He wrote, **"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"** (John 1:13). Whatever you may say about the will of man, the new birth into God's family has nothing to do with it. The new birth is not brought about by **"the will of man, but of God."** Who can argue with such a clear statement?

Have you been born again? Have you received spiritual life?

Give the glory all to God. The Bible counsels us how to look upon whatever we have and are. It says, **"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it"** (I Cor. 4:7)? Have you received eternal life by coming to Christ? If so, you did not come apart from the Father's drawing and all those whom He draws shall participate in a blessed resurrection. And since you received all spiritual blessings as a bestowal, a gift, why do you act as if you did something to earn or qualify for these blessings? Give the glory to God! If you are somehow different from this lost world's population it is because God made you different! Like as God found Israel, so He found you. Consider what God said about Israel: **"And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live"** (Ezek. 16:4-6). That is a picture of individual sinners to whom God gives spiritual life. It is God who passes by and sees whom He would save and says, **"Live"** and they live! Give all the glory for your salvation to God! None of it belongs to you!



“Let Us”

By Donnie Burford
of Irvine, Kentucky

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:24-25).



We as Baptists are very familiar with our text. Most often it is used to remind church members of their God-given responsibility to faithfully attend church services. Indeed this truth is supported by our text, but I believe it would do us all well to consider the broader context of verses 1-23 as to why we should be faithful to attend church.

The passage seems a very practical lesson to those early Christians who were primarily Jews and were struggling with the transition between the Old Covenant practices they had so long followed and the New Covenant they now professed by faith to believe and walk in.

The writer, by contrast, compares the Old, insufficient Covenant with the superior and full aspects of the New. He does this first by comparing the continual nature of the sacrifices of the Old with the superior and final sacrifice of Christ under the New. (read vs. 1-10.)

He continues his comparing

by contrast by next looking at the Old Covenant's office of the priesthood and laying it alongside of the superior truth of Christ being now our great high priest. (read vs. 11-14.)

His final defense of this truth is an appeal to the fact that, although his teaching was inspired, the Holy Spirit witnessed to the truth of what he was saying, for in fact the Holy Spirit had already confirmed all he was writing. It was no new truth but a truth long ago revealed (read vs. 15-18, also read Jeremiah 31:33-34).

In regards to all this being the truth, he concludes his presentation by giving them the practical and expected result (read vs. 18-21). So as the children of God, and knowing and believing these truths that have been revealed, we have been assured of the superiority of the New and eternal covenant over the Old, temporal and insufficient. Yes, we who through faith have received the blood atonement that Christ made once for all for us, and we who know we now have a perfect and holy great High Priest who continually intercedes for us. Yes, we now know we have the privilege the Jew never had under the old way, that being, we can now in full assurance at any and all times, enter into the very presence of God our Father through Jesus Christ.

Today we, as Christians, being so far removed from the mandates of the Old Covenant do not have much trouble separating ourselves from it. Having seen by faith the superior realities of the new and living way that in Christ has been revealed and given to us. Thus we, by faith and in full

assurance follow Him. Do We Not?

Do we really know these truths? Do we really, by faith believe these truths. You see the writer goes on to show the validity of their and our faith is assured by the manner in which our lives respond to these facts. A professed faith, with out the natural resulting life acts that are to follow, is no assurance of true salvation (James 2:26) The writer gives three expectations that are to be seen and experienced when true faith has been obtained. These three expected realities in the life of a believer are each introduced in our text by the phrase, “let us.” In essence, he is saying we who have truly believed should respond in such manners that reveal the reality of our true and God-given faith.

“Let us” (vs. 21-22). We who have truly believed draw near or nigh unto God with a true heart that has been established in the faith. This is exactly what those in James 4:8-10 were exhorted to do. Under the Old Covenant, a Jew was always restricted from the holy of holies, from the very presence of God but we, who by faith have been cleansed and been given a new heart will, by the reality of our new nature and standing, draw nigh unto God. This is the first of responses that those who have received true faith will fulfill.

