

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

The Hour Is Come

By Paul Stepp

Indore, West Virginia

Our text today is John 12:23-33. As you would surmise from the title of our message today, our text relates to us some events that occur just before our Saviour and God goes to the cross of



Paul Stepp

Calvary. The Lord delivers this discourse in response to a question that is posed to Him by Andrew and Philip. In vv. 20-21 we find that there were **"certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast."** These Greeks came to Philip **"and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus."** So, we find in v. 22 that Andrew and Philip tell Jesus that these men wanted to see Jesus. In v. 23 we read, **"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."**

At first glance this might seem to be a strange response to men that desired to see Him. However, I think that Jesus is telling these men, and all that would hear Him, that this is the time that all creation has anticipated. Now is the time **"that the Son of man should be glorified."**

There had been other occasions when the children of men had desired to see Him and had desired works to be performed that they might marvel at Him. In John 2:4 the Lord tells His mother, **"...mine hour is not yet come."** In John 7:6 Jesus tells His brethren, **"My time is not yet come:"** The Lord was

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Spiritual Adultery

By Billy Holbrook

Oblong, Illinois

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:27-28). **"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye**



Billy Holbrook

adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:3-4).

I believe that most of us understand what the Lord Jesus is teaching us in Matthew 5 about adultery: that adultery can be committed by lusting after someone in our hearts. James said that they didn't get what they asked for, because they asked that they may consume it upon their lusts and then he called them **"adulterers and adulteresses."** He is not speaking in the book of James about adultery against our husbands and wives but adultery against God. I do not have a complete handle on what all is spiritual adultery but I do believe that it is more often committed than what we would like to admit. Just like adultery against our spouse is committed more than we would like to admit. I hope and pray that this message will help us to guard our hearts against

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Studies in Esther 3:7-15

By Jeff Short

Mantachie, Mississippi

In our previous study, we took note of the conspiracy that arose to kill King Ahasuerus. The Lord brought it to naught by making the thing known to Mordecai. He informed Esther and Esther told the king. In the end, this action by Esther, prompted by Mordecai, endeared the queen to the king's heart even more. Mordecai jeopardized his own security to save the king; this also endeared him to the king's heart.

We also read how that Haman was promoted. He was advanced and his seat was set above all the princes that were with him. Now, Haman was the son of Hammedatha the Agagite. He came from



Jeff Short

the lineage of the reigning royals of the Amalekites and king Agag. In the Old Testament, God had pronounced a curse upon all Amalek. There was a bitter enmity between the Jews and the Amalekites. Haman, true to his heritage, was also a bitter enemy to the Jews.

His promotion brought him to a place of great power, which made it possible for

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Christian Perfection

By Arthur W. Pink

(1886 - 1952)

Let me first restate the four principal points, which occupied us this morning. First, there is an evangelical perfection in contrast from



A. W. Pink

that absolute perfection which the law demands, God in His grace accepting from His people (through Christ) sincere obedience of the heart: that genuine desire and sincere effort to please Him in all things. Second, relative

perfection in contrast from absolute: this is what distinguishes the Christian from the non-Christian. Third, perfection of parts, that is, the adding of one grace to another, so that a well-rounded Christian character and conduct is developed. Fourth, perfection of degrees, that is, growth from spiritual babyhood to youth, and from youth to full maturity. It is after the third and fourth we should daily and prayerfully strive.

By way of application, let me point out, first, that the Christian

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The Message of Missions

By Milburn Cockrell

(1941 - 2002)

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

Here are the marching orders of the Lord's church. She is to go and preach to every human creature who is capable of receiving the gospel. It is to be preached in all places, to all persons, in all generations. It is the business of the church to send the glad tidings up and down the world.

But what message shall the



Milburn Cockrell

missionary carry? What truths in the Scripture will be used by God to make disciples? What shall the herald of the way of salvation cry to his hearers? What certain sound shall the gospel trumpet players make?

The Gospel

The text indicates that the church is to preach the gospel. But just

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April 5, 2004

Volume XXIV, Number IV
Whole Number 301Temporary Editor: Christopher Cockrell
Editor in Training: Jeff Short
Foreign Correspondent: Curtis Pugh

THE BEREA 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 BEREA 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

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

PLANNING TO MOVE? Notify us three weeks in advance. The post office will only forward periodical mail for 90 days. They charge us \$.70 for each "change of address" they have to send us. Please save us this expense and the post office time.

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.

EDITOR'S PHONE: 1-662-282-7794.

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Studies in Esther

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him to seek to destroy all of the Jewish people. Had he remained in his former station he may have had the desire to kill them, but he would have been powerless to destroy a whole nation of people. His rise to power then was certainly according to God's providence.

The king so favored Haman that he decreed that all of the people of the kingdom were to reverence Haman. Mordecai refused to do the commanded reverence. His refusal caused Haman's wrath to be kindled. He first **"thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone"** (Est. 3:6). As his hatred continued to stir, he **"sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus"** (Est. 3:6). In the verses under our present consideration, we read of Haman scheming to accomplish his heinous, large-scale crime.

Verse 7 – "In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of

king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar."

Haman and his cohorts cast lots. They were making an appeal to their heathen gods to determine the best day for them to plan this execution of the Jewish people.

Casting lots was a common practice among pagans in history. They would cast lots to entreat their false gods to determine what was most favorable in their sight. They would seek direction for their plans. This pagan practice is still alive today. Many today consult their horoscopes, fortunetellers, card readings, or perhaps they may call online psychics. Many today want to know what is in the stars for them, rather than wanting to know God who made the stars.

Haman was casting lots to determine the best time to set for the destruction of the Jewish people. Notice, Haman does not inquire of the gods whether the thing should even be done. Haman does not have any problem or reservations about that. It was settled in his mind. He determined that the Jewish people ought to be destroyed because he had a contention with one man that was a Jew.

The lot fell upon the twelfth month, Adar. So, the mass execution would occur a little over eleven months from the time they cast the lots. Haman relied on the direction of the gods for his plans, yet he was ignorant of the providence of God. He entreated blind, deaf, dumb, imaginary deities and thought he received their blessing to his intended course of action. He did not know, **"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD"** (Pro. 16:33). Even though he sought direction from the heathen oracles, these events were actually ordered by God and Haman was totally ignorant of that fact.

Verses 8-11 – "And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all the people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them" (Est. 3:8). Haman pitched his proposal before king Ahasuerus. He chose his words carefully and never identified the nationality of the people. It may not have made any difference to conceal their identity for the king seemed not to care who the people were.

Haman reasoned with the king to destroy them. Haman proffered a few reasons to support his claim of necessary action. First, he said, **"There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom."** He said, "Here is a nation that is really not a nation. This is a nation of people that have no land of their own and are dispersed among all the

provinces of your kingdom. They are a people without a home and country." He argued that they were not native to Persia and, as such, were vagabonds in their country and a detriment to society.

Secondly, he submitted, **"Their laws are diverse from all the people; neither keep they the king's laws."** He charged that they had their own set of laws and standards by which they lived. Perhaps, he thought of their own customs and diets – for they did not eat the food that most of the kingdom ate, nor did they live their life like them. He did not accuse them of being law-breaking citizens, but at the heart of his complaint is the fact that in matters of conscience, the Jews obeyed the laws of God more than the laws of the king. Haman did not charge any particular infraction on the part of the Jewish people. No doubt, they obeyed the laws of the land, but they had a higher respect for God's law than Persian law.

Thirdly, he reasoned, **"Therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them."** Haman likely thought this was his strongest argument for wanting to destroy the Jews. He implied to the king that they were a relatively poor people and were not contributing greatly to the state. He suggested that this people would not be missed and the king's treasury would not suffer if they were destroyed. In fact, if the king permitted them to live, he would not gain from them financially, according to Haman.

Haman put his money where his mouth was, so to speak, by suggesting, **"If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries"** (Est. 3:9). He offered ten thousand talents of silver, which was a very large sum of money. It would have to be in the millions of dollars by today's standards. Haman promised that it would not hurt the king financially to destroy this people. He guaranteed to pay ten thousand talents of silver into the king's treasury, if his request was granted, as a way to ensure the king would profit by killing them. He appealed to the evil root of covetousness to secure to himself a way to feed his own pride. Notice how freely Haman would part with his riches to flatter himself in the eyes of men.

"And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee" (Est. 3:10-11). The king agreed to Haman's proposal. It pleased him just fine and he seemed indifferent to the offenders in this case.

Ahasuerus gave Haman his ring. This ring would be used to seal the decrees that were written. This official seal was how the king added his signature to the

decrees. The king was an absolute monarch. He had advisers but his word was final. When he gave his word, it would be stamped with his ring and published all throughout the provinces as law.

The king did not tell Haman to write the decree and bring it to him for his authorization. He just gave Haman the ring. A great amount of power was invested in Haman at this point. He would write whatever decree he pleased and seal it with the official ring. Haman here had the power to make laws.

It was very foolish and careless to place that seal in the hands of someone, especially Haman, to do with as they pleased. The king complied fully with Haman's request and gave him the resources, people and money, which were needed. This is a big undertaking. Think about destroying a whole nation of people! He is supplied with everything he needed and had the full authority of the king to carry out his wicked plan.

Great pride was manifested by both of these men. Haman, who was elevated and had authority, power, houses and lands, said of his prosperity, **"Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate"** (Est. 5:13). He had a problem with one man. Not only did he want to settle the score with that one man, but also he wanted to destroy all of the Jewish people. Is this not pride?

It is difficult to fathom this type of pride and arrogance. Pride tends to puff up a person and make them think that others are of less value than they are. Haman saw the Jews as a people of so little value that it was nothing to him to think of destroying them from the face of the earth.

There was also great pride on the part of king Ahasuerus. As far as we can tell, he did not make any inquiry as to whom these people were. He did not make any inquiry as to what evidence there was to support the charges that Haman made against them; neither did he make any inquiry into the law as to what ought to be done suitable to their offences, if they were guilty of some offense.

When he was dealing with queen Vashti, he went very strictly according to the law to see what could be done. Here he made no appeal to the law; just handed the ring to Haman to do whatever seemed good in his sight and gave him the resources to do it. How little care or concern! He did not even ask who these people were. He cared that little. He saw them as of such little value that he would simply allow them to be destroyed without any knowledge of who they were or what they had done.

Pity any people that live under the rule of any such despot so careless of human life. Unfortunately, many lawmakers today seem cut from the same cloth.

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Studies in Esther

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They have permitted the wholesale slaughter of millions of babies through abortion and have counted the money in the treasury that was saved by eliminating potential government benefit recipients.

Verses 12-14 – “Then were the king’s scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king’s lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king’s ring” (Est. 3:12). The scribes were called. The decrees were written up and sent out. They were done in the king’s authority. Haman commanded all the government subordinates in different places throughout the provinces in the kingdom, to carry this out. This went down the chain of command to the local man in a local area and he was responsible to go out and kill all the Jews in that place.

“And the letters were sent by posts into all the king’s provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey” (Esther 3:13). The decree showed the extent of the atrocity that was proposed. They were to kill all Jews, with no exceptions. They were to put to death young and old, as well as little children and women, and all in one day. They were going to kill all these people from the oldest to the youngest and then seize all their property and take it as spoil. This would help make up the talents of silver that Haman had proposed to bring into the King’s treasury. Haman plotted to kill a whole race of people pointlessly.

“The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day” (Est. 3:14). Verse 12 informed us of the decree that it was **“to every people after their language.”** Haman went to an extent much like the King had done in

going to excess to show his power. Haman wanted everyone to know and to be witness to the power he held. Haman wanted to display and make a show of his sin and wickedness. He was proud of what he was trying to accomplish. Haman wanted to ensure that every person in the kingdom knew of his feat by sending the post to every province and in every language.

Verse 15 – “The posts went out, being hastened by the king’s commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed” (Est. 3:15). Haman hastily published this decree. Historians have said that if hastened, the decree would make it to all the 127 provinces within two weeks. The decree was written in the first month and the appointed day was not until the twelfth month. Despite the fact that there were eleven months to pass before the deed was to be done, Haman made great haste for it to get out.

Haman wanted to make a show of his power. He likely hoped to gain the submission, through fear, of all of the subjects of the kingdom. If Haman had this kind of power to destroy the Jews, what kind of affect would this have on the other people of the kingdom? They would think, “If Haman can simply, at will, destroy a whole race of people from out of the kingdom, then what could he do to me if I was on his bad side?” No doubt, he would gain some reverence through fear.

Haman’s pride was manifested here because he did not fear the Jews or God. He made a decree that all of the Jews were to die; their property was to be seized and brought into the government’s treasury. They had a death sentence pronounced on them and sealed with the king’s ring. It was sure. He had published the decree in haste to make it known throughout the entire kingdom. In eleven months time, what could the Jews do? Could they flee the kingdom? Could they design to assassinate Haman? If there was a death sentence on them already, what was the worst that could happen to them, but to die? They might decide to rise up and fight.

Haman’s pride was clouding his judgment in what he did. He did not fear the Jews or their God for **“The king and Haman sat down to drink.”** They

celebrated their edict and victory but **“the city Shushan was perplexed.”** Those Jews were perplexed and Mordecai’s response demonstrated that attitude. It was probably a fearful time as they waited for that day to appear. It would be misery to live out those eleven months in expectation of that horrible day of bloody destruction. Haman was not afraid of the Jews or God and did whatever he pleased to make himself great.

Conclusion – In this portion of the book, there are some notable providential events. For one, Mordecai advised Esther to conceal her kindred. He told her not to make her people known to anyone when she went before the king. Mordecai probably had good intentions to protect the Jewish people and Esther by concealing her kindred. She was of a captive people who were not honored in the kingdom. Not only that, but she was an orphan girl. She had neither father nor mother and was not of the affluent society. She was a poor, Jewish girl.

Had Haman known that the queen was herself a Jew and was closely related to Mordecai, I doubt he would have went in and proposed a plan to destroy all of those people which included the queen and one of the king’s favorite guards. However, this thing was not known to him. Mordecai had meant it for good, but it led to Haman being able to persuade the king to make the decree. No doubt, God intended it in His providence to work out His purposes and not those of Haman.

Another providential event was Mordecai making it known that he was a Jew. We can see the two now working together. The queen had concealed her nationality and then Mordecai revealed his nationality, which brought the hatred and wrath of Haman down on all the Jewish people. Had Mordecai kept his kindred concealed something would have happened to him, but it never would have extended to the Jews. In providence, God used the wrath and hatred of this evil and wicked man Haman and the entire Jewish people were placed in danger and in need of deliverance.

A third notable providential event was the casting of the lots by Haman. Despite what evil powers of Satan were at work here, God overruled it all in his providence. Why? Because the twelfth month of Adar was the one the lot fell on. That might seem like luck or chance, but can we not see the providence of God in allowing so much time between the times that the decree was written and when it was going to be carried out.

Why was this in the providence of God? For one reason, it provided space for repentance. This decree affected the Jews’ destruction. If we would look at their sins, we would find that this judgment on them would be just. This time was provided for them to repent and turn to God.

This event would certainly also try their faith. Notice that God had promised, **“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be”** (Gen. 49:10). The Jewish people were not going to be destroyed from the face of the earth because Christ had not yet come. He was going to come from the people of the Jews. They were promised the millennial kingdom. The Jewish people were not going to be destroyed. God had promised. Were they going to believe and trust?

In this space of time, we can see God’s providence being used to bring about the things that will lead to their deliverance. Time was given. Had the thing been done immediately or had Haman decided to keep it secret, then the plan might have been carried out without any chance to intervene, but God’s providence overruled. God has allowed the time for Esther to be faced with her decision and to determine the course for her to be used for the deliverance of the people. Haman did not intend to glorify God, but all these things do glorify God and work to the fulfilling of His purposes.

The last notable event is the compliance of the king to Haman’s request. The king was so willing to go along with whatever it was that Haman suggested. He was a self-flatterer type of person that was very indulgent and excessive in his character and very sensual in his actions. The king was given to several different moods. Here he just went right along with Haman and did not offer any resistance or require anything further. He even went so far as to hand him his ring to seal the decree. He did not even desire to look over it and approve it before it was sealed. He put a lot of faith and trust in Haman. It seemed to be out of character for him, yet we see God overruling in these things and allowing these things to come about so the people will be brought to the brink of destruction and will be gloriously delivered by the grace and providence of God without any miraculous

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Spiritual Adultery

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unfaithfulness unto God. May we be more alert to what may be spiritual adultery in our lives and if we see it as such may God help us to turn from it because we love Him so much.

1. We address the obvious that is Spiritual Adultery. Many limit spiritual adultery to going to a place of false worship. I would agree that if you went, knowing that a place taught heresy and did not worship according to scripture, then that would be spiritual adultery. However, you committed it in your heart before you even went, because you knew what it taught and you allowed yourself to go "knowing" what they taught.

I compare it to a man who may catch himself in an awkward position being alone with a woman who may try to catch him. He did not seek to be in that position to be able to flirt or for intimacy. What he does when she tempts him will determine whether or not he is guilty of adultery. A person may go to a church not knowing what it believes or practices and they may catch themselves in an awkward position. The church may try to get them to worship in a manner foreign to scripture. How you handle that may make you guilty of spiritual adultery. If you go ahead and participate you are guilty.

What do you do men if a woman is trying to catch you? You run like Joseph! If you don't then you too become guilty. We may have to leave some services and if we don't, we may become guilty of spiritual adultery. I know when my wife and I were first married and on our honeymoon that we tried to go to some churches but we ended up leaving because there were some things going on that should never be in a Baptist church. If we had stayed and participated in their worship, I believe we would have been guilty of spiritual adultery.

Upon these thoughts, I want to say something about people who leave a good church to seek another. I think a person needs to be very careful about leaving the church that God has supposed to have made them a member of. If you've already got a wife you don't go looking for one do you? I Cor.7:27 states: "**Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed.**" I'm not saying that the Lord would never have a person leave one church to go to another, but a person better be very careful about leaving a good place of worship to go to another, even if the other is a good place also. In the church belt, church-hoppers are common. I think that some are guilty of unfaithfulness to God when they hop from one church to another. One ought to be very careful and prayerful about leaving the church that they are a member of.

When a man allows the members of

his body to embrace a strange woman, he becomes guilty of adultery. The church should not allow a member of the church to embrace a strange church and worship with her. Matt.5:29 says: "**And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.**" There may come a time when a church of the Lord Jesus Christ may have to exclude a member for knowingly going to a place of false worship. The church would profit more to "pluck" them out than to allow them to stay and God judge the church for allowing it. Churches will sometimes discipline for physical adultery but not for spiritual adultery.

This may be where some may start to disagree with me as to what spiritual adultery is. Know this, no matter what you think about the points to follow, that all I have done is considered what it takes to commit adultery against our spouses (as can be seen in the first point) and what the clearest of scriptures teach. WE DO NOT limit spiritual adultery to going to a false church and participating in their worship. Just like adultery can be committed without anything physical being done so can spiritual adultery. Please consider the following points carefully.

2. We commit spiritual adultery when we are closer to the world than we are to God. James 4:4 said: "**Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?**" A woman has every right to feel jealous over her husband when she perceives that her husband's heart is more toward another woman than her. When he seems to be better friends with another woman or shows them more respect than he does her. Likewise, God gets jealous over us as a husband or a wife would over their spouse, when our hearts are not with him. Exodus 34:14 states: "**For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.**"

God is not just concerned about us committing spiritual adultery in our actions as in going to a place of false worship but also in our hearts. God is jealous when we worship anything other than him and we don't have to go to a false church to do that. We can do it by not going to church at all.

To worship another god before the Lord God is to show it more reverence and respect than for Him. Some have more respect and honor for their relationship with the people of the world and the things of the world than they do for God. Some show a closer relationship with their jobs and their employers than they do with the church and the people of God. Are they not guilty of spiritual adultery? "**Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the**

friendship of the world is enmity with God?" Some show more respect for their hobbies and TV than they do for God. Members of Baptist churches are working, sitting at home watching television, going camping, golfing, fishing, hunting, shopping, going to ballgames on the Lord's day, when they are supposed to be worshipping God. Does that not show that in their hearts they are closer to the world than they are to God? Does that not provoke our jealous God who wants our hearts and minds?

3. We can commit spiritual adultery in our prayers. See again James 4:3-4. We must ask ourselves the question, "Why do we ask for the things that we do?" Is it for the glory of God and to advance our relationship with Him? Everything that we ask from the Lord should be to His glory and for our own spiritual good that we might be closer to Him. Sometimes we may ask for things knowing that if the Lord gave it to us that it would only help us to get farther away from the Lord. Do we ask for things knowing that we won't use it for Gods glory or to be closer to Him?

Sometimes we are like a wife who would ask a husband for \$50 so she could go out with the girls to a bar. Would a husband who wants his wife's affections grant her the request knowing that the \$50 will be spent in lustful activities? Most certainly not! Our requests however aren't very different in nature. It may be that we don't get some of the things we are asking for because it is for the lust of the flesh rather than for the glory of God. For our God is jealous of such requests and why would he grant it. If a jealous husband wouldn't give in to such a request then do we honestly think that the Lord will give us our requests when the things we are asking for are only coming from the lusts of the flesh? What is your purpose in asking? Are you committing spiritual adultery in your prayers? Is your Lord feeling betrayed because of what you ask for just like the husband would in the example that we gave?

4. We can commit spiritual adultery during worship services. Could not a man or woman commit adultery while being physically intimate with their spouse? If their heart and mind is imagining them being with somebody else during intimacy then are they not committing adultery in their hearts like Jesus spoke about? You don't have to be looking at woman to think about being with her. Likewise, I believe you can appear to be worshipping God while you're at church but where are your affections? Are they upon God or upon the things of the world?

We are ready to condemn those who worship in a false church and we should condemn such actions, but are we just as ready to condemn ourselves for committing spiritual adultery in the

house of God? Galatians 5:24 says: "**And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.**" Not only do we crucify the outward part of spiritual adultery but also the sinful lusts of the soul.

A man that is faithful to his wife will guard his heart as well as his body because he loves his wife. A man could be married to the same woman for years and be committing adultery in his heart by wishing he had married another, or by looking upon other women. Your bodies are here in the services but where are your hearts and minds? We are told to "**Set your affection on things above, not on the things of the earth**" (Colossians 3:2) Is your mind upon work, TV, hobbies, what's for supper, things of the earth rather than upon the Lord your God during the worship services? If we are loving the Lord like we should, then we will seek to put all those worldly things out of our mind as we come to the house of the Lord. We will seek immediately to put those things out of our mind if they creep in during worship because it's our heart's desire to worship and adore the Lord our God with every faculty of the mind and spirit.

5. The spiritual adulterer is like the adulterous woman. The Next thing I wish for you to consider is that the spiritual adulterer is not looking for the husband to return at any moment. Prov.7:6-23 would teach us much about the character of the adulterous woman. One of the things about the adulterous woman found in verse 19 is that she convinces and is convinced that her husband will be a while coming home so she says, "**For the Goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey.**" This thought allows her some time to fulfill her sinful lusts and convince her prey that he won't get caught. She no doubt does not want her husband to return at that moment.

Do we desire Christ to return? Do we know that if He comes today, we will be found unfaithful possibly in some of the things that we have mentioned? The language of the adulterous woman reminds me of what Christ said about some who would not be looking for His return in Matthew 24:42-51. In verse 48 He says the "**...evil servant shall say in in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming.**" He then goes on to "**smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.**" The spiritual adulterer is not looking for the coming of Jesus and when He comes, they shall be ashamed as their lights are not burning and no oil is in their lamps.

Are there sinful pleasures that you are engaged in that would have you ashamed of the coming of the bridegroom? Are you taken in by sin and believe its lie that Jesus is not coming home soon? Be faithful to the Lord your God not just because He

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may be back at any moment, but because you love Him with all of your heart, soul and mind.

Dear child of God are you being faithful to the Lord as though he could come back at any moment? Do you want Christ to come today or are there sinful pleasures in your mind that you would like to do before he returns? Are we watching? Are we being a faithful and a wise servant? Or, shall we be ashamed of his coming as an unfaithful wife whose husband arrived earlier than she expected?

Conclusion – In II Corinthians 11:2, Paul says: **“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”** Are each of us seeking to be that chaste virgin in our lives and in our hearts? Do we seek to be faithful to the Lord, not only on the outward, but also on the inward? What are our motives in prayer? Where are our hearts during worship? Are we being faithful to the church God has placed us in? Are we looking for his return? Or, are we lusting after the sinful pleasures of this world? Be careful with what you let your eyes behold lest they lead your heart astray from your God. May God open our hearts and minds to any form of spiritual adultery that may be in our lives and may we hate it with a passion enough to turn from it.

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what is the gospel? To the Corinthians, Paul wrote: **“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”** (I Cor. 15:1-4). Here we see that the gospel is the good news about salvation by faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is an announcement of the good things that God has done in the person of Christ.

The gospel is God's power unto salvation: **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”** (Rom. 1:16). God's power is terrible in nature and providence, but in the gospel, it is His saving power. In I Corinthians 15, Paul speaks of **“the**

gospel...by which also ye are saved.” The gospel is the Almighty Arm of the Lord rescuing men from sin, the wrath of God, spiritual death, and perdition. What an encouragement this is to the weak human agents who proclaim it to a dying world!

That great first century missionary, the Apostle Paul, said: **“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God”** (I Cor. 1:17-18).

The Apostle preached the gospel of a crucified Christ in plain language. He told the people the Son of God was crucified at Jerusalem, and that He was the Saviour of all them that believe. This plain preaching of a New Testament missionary was more powerful than all the philosophy and oratory of the heathen world. By its Divine authority and the demonstration of the Spirit, it turned the pagan world of that day upside down.

First, then we see the message of missions is a witness about the gospel, for without hearing it, none can be saved. All who believe this saving message are saved without exception. Thank the Lord that **“it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”** (I Cor. 1:21). It is the good news of salvation by a crucified Christ, which saved those who believe. It is the wonderful truth, which is to be proclaimed.

A Proclamation of Sin

Second, the message of missions is a communication about sin and its ruinous powers. We, who are sinners saved by grace, must go and tell others of their sinful disgrace. We, like the Scriptures, must give a clear testimony of the universality of sin in the human race. **“There is no man that sinneth not”** (I Kings 8:46). **“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not”** (Eccl. 7:20). **“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23). **“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin”** (Gal. 3:22).

To tell man that he is a sinner is about like telling a skunk that he stinks. Nevertheless, this is the message of the missionary. The Bible teaches that man is a sinner from his birth: **“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me”** (Ps. 51:5). Isaiah called man **“a transgressor from the womb”** (Isa. 48:8). David declared: **“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies”** (Ps. 58:3). We have from birth, the snares of sin in our bodies, the seed of sin in our souls, and the stain of sin upon both.

He who would carry out the Great Commission must warn men of the serious consequence of sin. It wrongs the

soul, darkens the understanding, warps the judgment, stupefies the conscience, and perverts the will. Sin enslaves a man: **“Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin”** (John 8:34). It excludes from Heaven: **For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God”** (Eph. 5:5).

Heaven's messenger is to go out and tell people that God hates sin and punishes the sinner. Proverbs 11:21 declares: **“Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.”** The flood, the Tower of Babel, Sodom and Gomarrah, Lot's wife and Calvary are monuments to prove that God will punish sin. God punishes sin with both physical and spiritual death: **“The soul that sinneth, it shall die”** (Ezek. 18:4).