“Let us,” (vs. 23) speaks to those who have a sure hope, they knowing the promises of God given them under the New Covenant have a persevering assurance that what they by faith have received, God will perform. They do not waver or do anything that would let them draw back to the old ways,

◊ (Continued on page 260)

BЕРЕА BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 9-1-2014 to 9-30-2014

Beginning Balance	\$7,391.65
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary Ind. B. C., Everson, WA	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
.....	525.00
TOTAL	7,916.65
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	454.98
Program production	195.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	649.99
.....	7,266.67
Interest07
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,266.74



BЕРЕА BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 9-1-2014 to 9-30-2014

Beginning Balance	\$1,852.69
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	50.00
B.C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	25.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Carol Willitt, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Jerry Dodson, Denham Springs, LA	5.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	25.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	85.00
Anonymous	1,210.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,545.95
TOTAL	\$5,398.64
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	670.55
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Supplies	81.50
Total Expenditures	\$3,868.01
.....	1,530.63
Bank charge	-13.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,517.63

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On October 12, 2014, the Grace Missionary Baptist Church in Cork County, Ireland was organized with eleven charter members who were lettered out in good standing with authority from The Lord's Baptist Church in Tacoma, Washington. The council of Elders at the organizational meeting were Elder Larry Killion, pastor of The Lord's Baptist Church and Elder Robert Ellis, Missionary to Ireland sent under the authority of The Lord's Baptist Church. The newly organized congregation called Elder Robert Ellis as pastor and he accepted the call. The new church adopted the Church Constitution, Church Covenant, and Articles of Faith held by TLBC.

The Community Missionary Baptist Church of Mansfield, LA is in need of a pastor. The church believes and preaches the Doctrines of Grace and church truth. Any interested elder should contact Bro. Ray Darden at (318) 567-3961 or (318) 364-6302 or former pastor Elder Garthel L. Burr at (318) 872-3742.

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH is in need of a pastor. Any interested candidates possessing the qualifications and traits concerning the office as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are asked to contact either of the following: Bro. Randy Coffey at (614) 871-2406 or email recoffeypot@aol.com, or Bro. Joe Vass at (614) 846-8699 or email jami joe@wowway.com.

The Glade Creek Baptist Church, Summersville, WV is in need of a pastor. This church

believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and church truth. Any interested Elder should call Bro. Rodney Perkins at (304) 742-3050 or Bro. Allen Frame at (304) 742-5775.

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

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

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is in need of a replacement pastor. Elder Raymond T. Ellis is the current pastor, but due to his age, is needing to resign. The church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and the local church. Any interested Elder may contact Elder Ellis at (618) 983-8697 or Bro. Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228.

The Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church of Hamilton, OH is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Organized in 1938, the church

holds to historic Baptist truths, including the Doctrines of Grace. Please visit the church's website at <http://twinbrook.net> to view the Church Constitution and other items that describe our beliefs and show what the church is doing today. Please contact Bro. Chris Willis at Elohimfirst@gmail.com for more information.

Any church that is without a pastor, please feel free to send your information in regards to the pastoral position for publication in these announcements.



"Let Us"

(Continued from page 259) ♦

either of the Old Covenant or their old nature.

"Let us," (vs. 24) may be the greatest proof of the sincerity of our having received the true faith, is love. Those who have been given by faith a true love for God will show it in their love for others. That being especially true as it is manifested towards those who have received like faith. As we live out our faith and hope, we do so with the motive of encouraging others or provoking others of the faith, our brothers and sisters in Christ, to do the same. True faith loves God and if this is

possessed, then it will normally result in its manifestation towards the brethren (I John 4:15-21, etc.).

Thus in consideration of the broader context, we who have true faith in Christ, we who have a sure and steadfast hope, we who truly love God and the brethren, especially knowing of our Lord's soon and certain return for us, manifest our true profession and possession of eternal life by "**not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**" This is the natural result of those who have truly entered in to the new and living way. It is the manner of life of those who are truly possessed of the Spirit of God. They assemble themselves together to worship, serve and encourage one another in the way (Acts 2:41-47).

Simply stated then, according to the rule of Scripture, those who have true faith, true hope and a true love, manifest the reality of it by going to church. It may be my friend, this explains a lot about the present spiritual condition of a host of church members who profess salvation but rarely find time to attend the house of God. Maybe it explains a lot about your unfaithfulness. Those who have truly believed do these things, do you? If not, maybe you should consider the consequences revealed as the alternative to those who draw back showing they had never truly believed (vs. 26-39). And second, you may, even though you profess to be in the faith, consider the admonition of II Peter 1:10. Are you sure? Then "**Let us,**" by the grace of God, continue in the faith.



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