The great work of the missionary lies in the realm of making known God's offer of forgiveness to those who turn from sin. The Bible says: **“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon”** (Isa. 55:7). We are to tell sinners that Jesus Christ has power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10). We are to declare that **“All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men”** (Matt. 12:31). Because of the death of Jesus, we are to speak to men of the forgiveness of sins in His name. Missionaries must tell of a God Who is **“good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy”** (Ps. 86:5).

An Announcement About Repentance

Third, the message of missions is a testimony about the need of repentance unto life. The only account of the doctrinal content of the Great Commission mentions repentance. Luke tells us: **“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem”** (Luke 24:47). The early church took the need of preaching repentance seriously. On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached repentance for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). To the men of Israel, he later said: **“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”** Addressing the Areopagus, Paul said: **“Now (God) commandeth all men everywhere to repent”** (Acts 17:30). Repentance was the theme of John the Baptist and Christ.

The modern church has forgotten to tell sinners to repent. Multitudes of misinformed people think they can continue in the old sinful life while adding Jesus Christ as a personal Hell insurance for the world to come. Churches are filled with people who have never repented. This fundamental, indispensable

foundation stone of the gospel is being ignored. Many seem to have forgotten that the Saviour said: **“Repent ye, and believe the gospel”** (Mark 1:15).

What is repentance? It comes from the Greek word which means to have another mind (Matt. 21:28-29). The word means to reconsider, to change one's mind, or purpose, implying his disapproval and abandonment of past opinions and purposes, and the adoption of others, which are different. This change in inward opinions makes a change in the outward life. Acts 26:20 makes this plain when Paul said: **“Repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.”** Thus true repentance is a change of mind which results in a change of conduct.

Nobody except a sinner can repent, and there is nothing to repent of but sin. To Simon in Acts 8:22, Peter said: **“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”** Jeremiah lamented men's lack of repentance of sin by declaring: **“No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle”** (Jer. 8:6).

The essentials of Bible repentance are three in number. First, there is conviction or sin admitted. The Holy Spirit at this point convicts the sinner of his sin nature. Speaking of the Holy Spirit, Christ said: **“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment”** (John 16:8). This brings fear of punishment, but there is no hatred of sin yet.

Second, there must be contrition or sin abhorred. Job said: **“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes”** (Job 42:6). The sinner comes to hate sin. This hatred is attended with shame and confusion of face. He becomes sorry for the sins he committed against God. David acknowledged: **“Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest”** (Ps. 51:4).

Third, it involves confession of sin abandoned. He who does not forsake the sins he repented of has never repented. The psalmist said: **“I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin”** (Ps. 32:5). The wise man declared: **“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy”** (Prov. 28:13).

The very heart cry of missionary work is to call men to repentance. God commands all men everywhere to repent, therefore let us go out and preach that men should repent. Call upon them to turn with sorrow and shame from every

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sin and with cheerfulness and resolution to every duty. All men are sinners and have cause to repent. Repentance is needed now as they have continued too long in sin already. Without repentance, none can be saved: **“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”** (Luke 13:3).

A Message About Faith

The message of missions is to call men to faith in Christ as man's only Saviour. Repentance and faith are inseparable graces. Repentance must always come first; otherwise, faith cannot exist. It is said of the Pharisees that they repented not afterward that they might believe in Christ (Matt. 21:32). Paul, the missionary of the church at Antioch, preached; **“repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 20:21).

Faith is indispensable to pleasing God. It involves a historical belief in the facts of the Scriptures and an acceptance of the doctrines of man's sinfulness and his dependence upon God. Romans 10:17 reads: **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** It also involves trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. True faith embraces Jesus Christ as Lord and surrenders to Christ's government. Isaiah called upon men to **“trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God”** (Isa. 50:10).

Evangelical faith appropriates Christ as the source of pardon and spiritual life. **“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name”** (John 1:12). Saving faith is an act of the will and affections as well as an act of the intellect. **“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”** (Rom. 10:10). Faith receives Christ as the only Lord, as the only Saviour, and as the only Mediator.

Those who truly believe on Christ will show their faith by their works. To the Galatians, Paul spoke of **“faith which worketh by love”** (Gal. 5:6). Good works are the natural and necessary results of faith. The best evidence that I believe a man's word is that I act upon it. The evidence of my faith in Christ is seen by my acting upon His commandments. John said: **“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”** (I John 2:3-4).

Faith is the instrumental cause of salvation. The end of faith in Christ is salvation (I Pet. 1:9). Paul told the jailer: **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31). It gives eternal life: **“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”** (John

3:36). It makes us judicially righteous: **“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness”** (Rom. 4:5). Faith justifies: **“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Rom. 5:1). Without it no person can be saved: **“He that believeth not shall be damned”** (Mark 16:16).

Conclusion

Why are the churches of today not as active in getting out the message of missions as were the early churches? Why do we sit around idle all the day? Someone says: “Compassion moved the early Christians.” But is heathenism less depraving, or sin less destructive, or Hell less fearful now, than then? Another would say: “Zeal for the glory of Christ incited them.” But are we less indebted to redeeming love than they? Still another will say: “The Spirit of God impelled and directed them.” But is not that same Spirit in us and in Christ's church today? Let us go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit and preach the gospel to every creature, for it is our Lord's command.

The Bible is a book of missionary work. Those who take its teachings seriously are missionaries. God had only one Son and He was a foreign Missionary. The first Baptist preacher the world ever knew was a missionary. The seventy were missionaries. The eleven Apostles were missionaries. The only one who was not was Judas. All the churches in the New Testament were missionary churches.

Dear reader, have you believed the gospel? Have you repented of your sins and received Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour? If not, then as a missionary, I beseech you to **“repent and believe the gospel.”**

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ministry has been appointed by God for **“the perfecting”** of His saints (see Ephesians 4:11, 12). God sends His servants that you may be instructed, nourished, sanctified. **“Night and day”** Paul **“prayed exceedingly”** that he should come unto the Thessalonian Christians and this that he **“might perfect that which is lacking in your faith”** (I Thess. 3:10): this is the yearning of every true servant of Christ's.

Second, our improvement of this means, the response that God requires His people to make unto the ministry of His servants: **“As ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more”** (1 Thess. 4:1): may this be true of you.

Third, nothing short of this should be our aim and diligent endeavor that you may **“stand perfect and complete in all**

the will of God” (Col. 4:12).

I. Reasons Why We Must Be Perfect

That is, not only sincere, with a heart desiring to and seeking after the glory of God, not only having all the spiritual parts of a Christian, and striving after the highest possible growth, but that we may actually attain unto all that is possible for us in Christ, in this life.

First, we have to do with a perfect God, and therefore we should seek perfection of character and conduct: **“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”** (Matt. 5:48). The main reason why God has been pleased to make known His attributes, to reveal unto us His perfections, is that we should take them for our copy.

Second, a perfect standard is set before us, and God will not lower it. To Abraham He said, **“Walk before me, and be thou perfect”** (Gen. 17:1). Abraham is the father of us all (Rom. 4:16, Gal. 3:7), therefore what God says to him, He also says to us.

Third, we have a perfect rule to regulate us (see II Timothy 3:16, 17). Those verses show that the strictness of the law is embodied in the Gospel. The high standard, which God has set up under the old covenant, has not been lowered under the new covenant. The exhortations of the New Testament are but so many explanations and applications of the Ten Commandments.

Fourth, we have a perfect and all-sufficient Redeemer to rely upon (Colossians 2:9). There is everything in Christ, which is needed by us and all that is in Him we may appropriate. God has not only given Christ *for* us, but He has given Him *to* us. *Christ Himself* is ours: O that the Holy Spirit may teach us how to draw from His infinite fullness.

II. Motives to Stimulate

First, all that we lost in Adam should be found again in Christ, or we do not honour Him. The last Adam is far more able to save than the first Adam was to destroy (Romans 5:17)—yet that **“abundance of grace”** has to be diligently sought; it is not given to the lazy and halfhearted. O that the Spirit may deeply impress each of our hearts with the fact that the more we **“grow up into Him in all things,”** the more Christ is glorified through us.

Second, we *pray* for perfection (at least, I hope we do) and therefore, should strive *after* it with all our might, otherwise our prayers are but a pretense. True prayer is a solemn binding of ourselves to use the means that we may obtain the blessings, which we ask: if this be not the intention of our hearts, then our prayer is merely empty words.

When we truly ask God to make us more holy, we pledge our selves to use every means, which makes for holiness, and strive our utmost to be holy. Prayer was never designed to be a substitute for

diligent effort. Therefore, if we are praying for the highest perfection attainable in this life, we must strive after it.

Third, we should remind ourselves more frequently, of what we lose when we slacken in our efforts after spiritual growth. All around us, we behold illustrations of the fact that God has closely linked together sin and misery; so also has He inseparably connected holiness and true happiness. Therefore, we should consider how much we miss when we slacken in our efforts after Christian perfection. It is those who take Christ's yoke upon them that find rest unto their souls; it is those who walk closest with Him that enter most into His joy. Not only so, but they who live a holy and happy life have a triumphant exit from this world (Psalm 37:37). Balaam said he wished that he might die the death of the righteous, but he was unwilling to live the life of the righteous. If our daily lives be right with God, He will look after us in death: this thought is also brought out in II Peter 1:11, which supplies the climax to the whole of that passage.

III. Means to Help

First, make sure that a Divine work of grace has begun in you; and, my friends, we cannot be too sure, nor be too diligent in the duty of self-examination. But there must be life before there can be growth: it is no use trying to grow if you do not have spiritual life. If you are in doubt, get alone with God and earnestly beseech Him to begin a good work in you. We must definitely choose God for our portion before we can cleave to and serve Him. Just as a young man selects his vocation or calling, and later chooses the woman to be his wife, so the Christian must definitely choose God. The enjoyment of God, the service of God, the pleasing of God, must become the soul's portion for time and eternity; but we cannot cleave unto God, walk with Him, or go on with Him, until we first take Him for our portion. David said, “The Lord is my portion.”

Second, give special attention to the radical graces. Just as in our physical bodies, there are some organs and members more vital than others, playing a larger part in determining whether we are well or sick, weak or strong, so there are certain graces in the Christian character, which are more vital and radical than others. What these are is intimated in I Corinthians 13:13: faith, hope, and love. Let us be especially concerned to have a strong faith, a lively hope, and a fervent love. Remember that word of the Lord to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:23: they were very careful about minor things, most punctilious about washing their hands, so particular they would not eat if the shadow of a Gentile even crossed their path. But God is not found in such things, neither is the

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Outlines for Country Preachers by a Country Preacher

Sermon Outlines by Milburn Cockrell

OUR UNACCOUNTABLE GOD

Job 33:12-13

These are the words of Elihu to Job. They are solemn and serious words. God is not accountable to His creatures. Submission and not contention is the wise and proper course of conduct on our part.

I. THE ABSOLUTE UNACCOUNTABILITY OF GOD.

1. The only moral intelligence in existence that is unaccountable is God.
2. He is absolutely independent, and He is under obligation to no being in the universe (Ps. 115:3; Dan. 4:35; Job 23:13).
3. He is not bound by law or power, outside of Himself, to be kind, loving or just.
4. His greatness above man is sufficient to exclude all murmurs and complaints by men (Zech. 2:13; Lev. 10:1-3).
5. God is not accountable to man or angel for anything He does in nature, providence, and grace (Deut. 29:29).
 - (1) He bestows riches and withholds them at His own good pleasure (I Chron. 29:11-12).
 - (2) He gives some a short time in this world, and others He gives many years (I Sam. 2:6-9).
 - (3) He saves some and leaves others (Matt. 11:25-26; Rom. 9:18-23; Eph. 1:4-5, 11-12).
6. The Hebrew in my text says: "He answereth not of all of his matters" (Joseph Caryl).
7. The power and dominion of God is absolute.
 - (1) He owes no man anything, for He has received nothing from us (Ps. 16:2; Luke 17:10; I Chron. 29:14-16).
 - (2) He is infinitely just and righteous in all His ways. Why should He give an account of any of His matters?
 - (3) No angel or man has the authority to call God to account. To be accountable to others is to be under their power.
 - (4) Against whom is it possible for God to sin? Is He amendable to any law above Himself? If so, by what law can He be indicted, and in what court can He be tried and convicted?

II. MAN DARES TO STRIVE WITH GOD.

1. "To strive against" means, "to refuse to submit, to call in question, to contend with" (Jas. 4:7).
2. A creature strive with the Creator? A man against the Maker? The clay against the Potter? Nothing against something (Isa. 40:17)? Weakness against strength? Folly against wisdom? How absurd and stupid (Isa. 45:9; Acts 5:38-39; 23:9).
3. How can we strive with God?
 - (1) Disobedience of His commandments. This is to strive against His holiness (Isa. 39:8; I Sam. 3:18).
 - (2) By distrusting His Word. This is to call in question His truthfulness (Num. 20:12-13).
 - (3) By being impatient under His chastening hand. This is to strive against His wisdom? Job did this.
4. It is daring impiety for us to arraign God at our bar, or call upon Him to explain to us what He is doing.
5. Instead of striving with God, we should submit to His providential dealings (I Sam. 3:18; Ps. 39:9; 75:5-6; Job 1:21; 2:10; Isa. 39:8).
6. To strive with your Maker is a horrible sin, for—
 - (1) It dishonors God and darkens His glory. It calls in question His wisdom and goodness, His truth and faithfulness.
 - (2) It hinders our spiritual growth and prevents communion with God.
 - (3) It reveals sin has much strength in us.
 - (4) It lays us open to all of the temptations of the world.
 - (5) It discloses we are like the Devil, who is always striving with God.

III. SOME THINGS WE SHOULD STRIVE ABOUT.

1. The sinful lusts of the flesh (Heb. 12:4; I Pet. 2:11).
2. The Devil (Jas. 4:7). We are not to submit to the Devil.
3. In prayer to God (Rom. 15:30). Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed.
4. The incorruptible crown (I Cor. 9:25; II Tim. 2:5).
5. The system of truth (Phil. 1:27).
6. To enter the straight gate (Luke 13:24).

CONCLUSION:

1. God is not accountable to us, but we are accountable to Him (Rom. 14:11-12).
2. Great judgment awaits those who strive with God (Jer. 50:24-27).

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spiritual life promoted by them. Give your attention to that which is vital and fundamental.

Third, seek grace to appropriate Philippians 4:13, and turn it into earnest prayer: "**I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**" Unbelief says, I cannot; previous failures say, I cannot; past experience says, I cannot; the example of fellow-Christians says, I cannot; Satan tells me, I cannot. But faith says, I "**can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me**" – turn that statement into believing, fervent, persistent prayer. Count upon God making it good.

Fourth, remind yourself frequently that failure to strive hard and constantly after perfection dishonors Christ. O that the love of Christ may constrain us, that gratitude to Him will compel us to seek a closer conformity unto Him. The more I am like Him, the more I honor Him; the less I am like Him, the more I dishonor Him. We must realize this if our hearts are to be stirred up unto renewed efforts after perfection.

IV. Tests

Here there are two extremes to guard against. On the one hand, the workings of pride, assuming that I have made more progress than is really the case. On the other hand (and to a genuine Christian, this danger is just as real), the workings of unbelief, a mock humility denying that I *have* made true progress. Now every real Christian should be anxious to know what measure of growth he has attained unto. You know how it is with growing children: how anxious they are to test themselves. They make a mark on the wall to register their height, and in a month's time see whether they have gone beyond it: so it should be with us spiritually. I am going to mention five things by which we should test ourselves concerning our growth.

First, increasing deadness to the world. The closer we approximate to Christian perfection, the deader will our hearts be unto the world. The more fully we are conformed unto the image of Christ, the less power will the world have to attract us. When I say that,

I refer to something more than its amusements and grosser sins; I mean also its pretty things. One of the marks of a child is to value a thing not according to its worth and usefulness, but according to its attractiveness to the eye. There are many forms of worldliness: Isaiah 3:22 warns against "**changeable suits of apparel**"—such savors of pride; it is an unnecessary expense; and, it is a denial of our strangeness.

The more we are really growing in grace the less shall we be attracted by such baubles, and the more attention shall we

give to the adorning of our souls. One-half of practical godliness is a dying unto the world; the other half is a living unto God: the mortification of self-love, and the strengthening of love to God. "**But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world**" (Gal. 6:14)—that is the language of a perfect Christian that is the experience of a mature saint: dead to the world. It no longer has any attraction for him and no power over him.

Second, increasing dissatisfaction with our present attainments. Instead of being pleased with and proud of the progress he has made, the growing Christian increasingly mourns over the littleness of it, groans daily because of his sinful failures, and is burdened over his lack of conformity to Christ. Instead of self-complacency for having attained unto this or that, there is a realization that "**there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed**" (Josh. 13:1). The nearer I come to real Christian perfection, the more imperfect I feel myself to be. Therefore, dear friends, the measure of spiritual growth you have made during the past year is the extent to which you have grown out of love with yourself.

Third, increasingly being moved by love rather than by fear. The weak and immature Christian is most obedient when he is most in fear of punishment from God—either fear of His law or fear of His chastisement. But the mature Christian, he who has grown in grace, is moved more by the love of God and love to God: this is what regulates his actions: "**For the love of Christ constraineth us**" (II Cor. 5:14). The extent to which we have grown spiritually during the last twelve months may be gauged by the measure in which our conduct is now regulated by love to Christ.

Fourth, increasing humility. Where there is real and deep humility, one sees more quickly and is more concerned about *his own* defects than those of his fellow Christians.

A proud man is quick to note the faults of other people, but it takes a humble man to recognize and acknowledge his own. A babe in Christ is far more likely to be proud of his spiritual attainment than is a mature Christian: the latter is filled with self-aborrence.

Thus, increasing holiness means increasing self-loathing.

Fifth, increasing deliverance from childishness. I believe the analogy holds good at every point between the natural and the spiritual. Let me name one or two points of resemblance.

First, touchiness characterizes an infant: a little child will cry over every trifle, but as he gets older, he outgrows that. The same holds good spiritually: alas, that such growth does not always keep pace with the added years.

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Christian Perfection

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Oftentimes one who has been a Christian for twenty years has really grown less than one who is only five years old spiritually. Where there is growth, one is less sensitive of being hurt over trifles.

Second, a child is regulated very largely by his senses, rather than by his reason. Take food as an example: if something looks nice, tastes nice, smells nice, the child wants it, whether or not it is good for him—he is regulated by his senses. But as he grows older he learns that some things, which look and smell good are injurious, and so he learns to leave them alone. So it is spiritually: a developed Christian is regulated by his judgment rather than by his senses.

Third, a child is incapable of helping others very much: it is always needing attention itself. But as the child grows older, it increases in usefulness: it becomes able to help mother in the home, and later on to do other things in the world. So it should be spiritually. That Christian who is all the time needing attention and help from others is not growing; he is only a spiritual babe.

Finally, a child is always getting into mischief or trouble, constantly doing something or other, which it ought not, so that it is not safe to allow it to be long out of sight. But as it grows older, if it be properly trained, it grows out of that. Now, my friends, honestly measure yourselves by these tests.

In closing, let me say, praise God for any real growth that you can see has been wrought in you: to Him alone belongs all the glory. Strive earnestly after further growth, avoiding all things, which hinder and retard it, making a diligent use of all the means of grace, which God has appointed for the promotion of the same.

The Hour Is Come

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always conscious of His Work that He must perform, and everything must be done in order. He could not and would not manifest Himself in a full way until it was the hour to do so.

We also find that the Lord is referring to the fact that the *hour is come* that wicked men would take Him prisoner and kill Him. In John 7:30, after the Lord had spoken boldly against the leaders of the Jews, we read these words: **“Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.”** Puny man could have no power against Almighty God, unless He would allow it!

In John 8 we read of the account of the adulterous woman being brought to Jesus

at the beginning of the chapter. And then we read of another discourse that the Lord delivers against the Pharisees. Then, in v. 20 we're told, **“These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.”** In both of these examples, men dared not even lay their **“hands on him,”** because it was not yet time. They desired to take Him and slay Him, but they did not. We might surmise that it was fear of the people that kept them back, but I believe that it was purely and simply the power of God that kept them from taking Him on these occasions.

Now, however, in John 12:23, when the Grecian men come to Him, Jesus says, **“The hour is come...”** I think that we can see that the timing of events in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ was completely in the power of God Almighty. He would do what He desired, when He desired to do it, and no man could restrain Him. Rather, He was the One that restrained men. At the appointed time, when *the hour is come*, He will remove His restraining hand and allow sinful men to do what they have desired forever to do.

I also think that it is very pertinent to notice that in the four examples that we have just referred to in the Gospel of John concerning the fact that the *hour was not yet come*, two examples spake of the *hour* of the Lord's Glory, and two of the examples spake of the *hour* that wicked men would take Him. Amazingly, the *hour* that is spoken of in all of these cases is the same *hour*! It is the will of the Lord that the *hour* that men will take Jesus Christ and crucify Him, is the same *hour* that His Glory will be revealed! It is for this purpose that He came into this sinful world. It is this *hour* that is the culmination of all His years upon this earth. This *hour* that men think is their time is actually the *hour* of the Redeemer of mankind! In this *hour* Satan and Sin and Death are defeated, and Jesus Christ reigns as our eternal Saviour! Why, even the centurion at the cross could not help but cry out **“...Truly this man was the Son of God.”** (Mk. 15:39).

I want to think a little while today about the words of our Lord here in this passage. I think that we will find that when He says, **“The hour is come”** He means more than just that the time of sinful men and the time of His glory is at hand.

The Hour of the Death of the Lord is Come

In v. 24 we read, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”**

The Lord came into the world and lived a perfect life. He lived a sinless life, so that He might die a sinless Death. He lived and died sinless, because He is God, and He is holy.

In the symbolism of the planting of a seed is seen a picture of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. His was not a pointless or wasted death. His was a death for a purpose. He must die, so that fruit may come forth. His was a perfect life. But if that life was not sacrificed on the altar of the justice of God, there could not be any other perfect life. His perfect life that He lived as a man, would forever be one that **“abideth alone,”** if He did not sacrifice that life. If His life were not given, then others would not have life. He must die, and be buried in the earth, even as a seed of corn, and then life would spring forth in abundance. In John 10:10 the Lord tells us, **“...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”**

The hour is come that the Perfect Life must be given that others might have life.

The Hour that will Manifest the Faithfulness of Christians is Come

Next, we read in v. 25 that the Lord tells those at hand, **“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”**

The hour is come that lives will be hazarded for the service of Christ. Do we love our mortal lives? Or, when we compare our mortality with the wonders of the Spiritual Realm do we despise our mortal lives? If we love the physical things even unto death, then spiritual life will be denied us. If, however, we place our love on the things that are from above, then even if our physical life is taken from us, we will go on **“unto life eternal.”**

On the night of the crucifixion many would be in danger. The disciples were in the Garden when the chief priests and officers came. Their lives were precarious. Yet, they were willing to die for the Lord, if the Lord would command them to fight. They fled, only when they saw that the Lord intended to give up without a fight. The Lord is giving a warning to His people that if they would serve Him (and those that are in His will certainly serve Him) then they must be prepared to offer even their very lives to honor and praise their Saviour. We are told in John 16:2, **“...yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”** Indeed this prophecy began to be fulfilled in the book of Acts and we know that Stephen and James (among many others) were taken and slain for their witness of Jesus Christ.

And yet, I believe that Jesus is referring to more than the physical danger that we must face from time to time as a consequence of service to the Lord. I believe that the spiritual ramifications here are worthy of some attention. I believe that you could also use this verse to teach that men who love their lives; and who value the things that they have done in the flesh; and who imagine that their deeds make them worthy in the sight of God; these will one day lose

themselves in eternal death and damnation. Conversely, those who hate the flesh, and despise the things that they have done, these are the ones that will be given life and that eternal.

As an example of these two conditions, let's read the parable of the Pharisee and the publican that went to pray. **“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”** (Lk. 18:9-14).

Really, this phrase at the end of the parable – **“for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted”** compares in meaning to our text in John 12:25 when we read, **“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”** Exalting your life is the same as loving your life. And humbling yourself is the same as hating what you are in the flesh. If you place your confidence in the flesh, you are without hope. If you base your salvation on things that are of this world (your works, your deeds, your righteousness), then you are facing certain death and damnation in the world to come.

The hour is come that we turn from the things of the flesh, and place our hope and confidence in the works of Him who is righteous.

The Hour of the Honor of the Saints of God is Come

In v. 26 we read, **“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.”** O, what honor is bestowed upon us here in this life! We are privileged to *serve* the Lord Jesus Christ. We are privileged to *follow* the Lord Jesus Christ. Even if we are led to offer our lives as a living and then a dying sacrifice, it should be counted a privilege. In Acts 5:41, after the disciples have been imprisoned and beaten; we find that they **“...departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”**

Honor will not be given to the saints of God by the world. Rather the world will hate us. But honor and love will be

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The Hour Is Come

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manifest upon us from the Father in Heaven. He will give us what the world will not.

Also, it is our privilege and an *honor* from the *Father* that we are allowed the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We are allowed to be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. That, as He tells us in this verse, **"..where I am, there shall also my servant be:"**

And lastly, we are given this great *honor* of the Father. He will bestow upon us, the names of the sons of God. **"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..."** (1 Jn. 3:1). *The hour is come*, that the Only Begotten Son of God will make the way clear for we, who were sometime far off, to be called **"the sons of God."**

The hour is come, that we will be allowed the privilege and *honor* to serve the Lord; to follow the Lord; to be with the Lord; and to be receive *honor* from the Father.

The Hour of the Glory of the Father's Name is Come

In v. 28 we read, **"Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."** This is the third occasion recorded in the Gospels where the Father's voice came from Heaven in the presence of Jesus. The other two occasions are at the baptism of the Lord (Mt. 3:17), and at the Transfiguration (Mt. 17:5). Since the other two occasions were of such importance, I believe that we should pay special heed to the words of the Father and Son in this passage as well.

I am sure that the voice of the Father in Heaven is given here as a witness of His approval upon His Son as He prepares to go to the cross. In Jn. 8:17-18 we read the words of the Lord Jesus: **"It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."** Here we have the witness of both the Father and Son being expressed before men. But let us also notice the words of the Lord at this time as He prepares for the cross.

When the Son says, **"Father, glorify thy name"** He is putting into words what it has been His life's work to do. **"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."** (Jn. 17:4). Just as it is His work, so it is our work to glorify the Father and His Name. It should be our goal, every morning when we get out of bed, to glorify the Name of God. It should be our greatest pleasure, thrill, enjoyment, responsibility, and desire to glorify our Holy God and Saviour.

The hour is come that the Son of God will complete His task that was given to Him by His Father. The Father is glorified, even in the actions of the Son. His obedience glorifies the Father, just as the obedience of our earthly children honors us. Just as we receive some level of honor and respect when our children are examples of obedience, even so the Father, on a much higher level, is glorified by the Son of God. We read in Phil. 2:7-8 concerning the Lord Jesus, that He **"..made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."** The Lord has been glorifying the Father throughout His life, but now His earthly endeavors are about to come to a close. He has been obedient, and He will continue to be *obedient, even unto death.*

The hour is come that the Father will be glorified through the work of His Only Begotten Son.

The Hour of the Judgment of this World is Come

Next, we read in v. 31, **"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."** This is the time that was prophesied of in Gen. 3:15. **"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."** Now is the hour that Satan can smell victory. He thinks that he is about to slay Him whom the O.T. scriptures prophesied of. Now, even as he thinks that he has victory, Satan's defeat is at hand. Sure, he will cause the Son of Man to suffer at the hands of evil men (**"thou shalt bruise his heel"**), but the Lord is about to perform the necessary deeds for the Redemption of all of His people, and to deliver them from the power of Satan (**"it shall bruise thy head"**).

The hour is come that Satan will be defeated, death will be conquered, the judgment of the reprobate made sure, and Justice on the behalf of the elect of God will be appeased.

The Hour of the Salvation of the Elect is Come

Just as we have referred to in our last point, the hour is come that the salvation of the elect shall be secured. In v. 32 we read, **"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."** Now we see that not only is the death of the Lord a purposeful one, but His death is also perfectly effective. He will draw **"all men unto"** Himself.

You and I both know that these words **"all men"** do not refer to the entirety of humanity, or else it would be obvious that the Lord has failed in His desires. (For all men have not come to Him.) But rather, the words **"all men"** refer to His people that were given unto Him by His Father

in Heaven. All of these will be drawn to Him, even as the Jews hang Him on the cross and kill Him with their sinful hands.

The hour is come that the Lord will be hung between the heaven and the earth, and the eyes of faith that are given to all of the elect of God, will behold Him there as their Saviour and God.

Conclusion

In our text we find that *the hour is come* in so many ways. Our Lord is master of space and time. He will work out His will on whomsoever He desires, and at whatsoever time He desires to do it. Men will participate in the perpetuating of the will and purpose of God, in either an unwitting and sinful fashion, or they will participate in a knowing and faithful fashion. Which one are you today? If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, still yet you cannot prevent the Will of God from being performed; it is being acted out all around you. Confess your sins today; acknowledge that you have sought out evil all of your days and

turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is in control, and perhaps the *hour is come* that you will profess Him and follow and serve Him as you seek to do the will of the Father in Heaven.

Are you already saved? Do you know that the will of God is being done joyfully by those others who serve the Lord around you? Follow the Lord! Do as He gave you an example. Be willing even unto the death to praise and honor and glorify Him Who died for you. This service that we are bound to is not a grievous thing! It is a joy and an honor and a privilege. Things of this earth do not matter – despise them. Things of Heaven do matter – love them and Him.

The hour is come that we should serve the Lord. We may not live to see the next hour, minute, or second. Let us redeem the time wisely, that we may be found joyful and obedient servants to our Lord God Almighty.

Why I Am Not A Follower of "The Prophet"

By Curtis Pugh

Bocsa, Caras-Severin, Romania

Down through the years many men and women have claimed to have received from Heaven a special understanding of God and the truth. They have insisted that they are specially qualified teachers who know and understand more than others. In this claim they are not unlike the Pope of Rome who claims for himself the ability to speak infallibly on matters of morals and doctrine when he speaks "ex cathedra." And it seems there is always a multitude of people ready to believe that such and such a person really does have the God-given ability to tell them exactly what to believe. In the first part of the 19th century especially there was a rash of such "special teachers" – persons who have influenced multitudes around the world. This deception (and I label all these as deceivers as I believe I shall prove) has continued until the present time.

These men and women have built for themselves societies which are falsely called "churches." These societies are all of the same kind although they may differ widely on doctrines: they all claim to be the restored church of Christ or to have the truth restored to them and them alone. Thus they teach that the truth was lost and that Christ's churches apostatized and had to be reformed, purified, corrected, etc. Of course it is through THEIR OWN prophet that God accomplished this or is presently accomplishing this great restoration work. So all these groups may be classified together as being what we may call "restoration type churches" since all claim to have restored either the truth or the



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true churches of Christ or both. In truth they are only man-made churches, having no valid connection with the Church that Jesus built during His earthly ministry.

Among these various "prophets" – I refer to the men and women who claim to have received special revelations directly from God – are names that are familiar to many people. Joseph Smith, (1805-1844) founder of the Mormons or Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is one. Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916) who founded the Jehovah's Witnesses is another. Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) is another. She founded what is falsely called Christian Science. Mrs. Ellen G. White (1827-1915), if not the founder of the Seventh Day Adventists, is certainly the chief leader among them. Her books are still circulated as being the authoritative teachings of an inspired prophetess. Another would be Alexander Campbell and his "restoration movement" which today exists in those groups called "Christian Churches," "Disciples of Christ," and "Churches of Christ."

More recently there have been others either among or having some connection with Pentecostal societies (I do not call them churches) who have made similar claims to special status. These rose to

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

1. Are we supposed to forgive those who do not repent of their trespasses against us? ---Ohio



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Luk. 17:3 says, **“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.”**

I assume this verse, or some similar to it, is what the questioner had in mind with this question. It seems that our forgiveness is based on whether or not our offending brother repents or not. However, I don't think this would be the correct way to divide the Word of Truth.

Mat. 5:43-48 says, **“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”**

In light of this passage, we are to love our enemies. We are to bless them that curse us. We are to do good to them that hate us. We are to pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us. How can we do any of these things without forgiveness? We cannot.

We never need to look for ways out of forgiveness. Sometimes, forgiveness is not easy. In fact, many times it is not. However, we must look at the example of Christ. Though the soldiers had nailed Him to the cross and His own nation had rejected Him as their promised Messiah and Savior, He said, **“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”** (Luk. 23:34). What a great example of forgiveness!

Our prayer to God is to be that He will **“forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us”** (Luk. 11:4). Nothing is said here about us only

forgiving those that have repented. It says here that we ask for forgiveness as we have forgiven **“every one that is indebted to us.”** Do we do this? The model prayer that Christ gave unto us said we should. This doesn't speak about forgiving those who *were* indebted, but, those that *are* indebted to us.

Do we forgive those that have not repented or apologized? Surely we are supposed to. The thing is we find this easy to do when it's our child or a close loved one. However, we find that we measure our forgiveness differently with others. We look for a reason to forgive our loved ones while we look for a reason not to forgive others.

My advice is, follow the example of Christ. Forgive those that trespass against you. You cannot help whether they repent or not. You will never stand in their place at the Judgment Seat. However, you will have to give an account for yourself. Don't ever look for a reason NOT to do what the Bible says. Some instructions aren't easy. However, our job is to strive to be a **“good and faithful servant.”** This includes having a forgiving spirit.

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“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Luk. 17:3-4).

This passage of scripture clearly states that we are to forgive those who repent of their trespass against us. It is important that we forgive others because each of us is also guilty of trespassing against the Lord and against others too. Christ taught us to **“forgive, and ye shall be forgiven”** (Luk. 6:37). While teaching the disciples how to pray, Christ said in Matthew 6:12 **“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”** He went on to say in verse 14, **“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”**

We must take note, however, that real forgiveness is based on repentance. Remember that God forgives only those who repent of their sins **“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out”** (Acts 3:19). In I John 1:9 we are taught that **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

It is also worthy to note that when Christ was on the cross he prayed to the Father and said, **“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”** (Luk. 23:34). Jesus did not say, **“Thy sins are forgiven thee”** as He did to another in Luke 5:20, but He simply prayed for them. I believe the reason for this is because the men who crucified Christ had not yet repented of their sins. Sometimes we confuse the doctrine of loving our enemies with the doctrine of forgiveness. When someone has repented of their trespass against us, we ought to always forgive them and then fellowship will be restored. If we truly forgive someone we will never again hold their trespass against them. But many times there are those who trespass against us who do not repent, and Christ taught us to, **“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you”** (Matthew 5:44). It is clear that we ought to pray for those who do not repent of their trespasses. We ought to do good to them and love them, but we are not able to have the same fellowship with them that would be possible if they repented.

Perhaps a good illustration of this is church discipline. When a church has to exclude a member for disobedience, the church ought to pray for that person and seek to restore them to fellowship. However, unless the offending member repents they cannot be restored and the breach of fellowship remains.

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This Scripture points out the necessity of forgiveness. We cannot expect God to

forgive us without us forgiving others. The Scripture points out that unforgiveness is unforgivable.

In Ephesians 4:32 the grace of God demands we forgive others even as God had forgiven us because of the sacrifice of Christ for us therefore we are obligated to forgive others as God forgave us. In I John 4:11 the Word of God says, **“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”**

Unforgiveness grieves the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 4:30-32. Unforgiveness creates bitterness and hurts the church, Hebrews 12:15. There is no limit to forgiveness, Matthew 18:21-22. Ever how often or how many times a brother sins against us we are to forgive them.

I must say though that I do not believe it is possible to actually forgive one their trespasses who refuses to repent or ask forgiveness. This does not mean that we are to hold grudges or harbor ill feelings or be bitter toward the unrepentant, but cannot condone, forgive, pardon, or clear the trespasser from their sin against us.

The Bible shows us that even before God forgives us we must repent. True forgiveness cannot be given unless sought and asked for, Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30 and II Peter 3:9. Reconciliation can only come after repentance, if no repentance then penalty must be paid, **“should perish.”** In Matthew 18:15-17 we are told that when one offends another and they refuse to repent of the offence they are to be treated as a heathen which I take to mean, treated as a lost sinner, unrepentant and not forgiven.

We do not have to hold ill will toward, mistreat, or desire hurt to the unrepentant, but I do not believe you can forgive one that desires no forgiveness.

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Repentance is definitely a prerequisite to forgiveness and restoration of fellowship between men according to Luke 17:3-4 which states: **“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”** However, if the person who is guilty of the offence does not express the sorrow of repentance, are we to hold a grudge against them or harbor ill feelings against them? I think not. I believe that we are to have the spirit of forgiveness and rec-

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, Mississippi 38855

2. What is the book of Jasher referred to in Joshua 10:13 and II Samuel 1:18? ---Alabama



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“And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day.” (Joshua 10:13). **“Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher”** (II Samuel 1:18).

It appears to me based on the context of the above scriptures that the book of Jasher was an ancient text containing references to the wars which Israel fought. There is another book mentioned in Numbers 21:14 called **“the book of the wars of the LORD.”** It is likely that this is the same as the book of Jasher but titled differently.

The events that occurred in the above texts certainly had a great impact on the nation of Israel and were seen by many witnesses. These events would have been written and kept in the records of the nation of Israel. Perhaps the significance here is that the inspired Word of God makes reference to these other books proving that the events mentioned are recorded historical truths.

MATT JAMES



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Jos 10:13 reads, **“And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day.”**

2 Sam. 1:18 reads, **“(Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in**

the book of Jasher.)”

I am tempted to answer this question as I used to see some of the forum writers from the Baptist Examiner do— “I don’t know.” However, I will give what little (and I do mean little) insight I have to offer here.

I do not believe the book of Jasher mentioned in these verses was inspired because it is not today contained in the Scriptures. God has preserved His Word for us today.

Both of the references given to us are the only two places this book is mentioned in the Bible. These verses refer the Jews to the book of Jasher as a reference to past happenings. Therefore, I can only assume that it was a historical book. Many historical books are trustworthy as I’m sure this one was.

Today, you can purchase copies of several books which claim to be the authentic “Book of Jasher.” Is it likely that they are? No. However, I wouldn’t be completely dogmatic as I know the book did exist at one time.

The Jews believed that this book was one of the books of the Bible. However, there was some division between them as to which one. Some thought it could be Genesis while others thought it could be Deuteronomy, Judges, or even Job.

This is one of those things I don’t think we can give a solid answer to and surely we can’t be dogmatic over.

TODD BRYANT



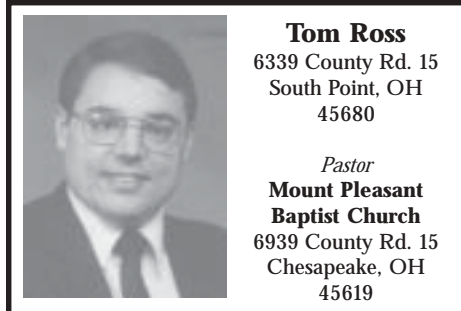
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I must confess that I personally know nothing about the book of Jasher referred to in Joshua 10:13 and II Samuel 1:18. The only information I have concerning this comes from “The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,” Vol. p. 1570. “The Book of Jasher,” ‘the book of the upright or book of the righteous one.’ The title of an ancient Hebrew national song book, from which two quotations are made in the Old Testament: Joshua 10:13, II Samuel 1:18.”

There are some other ideas concerning the Book of Jasher, but they are conjecture and not proven.

Hopefully there will be more information in some of the other brethren’s answers to this forum question.
GARNER SMITH



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In the margin the book of Jasher is referred to as the book of the upright, so it probably was some sort of record of righteous deeds. According to Matthew Henry, the expositor, the book of Jasher was “...a collection of state poems, in which the poem made upon this occasion was preserved among the rest; probably the same with that book of the wars of the Lord (Num. 21:14), which afterwards was continued and carried on by one Jahser. Those words, ‘**Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon,**’ sounding metrical, are supposed to be taken from the narrative of this event as it was found in the book of Jasher. Not that the divine testimony of the book of Joshua needed confirmation from the book of Jahser, a human composition; but to those who had that book in their hands it would be of use to compare this history with it...”

TOM ROSS

Forum #1

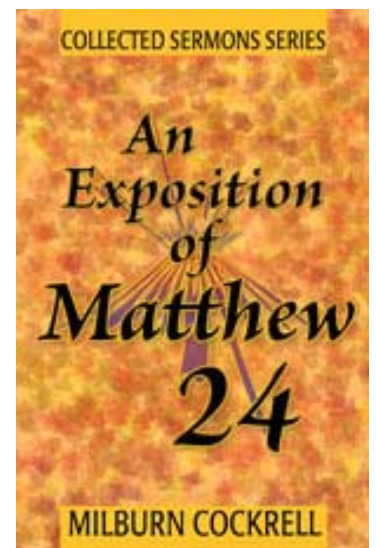
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conciliation towards an offending brother whether he repents of his trespass against us or not. Otherwise, we may allow the root of bitterness to grow within our hearts. In many things we all offend. Let us learn to have a kind and forgiving spirit regardless of the attitude of those around us.

Repentance is definitely a prerequisite to forgiveness and restoration of fellowship between men according to Luke 17:3-4 which states: **“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”** However, if the person who is guilty of the offence does not express the sorrow of repentance, are we to hold a grudge against them or harbor ill feelings against them? I think not. I believe that we are to have the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation towards an offending brother whether he repents of his trespass against us or not. Otherwise, we may allow the root of bitterness to grow within our hearts. In many things we all offend. Let us learn to have a kind and forgiving spirit regardless of the attitude of those around us.

TOM ROSS

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PRESIDENT BUSH BACKS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BANNING HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE

WASHINGTON (EP) – In a move many conservatives have been waiting on for months, President Bush officially called for a constitutional amendment defining marriage as an institution between one man and one woman in a Feb. 24 announcement.

“Marriage cannot be severed from its cultural, religious and natural roots without weakening the good influence of society,” Bush said. “Government, by recognizing and protecting marriage, serves the interests of all. Today I call upon the Congress to promptly pass, and to send to the states for ratification, an amendment to our Constitution defining and protecting marriage as a union of man and woman as husband and wife.”

Bush’s announcement came in the wake of San Francisco’s Mayor Gavin Newsome issuing thousands of marriage licenses to same-sex couples in the last two weeks in defiance of California-state law. Judges in that state have refused to stop what one conservative group has called “municipal anarchy.” The announcement also comes on the heels of the Massachusetts Supreme Court ordering the state to begin issuing marriage licenses to homosexual couples in May.

“After more than two centuries of American jurisprudence, and millennia of human experience, a few judges and local authorities are presuming to change the most fundamental institution of civilization,” Bush said. “Their actions have created confusion on an issue that requires clarity.”

Bush reaffirmed the freedoms Americans enjoy, but said freedom cannot undermine morality. “America is a free society, which limits the role of government in the lives of our citizens,” he said. “This commitment of freedom, however, does not require the redefinition of one of our most basic social institutions. Our government should respect every person, and protect the institution of marriage. There is no contradiction between these responsibilities.”

Some Republicans in Congress expressed caution over the prospect of a constitutional amendment, and emphasized such a process would move slowly. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, said it would take time to gauge the level of support in Congress for a constitutional amendment. He suggested the difficulty of passing one may cause lawmakers to take a different approach to

preserving marriage as a solely man-woman union. “We don’t want to do this in haste,” DeLay said.

Pro-family leaders supporting a constitutional amendment were pleased with Bush’s statement. “We are delighted the president has stepped forward on this issue and his announcement serves as a critical catalyst to energize and organize those who will work diligently to ensure that marriage remains an institution between one man and one woman,” Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, said in a statement.

A majority of Americans – sometimes by as much as a 2-1 margin – oppose legalizing homosexual marriages, according to The Associated Press.

At least 38 states and the federal government have approved laws or amendments barring the recognition of homosexual marriage. Ratification by three-fourths of the states (around 33 states) is required to pass a constitutional amendment.

HOUSE TO VOTE ON UNBORN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE ACT

By Pete Winn, CitizenLink

Unborn Victims of Violence Act would allow for a pre-born child to be classified as a victim in an attack on his or her mother.

WASHINGTON (EP) – The House of Representatives was expected to vote Feb. 26 on the Unborn Victims of Violence Act (UVVA). The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, and Rep. Melissa Hart, R-Pa., would change federal law so that if a pre-born child is killed or injured in a criminal attack on the child’s mother, the child would be regarded as a separate victim.

According to Michael Schwartz, vice president for government relations at Concerned Women for America, the need for the bill has become obvious.

“There are a number of cases on record where the mother was assaulted and the baby died, but the only crime that the perpetrator could be charged with was assault and battery – even though a life was taken,” Schwartz said.

The problem is that pre-borns are not protected under the law in 22 states and in cases under federal jurisdiction.

“On the other hand,” Schwartz added, “there are 28 states that do recognize unborn children as distinct victims in a criminal situation, and in those states, more appropriate prosecutions are possible.”

Fifteen states provide protection throughout the entire period a baby is in the

womb, while the other 13 provide protection during specific stages of development.

SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE – OFFICIALS IN NEW YORK, OREGON ISSUE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE LICENSES

WASHINGTON (EP) – Warning that same-sex marriages are likely to spread across the country like “wildfire,” Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) called on fellow-lawmakers March 2 to embrace a constitutional amendment banning homosexual marriage.

“We simply will not let activist judges redefine that definition of marriage,” Frist said. “We will not let activist judges redefine – I would say radically redefine – what marriage is, and that is a union between a man and a woman.”

Frist’s comments came one day before county officials began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in Portland, Ore. At least 50 people lined up outside town hall to apply for the licenses after a Multnomah County commissioner said she would begin issuing the paperwork to same-sex couples.

Oregon is one of 12 states without a law specifically defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

The same day, New York’s attorney general, Eliot Spitzer, said that New York state law prohibits same-sex marriage. Spitzer’s statement came in response to the mayor of New Paltz, a small town 75 miles of Manhattan, issuing marriage licenses to 25 same-sex couples. Mayor Jason West now faces 19 criminal counts and could face jail time.

Spitzer’s ruling, however, came with a personal caveat: The attorney general does not agree with state law forbidding same-sex marriage. “I personally would like to see the law changed, but must respect the law as it now stands,” he said in a statement.

Before Spitzer’s opinion, New York Gov. George Pataki repeated his assertion that gay marriage is illegal.

“My position is very clear,” he said. “Marriage under New York state law is and has been for 200 years between a man and a woman. And we have to uphold that law. If people seek to change that law, they should do it through the legislative process and not just by breaking it.”

Breaking the law is exactly what San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsome continued to do as he allowed city officials to continue issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in direct defiance of California state law. Two state Supreme Court justices refused to put a stop to the “marriages,” instead giving both sides several weeks to file briefs in court.

Meanwhile, the federal government showed that it was not ready to recognize the thousands of illegal marriage licenses that have been issued in recent weeks. The Social Security Administration issued a memo to its employees telling them not to accept same-sex marriage licenses in requests for name changes to social security cards.

CATHOLIC CHURCH RELEASES SEXUAL ABUSE STUDY

INDIANAPOLIS – The Roman Catholic Church released a disturbing study last month, analyzing and quantifying the scandal of sexual abuse in the U.S. Catholic Church over the last 50 years. The study was issued by the National Review Board, a lay watchdog panel formed by U.S. Catholic bishops.

The study reported that there have been a stunning 10,667 abuse claims against Catholic priests since 1950. More than 80 percent of the alleged victims were male and over half were between the ages of 11 and 14 when they were assaulted.

About 4 percent of all American clerics who served during the years studied – 4,392 of the 109,694 priests and others under vows to the church – were accused of abuse.

Indianapolis Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein said the numbers were deeply disturbing, and church officials repeated official apologies to past victims.

“Though disturbing, it’s not surprising,” Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger, who has advocated the church develop a way to track priests accused of abuse from parish to parish, told The Associated Press.

“Now that it’s out, it’s in the open, we can start to deal with it,” he said.

Fort Wayne-South Bend Bishop John M. D’Arcy – who was transferred from Boston to Indiana when he questioned that diocese’s handling of abuse cases – said in a written statement that the abuse reports, which were highly critical of bishops’ handling of the crisis, were “painful” but “hopeful.”

“This study, if followed closely by the bishops, represents a moment of hope and grace for our church,” D’Arcy said.

The report concluded that some bishops “placed the interests of the accused priests above those of the victims,” did not speak with victims directly, relied on misleading advice from therapists and lawyers or emphasized “institutional concerns” that fostered “secrecy and concealment.”

“We need to start with ourselves,” Gettelfinger said.

STATES POISED TO PROTECT MARRIAGE

By Sonja Swiatkiewicz, CitizenLink

Defense of Marriage Amendments on tap for lawmakers in Idaho, Georgia, Wisconsin and Indiana.

BOSTON (EP) – One of the most clear legislative responses that the Massachusetts Supreme Court’s November ruling – stating marriage licenses must be extended to same-sex couples – has generated has been the galvanizing of many states to pursue marriage-protection amendments to their own constitutions.

Three-fourths of the states now have some form of formal public policy defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Of those 38 states, only four have enshrined the definition of marriage in their constitution. But in response to the

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Massachusetts decision, and same-sex marriage licenses being issued in San Francisco, at least 11 more states are advocating Defense of Marriage Amendments (DOMA) this legislative session.

Recognizing the looming threat of same-sex couples who have been "married" in San Francisco — or may be "married" in Massachusetts this May — returning home and challenging their state's definition of marriage, pro-marriage legislators have introduced DOMA amendments that have a better chance of withstanding legal challenge than the DOMA statutes, or laws.

Currently, states can only expect activist judges to strike down their DOMA statutes under the Full Faith and Credit clause of the U.S. Constitution, which requires states to recognize the judicial acts of all the other states — the reason that a marriage licensed and performed in one state is valid in all 50 states.

But courts would inevitably have a more difficult time contradicting amendments to state constitutions protecting marriage.

Here's a closer look at the marriage-protection efforts in key states.

Idaho

House Joint Resolution 9, Idaho's DOMA amendment, passed the state House by a vote of 53-17 and now needs support to pass the state Senate. If approved, the DOMA will go to the November 2004 ballot for the voters to decide Idaho's definition of marriage.

Indiana

Indiana's DOMA amendment, Senate Joint Resolution 7, faces an uphill battle to pass in the Legislature this session and during the 2005-2006 session in order to appear on the November 2006 ballot. The state Senate approved the resolution 42-7, but House Speaker Patrick Bauer is refusing to allow it to come to a vote for the full House. Until Bauer allows the bill to come to a vote, the definition of marriage will remain up in the air in Indiana.

Georgia

Senate Resolution 595, the DOMA amendment in Georgia, already has been approved by the state Senate, 40-14. But to encourage its passage in the state House, Georgians United, a pro-marriage group, has organized a rally for March 1 at noon in the Georgia Capitol rotunda. The DOMA needs 120 votes in the House to advance to the November 2004 ballot for a public vote.

Wisconsin

After failing by one vote to override Gov. Jim Doyle's veto of last year's DOMA statute, pro-marriage legislators in Wisconsin are attempting to settle the issue with a constitutional amendment, Assembly Joint Resolution 66. Assembly members and senators must know that Wisconsin's residents support the traditional definition of marriage. The DOMA must be passed this session and next to appear on the April 2005

ballot, at the earliest.

As same-sex marriages continue in at least two states in defiance of state laws, look for more states to add DOMA amendments to their legislative agendas.

CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT ORDERS HALT TO HOMOSEXUAL 'MARRIAGES'

SAN FRANCISCO (EP) – The California Supreme Court ordered an immediate halt to the issuing of marriage licenses to homosexual couples in San Francisco March 11.

The court did not make a final ruling on the legality of homosexual "marriages," saying they would hear such a case in May or June.

The Supreme Court's action came two weeks after state Attorney General Bill Lockyer and the Alliance Defense Fund, an Arizona-based pro-family group, asked the justices to block San Francisco officials from issuing homosexual marriage licenses in defiance of state law.

Over 3,700 homosexual couples have received marriage licenses at San Francisco's City Hall since Mayor Gavin Newsom ordered his administration to issue the paperwork Feb. 12. The "marriages" were immediately challenged by President Bush, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and conservative groups who pointed out that California state law defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

MASSACHUSETTS LAWMAKERS GIVE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BANNING HOMOSEXUAL 'MARRIAGE'

BOSTON (EP) – Massachusetts lawmakers gave preliminary approval March 11 to a state constitutional amendment that would ban homosexual marriage but allow civil unions.

A November high court ruling, however, will still make homosexual "marriage," legal in Massachusetts in May. In order to ban same-sex "marriage" a constitutional amendment has to be placed on a statewide ballot; the earliest time that could happen is November 2006.

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins said Massachusetts should pass an amendment banning same-sex "marriage," but should not legalize so-called civil unions. "Unfortunately, traditional marriage is getting lumped together with civil unions in the same amendments, instead of keeping the issues separate," Perkins said. "The people of Massachusetts should be allowed to vote solely on the issue of marriage without being blackmailed into civil unions."

HOUSE PASSES MAJOR BROADCASTING DECENCY BILL

WASHINGTON (EP) – In the wake of the recent Super Bowl halftime show debacle – and public backlash over degenerating media broadcast standards – the House overwhelmingly passed a bill March 11 that will dramatically increase fines for radio and

television indecency.

Representatives voted 391-22 to pass the measure. Similar legislation is pending in the Senate.

The Bush administration strongly supported the bill and it received major bipartisan approval.

"I am tired of hearing parents tell me how they have to cover their children's ears," Rep. Joseph Pitts, R-Pa., said during debate on the bill. "Today, we're saying enough is enough."

The measure would raise the maximum fine for a broadcast license-holder from \$27,500 to \$500,000. The fine for a performer would jump from \$11,000 to \$500,000.

Current indecency rules prohibit radio and TV stations from airing material that refers to sexual and excretory functions between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., when children may tune in.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is the federal agency charged with monitoring airwaves and levying penalties for violations. Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., a main co-sponsor of the bill, said the FCC has not been aggressive enough in enforcing decency standards.

He said testimony from FCC Chairman Michael Powell showed that indecency cases often languish in FCC-limbo for years.

"It appears as though the industry has largely concluded that the FCC is a paper tiger," Markey said. "The rare and paltry fines the commission assesses have become nothing more than a joke within the broadcast industry."

Although the Senate has considered increasing indecency standards in the past, this year's Super Bowl halftime show – in which Janet Jackson's bare breast was exposed – served as a catalyst for more immediate action.

"The halftime show was full of crude and sexually explicit performances," Texas Democratic Rep. Martin Frost said on the House floor. "Throughout the day, we were subjected also to some offensive ads – all this was going on in our gyms, our living rooms, places we gather every year to watch the Super Bowl."

Frost added that "we shouldn't be singling out the Super Bowl broadcast for our disapproval."

Radio shows and much of family-hour cable programming also need to be reined in, he said.

It appears that the new emphasis on enforcing decency standards may already be having an effect. Clear Channel Communications – the nation's largest radio chain – fired a disc jockey in February whose vile broadcast cost the chain a record \$755,000 in fines. The company also suspended shock-jock radio host Howard Stern in the wake of the House's ruling.

Though Stern could conceivably remain on air – if he were willing to comply with FCC standards – he made it clear that he would not change his broadcast, and predicted his show's cancellation. He lamented his profane show's demise on a

March 5 broadcast before being suspended from the airwaves. "There is still a cultural war going on," he said. "The religious right is winning. We're losing."

'DIRE CONSEQUENCES' – ALAN KEYES TALKS ABOUT WHAT'S AT STAKE IN THE HOMOSEXUAL 'MARRIAGE' DEBATE

By Pete Winn, CitizenLink

WASHINGTON (EP) – Is homosexual "marriage" a civil right? Would it be "discrimination" to add the Federal Marriage Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to define marriage as being between one man and one woman?

We posed these questions to Dr. Alan Keyes, firebrand political commentator and former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Keyes has a Ph.D. in government from Harvard University. In addition to hosting a radio talk show, "The Alan Keyes Show," he ran for the U.S. Senate in Maryland in 1988 and 1992 and for president in 1996 and 2000.

Q. We typically hear activists say, "How does my homosexual marriage have any effect upon your heterosexual marriage, in any way?" How do you respond to that?

A. That sort of a comment shows a misunderstanding of what marriage is. The first thing you have to understand is that marriage pre-exists civil society. It is not defined by government; it is not defined by society. Marriage existed before human beings established the sort of complex relationships that now characterize society and government. One of the premises on which we all entered into civil society was that the family, which was the first form of property, would be respected. So when somebody asks what their "marriage" is going to harm, it is that their marriage does not correspond to the meaning and nature of marriage, and therefore destroys the institution, as such.

Therefore, to claim "privileges" . . . that go along with the status of marriage without being able to enter into the institution, also means that you are degrading the institutional requirements. The understanding of the institution that is involved in (arrangements such as civil unions) is a degraded one — it exists for the gratification of the parties involved. Marriage is a God-ordained institution that exists in order to respect the responsibilities and obligations of procreation, and to signify society's recognition of those responsibilities and obligations, and its support for their fulfillment by the parties to the marriage.

Is this the same issue that was at stake in the 1850s when Utah was denied entry into the union at first because members of the Mormon religion insisted on polygamy?

I think, basically, it is. It reflects the fact that marriage, as an institution . . . is related to the religious understanding of that society. . . . And the understanding in our society is that the heterosexual, marriage-based family arises from respect for the fact that the

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relationship between man and woman existed in the context of a commitment to procreation, as ordained by Almighty God. That commitment to procreation then led to a marriage institution that entailed upon the man and the woman certain responsibilities that transcended their feelings.

I often tell people that getting married is a little bit like joining the army. The only decision that you make that is voluntary is the one you make to join it. After that, you are involved in an institution that has its requirements that you are obliged to respect.

So the whole idea that homosexuals are putting forward their so-called "claim" to so-called "marriage" is based upon a premise . . . that marriage exists in order to gratify the individuals that are party to the marriage. That's a false premise which destroys the very concept of the marriage state.

But they seem to think it's a question of civil rights.

In point of fact, we are not talking about something that has to do with "rights." We're talking about an institution that exists in order to signify society's recognition of certain responsibilities and obligations.

It also exists, by the way, to signify society's respect for an authority that predates society, which is the authority of parents over their children. So the social contract which gives the basis for civil society includes as one of its major premises the fact that society will respect the family. If, in fact, steps are taken in a society that undermine the institution of marriage, that destroy respect for the family, its responsibilities, its obligations and the authority of the parents . . . then the social contract that is the basis for civil society is broken and breached. And that, unhappily, is a cause for war.

(Homosexual activists) need to think through what they are doing, because they are destroying the basis for our civil society in such a way as to introduce the kinds of things that have in the past led to terrible conflicts in societies throughout human history.

Let's talk about the Federal Marriage Amendment. The president talks about it being necessary because of the activism of judges and their attempt to legislate. Assess that for me. Do you agree?

We have a special problem here. The courts are, in fact, legislating, but they are legislating in the midst of a vacuum on the part of the legislature itself and on the basis of steps taken by legislatures that were mistaken.

When, starting in the latter half of the last century, we moved toward no-fault divorce, legislatures started to gravitate toward an understanding of marriage that did not correspond properly to the institution itself. That is to say, they started to take a "civil contract" approach to marriage, as if it were some type of contractual relationship and children were just assets — part of the

contract. That's all nonsense. But it was done.

Once legislatures moved in this direction, the courts then had a basis for looking at marriage as if it is just something that exists for the sake of the parties involved. When homosexuals start getting up and clamoring that they, too, want to get these "privileges," that understanding then leads the courts to say, "Well, it seems to us they're entitled to the same kind of treatment given to these other individuals, because that's all that marriage is about."

Once the states, whether it's through the courts or the legislatures, started taking this position, the problem that arises from the Full Faith and Credit Clause to the Constitution is that if one state moves in this direction, there is a plausible legal argument that individuals married in that state would then go into other states and demand recognition, thereby forcing the whole country to accept something that the overwhelming majority of Americans do not accept or agree with. That is what gives rise to the discussion of — and now the push for — a constitutional amendment that will prevent the federal courts from applying the Full Faith and Credit Clause in such a way as to force all of the states to accept something that is being adopted by only a few.

What's your response to the flouting of the law in San Francisco, and in other cities, where homosexuals are being issued "marriage" licenses and are being allowed to "marry" — and courts are doing very little to stop them? That's certainly not the reaction that Judge Roy Moore in Alabama got over the Ten Commandments issue. He was excoriated in the press for — at least in their eyes — taking what they called a unilateral action.

The fact that certain local officials take steps doesn't mean that other levels of government have to recognize those steps. So the state government in California can simply refuse to deal with those "marriages"; so can the federal government. But it definitely presents a complex situation.

The difference with Judge Moore's case is that he was not breaking the law. He was, in fact, standing on rights that are clear in the Constitution, and exercising a prerogative with the mandate of his state constitution and the people of his state, in an area — dealing with church/state relations — that is specifically reserved to the states by the Constitution of the United States.

The reaction that he got was the reaction that comes because we have allowed . . . federal judges to usurp an authority that they do not legitimately have under the Constitution. When you usurp a power — when you exercise an illegitimate power, it follows that you will use that power in an abusive fashion, because a usurped power has no defined limits, it can be used in any way you please. And that is what the federal judges do — they act according to their whim, because they have no basis in the Constitution or the law on which to limit their whim, and so discipline their judgment.

So the whole apparatus that moved against Judge Moore did so in an abusive

fashion, because the whole power that was being exercised there was an abusive power.

Has this push for gay "marriage" — especially with regard to what's happened in recent days and weeks — put us in a new era?

Well, I don't know. I think we're in an era where at both a political and social level we're witnessing the dissolution of the republic. I don't know that that's a new era. It's a tragic era. It's an era that our civilization is not likely to survive if we don't deal with these issues in an urgent fashion in order to reestablish the basis for our civilized life and freedom. So, I can't see that this is some new day, no. This is actually the twilight of a day, if we're not careful.

Right now, we are in the midst of a tremendous crisis that will decide the fate of our society.

Certainly, this is a process that has long been ongoing. Is it now that this crisis has intensified so greatly that it has brought the issue to a head?

Yes, I think if there were people who thought that this was not serious, and they weren't paying attention, they ought to pay attention now. This is coming to a head. In this generation, we will decide the fate of the American republic and of the civilization that we know. We can either sit back and let abusive courts and gutless politicians make these decisions, or as citizens who understand what's at stake, we can get involved and demand that steps be taken to act aright. If we do not, this crisis will intensify.

I believe — and this is something I will work to avoid — that a mishandling of this situation will lead to dissolution of our union, because at the end of the day, the founders put us on a basis that would allow us to handle these questions without confrontation, conflict and violence. These abusive judges and lawless officials are now abandoning that understanding. This is going to have dire consequences for the future of our people.

CRAWFORD, Texas (EP) — At least two Girl Scout troops in Crawford, Texas have disbanded over the Girl Scouts' financial support of Planned Parenthood in east Texas. Parents were disturbed to learn a few weeks ago that the local Girl Scout organization had given a "woman of distinction award" last year to a Planned Parenthood executive. And they were disturbed to find out that the Girl Scout organization has been giving its endorsement for years to a Planned Parenthood sex-ed program in which girls and boys are given literature on homosexuality, masturbation and condoms.

"It's not that we're a bunch of activists. We're just a bunch of moms who care about their kids," Lisa Aguilar, who took her 10-year-old daughter out of her eight-member Girl Scout troop, told The Associated Press. "For us, it's the morality. Where is Girl Scouts going?" The two troops in Crawford, population 700, decided not to deliver the cookie orders that they had already taken.

Presidential hopeful John Kerry is strong on defense. He voted to kill the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. He voted to kill the M-1

Abrams Tank. He voted to kill every Aircraft carrier laid down from 1988. He voted to kill the Ages anti-aircraft system. He voted to Kill the F-15 strike eagle. He voted to Kill the Block 60 F-16s. He voted to Kill the P-3 Orion upgrade. He voted to Kill the B-1. He voted to Kill the B-2. He voted to Kill the Patriot anti-Missile system. He voted to Kill the FA-18. He voted to Kill the F117.

In short, he voted to kill every military appropriation for the development and deployment of every weapons systems since 1988 to include the Battle armor for our troops. If Senator Kerry becomes president our Army will be made up of naked men running around with sticks and clubs. He also voted to kill all anti terrorism activities of every agency of the U.S. Government and to cut the funding of the FBI by 60%, to cut the funding for the CIA by 80%, and cut the funding for the NSA by 80%. But then he voted to increase OUR funding for U.N operations by 800%!!! Is this a man we need in the oval office? (*internet*)

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prominence only after 1900 for that date is the approximate beginning of what is called the Pentecostal movement.

Interestingly, for whatever reason, there have been a number of these "special teachers" to arise in the religiously-fertile area of the Ohio River Valley in and around Louisville, Kentucky. Among these should be listed the long deceased William Sowders of Louisville, father of the "Schools of the Prophets," generally now known as "Gospel Assembly Churches." The School of The Prophets was known for its Gospel of the Kingdom Campground near Louisville at Sheperdsville, Kentucky and the famous "new experience" of holy laughter which occurred shortly after Sowders' death in the 1950's.

The state of Indiana lies immediately across the Ohio River from Louisville. Three small Indiana cities make up a part of the Louisville metropolis. This area, too, has produced others who have made similar claims: two of whom we will mention here. Mrs. (Sister) Bernice Hicks, founder of Christ Gospel Churches International, is one. Another from the Indiana side of metropolitan Louisville area is the deceased William Branham. Like several other groups of the same sort, the followers of the prophet William Branham say that they want to be called simply "Christians" (but are most often known today as "Branham-ites").

Just as others among these "prophets" have been succeeded by new generations of prophets or so-called special teachers as well as new followers, so William Sowders was followed by several others, but in large measure by "Dr." Tommy Jolly

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who once was “bishop” over large assemblies in Indianapolis, Indiana, St. Louis, Missouri, El Dorado, Illinois and Louisville, Kentucky – all at the same time! So also William Branham has been succeeded in some measure by Ewald Frank who now has headquarters in Krefeld, Germany. Mr. Frank has not succeeded in replacing William Branham for it is said that Branham’s followers are divided into some thirty groups – each one claiming to be the true followers of “the prophet,” of course. Interestingly enough, each of these three groups (as well as some others) claim to have come “a step further” than Pentecostalism, that is, they say that they have more truth than old Pentecostalism and so consider themselves superior to ordinary Pentecostals. Of course the followers of William Sowders / Tommy Jolly Lloyd Goodwin, or Sister Bernice Hicks, and the followers of William Branham / Ewald Frank do not have the same exact doctrine, but all claim to have more light than the Pentecostal groups who came before them. Each of these groups make exclusive claims to being the only people with the truth and so have nothing to do with each other, but it is interesting that all make the same basic claim as being what I might call “reformed Pentecostals.” Whether or not the Pentecostals can be improved upon is beyond the scope of this article, but we venture to say that none of these groups under discussion has succeeded in making any improvements on the old system!

To the individual “prophets” mentioned above could be added others of the same sort, but these are enough to show that there are many religious people who fall into the classic error of following authoritative teachers rather than following the Authoritative Teacher. Such special teachers all have at least two things in common: (1) they deny that Christ’s churches have had a continual existence, insisting that apostasy crept into the churches making necessary a restoration of the truth, which restoration is of course their particular group, and (2) each of these individuals claimed or claims to be a specially qualified prophet or authoritative teacher of truth in a superior way to his or her followers. While they set forth many other errors, these two are basic ones common to all in this group of “restoration-type churches” and by these two errors they all are condemned by the teaching of the Bible. Where the premise is unsound, the conclusions are necessarily so. And all these “special teachers” base their claims on a false premise. I titled this piece “Why I Am Not A Follower Of The Prophet” because in the minds of the followers of each of

these special teachers he or she is regarded as a modern prophet of God whose words are equal or superior to the Bible.

Although the followers may deny that the words of their particular “prophet,” are equal or superior to the Bible, nevertheless, in a very real and practical sense they are in fact equal or superior to the Bible. This can be demonstrated to any honest and knowledgeable person for it is the words of the “prophet” that are used to establish the official interpretation of the Bible in each group.

Generally, those of us who reject the teachings of these prophets are regarded by the followers of each one as having rejected the Word of God. Thus those who are not followers of the prophet are eternally damned, according to the teaching of most of these groups. In general, if they teach anything about election at all, they teach that the elect of God will eventually come to see “the truth” – that is, the particular and peculiar teachings of their particular prophet. What this means is that those who never come to see their particular brand of truth are eternally lost. And yet these prophet-followers, in order to try to win people to their views, continue to call believers who are not in their group by the Biblical terms “brother” and “sister.” Is this not inconsistent and dishonest? If we who are outside their particular group are damned to suffer the wrath of God, they ought not to call us their brethren! They ought to refuse to speak to us in any way that would cause us to think we are right with God so that we might be warned of our imminent damnation.

In writing this piece I have no hope of helping any gullible follower of one of these prophets to see the truth. There is a difference in being gullible and in being a believer of the Word of God. Generally, gullible people are ready to believe fables and are interested in the spectacular, being desirous of miracles, signs and a restoration of those evidences of truth that were given by God to attest the veracity of teachers before the Scriptures were complete. They are not satisfied with the Bible. They long for additional revelations from God and these “prophets” claim to be able to give them truth that others do not have. They have not faith and so they seek signs. Such gullible persons are lacking in true faith – **“the faith of God’s elect”** (Titus 1:1). Having no saving faith, they cannot walk by faith and long to see miracles so that they can walk by sight. They must “see” something or “feel” something and then they will believe. They are like the man in Luke 16:19-31 who thought that if his brothers could see a resurrected man they would then believe. The truth is, **“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead”** (Luke 16:31). If a person does not believe on Christ through the words of the Bible, they will

not believe on Christ even though some miracle is performed before their eyes. And on the other hand, those who think that miracles in this end of the age are proof that a man or a woman is from God are sadly deceived.

Perhaps here we should insert the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ regarding those who think signs, miracles and wonders are important. Jesus spoke of those who would think these things so important as to commend the workers of such things as being saved people. I quote the entire passage here because I believe it is important. **“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”** (Matthew 7:21-23). Notice that many will think that because they have had the ability to do supernatural things, they should be with the Lord in His eternal kingdom. They thought they were saved because they worked miracles! There are five marks of these people. (1) They are people who call Jesus Christ “Lord.” (2) They have prophesied, claiming to do so in the name of the Lord, that is, with the authority of Jesus Christ. (3) They have power over demons, claiming to do so by Christ’s authority. (4) These people have worked many miracles, all the while claiming to do so by the authority of Jesus Christ. (5) There are “many” of them, that is, those who make these claims constitute a multitude. Notice that the Lord Jesus did not refute their claims to having done these things! He did not reply that their claims to being miracle workers were false! He had something else to say. He said that He never knew them! He said they were lost false religionists, in spite of their supernatural spiritual powers. He said **“depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”** These spiritually powerful people who claim to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are going to eventually be cast into the lake of fire for eternity! They are lost and going to eternal punishment! Religion apart from Christ and His truth is iniquity! Jesus Christ said so!

Now in our day, just who are the people who make such claims as these described by our Lord? I am happy to report to you that these claims are not made by Baptists! We have been faulted for many things and indeed have many faults, but it is not the Baptists who claim to perform these miraculous things. Who are the people who think such outward display of power is an evidence of true salvation? Who are the people who think these sign-gifts to be important? It is among the Pentecostals and Charismatics

as well as the “Hicks-ites, Sowder-ites, and Branham-ites” – the “reformed Pentecostals” that people are to be found who make such claims. And we are sure that among them will be the people to whom the Lord will address His words, **“depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”**

But I do have hope that there may be some few elect among these groups who are temporarily deceived, but who really believe the Bible and are truly desirous of knowing God’s simple truth. Perhaps, just perhaps, these people will be helped by this article, and perhaps some of God’s children, although presently not involved in these false churches, may be warned and rescued from the danger of these religious societies.

Bible-believing Baptists can, I believe, slay these false prophets – these religious Goliaths – with three verses of Scripture. Of course those who are merely gullible followers of one of these prophets shall distort and disbelieve the Scriptures in order to continue the direction they are travelling (2 Peter 3:16). But surely, if there are among any followers of one of these “prophets” who know and really believe the Scriptures, these simple Bible verses shall be sufficient to cut off forever the influence and teachings of these false teachers.

All these groups teach that the true Churches of Jesus Christ went into apostasy, lost many important truths, and consequently, the truth had to be restored. If the Bible teaches that this could not and did not happen, then all this class of “churches” are shown to be foundationally in error. In other words, if Christ’s kind of churches still exist and have had continued existence since He built the first one, the very basis of restoring truth as taught by these restoration churches is seen to be shot through with errors and thus their whole scheme falls in a heap.

What does the Bible say? Here is the first verse which slays these “prophets.” In Matthew 16:18 the Lord Jesus promised, **“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** [Emphasis added]. It is clearly promised that Jesus Himself would build His kind of church or assembly (Gr. ecclesia) and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This is a promise of the continued existence of His kind of churches. He said nothing shall destroy it! His kind of church is a **“pillar and ground of the truth”** not an apostate congregation! (See 1 Timothy 3:15). Many churches have apostatized, but not all. God has always had a remnant!

This is our second verse which slays the modern day “prophets.” For Jesus made another promise to His kind of churches or assemblies (Gr. ecclesia) in Matthew 28:20 where He said,

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“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” [Emphasis added]. This promise of Christ to be with His kind of Churches even to the end of the age means that Christ’s kind of Churches – not apostate ones nor corrupt ones – shall have a continued existence even to the end of the age. So the whole philosophy on which this class of “churches” is based falls to the ground, slain by the Word of God, never to rise again! And with the fall thereof also falls the authoritative teachers of each of these groups for each is seen to be a false prophet having deceived the people into starting a new “church” when no such thing was needed because Christ’s kind of New Testament churches have never ceased since He built the first one.

But as David took the sword and cut off the head of the fallen Goliath, let us make sure that these Goliaths are not only dead, but also clearly seen to be dead. Let us look at one other Scripture passage and with it finish the job by decapitating Goliath. Here is the third passage that ends forever the claims of these “prophets.” Consider: **“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”** (1 John 2:27 – emphasis added).

Let us first consider what this verse does NOT mean, for some have distorted it and use it against all who would preach and teach the Word of God. This verse does not mean that God has no teachers in His churches today. Paul who was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ clearly stated that he was a teacher (1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11). There were God-given teachers in the churches of the New Testament (Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 12:28, 29; Ephesians 4:11). And God has given us the qualifications for pastors and one of them is that they shall be apt teachers (1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:24). So if there are God-given teachers, it must necessarily follow that there be persons who are taught by them. If it is right and ordered of God that teachers teach, it must also be right and ordered of God that there be people to be taught. So this verse does NOT mean that there are not to be teachers and learners in the Lord’s churches today.

It is a specific KIND of teacher that John wrote about in the above quoted verse, not the God-given office of teachers. In this verse John writes about the “same anointing” teaching each true child of God. Of course this is a reference to the Holy Spirit. (See John 14:26).

What John is saying is that each born-again person has an “on-board” Teacher to teach him or her the truthfulness of the Word of God. The children of God do NOT need an authoritative teacher or prophet in this day and age because the Holy Spirit is possessed of each child of God. This is what John would have us understand. We have The Authoritative Teacher and Spirit of the true prophets within us as born-again children of God. What need have we for some person to claim that he or she has some special anointing which enables them to have special knowledge not available to us? What need have we of someone to tell us what to believe? No such person exists because all the born-again ones have the “same anointing.” The answer is clear. The child of God has no such need for extraordinary teachers such as claim to be prophets or authoritative teachers! Why do we not have such a need? Because each regenerated person has the “same anointing” and thus the same Teacher. And if we have no such need, we can be assured that God did not send such men and women as claim this exalted position. God does not give needless gifts!

The people who make these claims to such an exalted position, it seems to me, are like **“...Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them...”** (3 John 1:9) and would be lords over God’s heritage.

Now understand this, please. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher, in this very real and practical sense, of the truly regenerated child of God. False religious professors do not have the Holy Spirit to be their Teacher. If you, reader, are not aware that you have such a Teacher (the Holy Spirit) it probably is because you do NOT have Him! If you do not have Him, you are yet lost and in need of regeneration. I write such a bold statement based on Romans 8:9 which says **“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.”** [Emphasis added].

The New Testament contains warnings about men who would come on the scene especially after the departure of the apostles. These men are described as being gifted teachers. Some of them possess charismatic qualities and even supernatural abilities given them by some unseen power – but not the power of God. I urge you to read carefully and ponder the following passages of Scripture, parts of which I have underlined for emphasis.

2 Timothy 4:3, 4 says: **“For the time will come when 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.”**

In 2 Peter 2:1 the Word of God says, **“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”**

In 1 John 4:1 we learn that false prophets have evil spirits empowering them. **“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”**

Ephesians 4:14 is a warning to the child of God who has not been established in sound, biblical doctrine. It says: **“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive...”**

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 21:8: **“And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.”**

Unless and until one of these extraordinary teachers can show from the Scriptures that Christ was wrong and that His kind of churches did cease to exist (and therefore a restoration of truth was needed) then we shall continue in our conclusion that there is no need for such extraordinary teachers or prophets as these claim to be.

And in similar manner, unless and until one of these special teachers (so called) can show from the Word of God that in this New Testament era we need someone other than the Holy Spirit to be our Extraordinary and Authoritative Teacher we shall continue with Him and the Christ He glorifies.

And so I am not a follower of “the prophet” because all such are shown by the Word of God to be false prophets. They are blasphemers. They make Christ a liar at worst or a failure at best because

they claim that His promises regarding His churches have failed. I would not follow a blasphemer.

I am not a follower of “the prophet” because they are also usurpers of the work of the Holy Spirit of God. They claim that we, the children of God, need them to be our authoritative teacher(s) when the Bible clearly says that we do not need such a teacher at all for we all have that “same anointing” and that anointing teaches us! Amen.



The Requisites to Effective Preaching

By John Broadus

They may be stated as four, viz. piety, natural gifts, knowledge, skill.

1. Piety. Men sometimes do good by preaching who turn out to have been destitute of piety. It is one of the many wonderful ways in which God brings good out of evil. But, such cases are exceptional, and as a rule, the prime requisite to efficiency in preaching is earnest piety. This inspires the preacher himself with ardent zeal, and keeps the flame alive amid all the icy indifference by which he will so often be encompassed. This gains for him the goodwill and sympathy of his hearers, the most ungodly of whom will feel that devout earnestness on his part is becoming, and entitles him to respect. And, this is authorized to hope for the blessing of God upon the labors which it prompts. Much false theory and bad practice in preaching is connected with a failure to apprehend the fundamental importance of piety in the preacher. As was said above on a kindred topic, just rhetorical principles, as well as other and far higher considerations, imperatively require that a preacher of the gospel shall cultivate personal piety. It is bad rhetoric to neglect it.

2. Natural gifts. The preacher needs the capacity for clear thinking, with strong feelings, and a vigorous imagination; also capacity for expression, and the power of forcible utterance. Many other gifts help his usefulness, these are well-nigh indispensable to any high degree of efficiency. Each of these can be improved almost indefinitely, some of them developed in one who had not been conscious of possessing them; but all must exist as natural gifts.

3. Knowledge. There must be knowledge of religious truth, and of such things as throw light upon it: knowledge of human nature in its relations to

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Gleanings

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religious truth, and of human life in its actual conditions around us. It was a favorite idea of Cicero that the orator ought to know everything. There is of course no knowledge, which a preacher might not make useful. We may thankfully recognize the fact that some men do good who have very slender attainments, and yet may insist that it should be the preacher's lowest standard to surpass, in respect of knowledge, the great majority of those who hear him, and should be his sacred ambition to know all that he can learn by life-long and prayerful endeavor. Piety furnishes motive power; natural gifts, cultivated as far as possible, furnish means; knowledge gives material; and there remains:

4. **Skill.** This does not refer merely to style and delivery, but also to the collection, choice, and arrangement of materials. All who preach eminently well, and the same thing is true of secular speakers, will be found, with scarcely an exception, to have labored much to acquire skill. Henry Clay, in an address to some law-students at Albany towards the close of his life, mentioned that during his early life in Kentucky, he "commenced, and continued for years, the practice of daily reading and speaking upon the contents of some historical or scientific book. These off-hand efforts were made sometimes in a cornfield, at others in the forest, and not unfrequently in some distant barn, with the horse and the ox for my auditors." We are told that the Indian orators of the Six Nations were known to practice their speeches beside a clear pool.

"Patrick Henry, the most illustrious example of natural oratory, so far as there is any such, went through a course of training in his daily studies of human nature as drawn out by himself in his little shop, his every-day trials on his lingering customers of the power of words, his deep and enthusiastic investigations into history, and particularly his patient and continued study of the harangues of Livy and the elaborate translations he made of them, which, to say the least, is very uncommon."*

Anyone whose good fortune it has been to be intimate with some of those noble Baptist preachers, who beginning with hardly any education have worked their way up to the highest excellence in their calling, will have seen ample proofs, particularly in their unrestrained private conversation, that their power of clear and precise expression, and of forcible and attractive delivery, is the result of sharp, critical attention, of earnest and long-continued labor. The difference between skill and the lack of it in speaking, is almost as great as in handling tools, those, for example, of the carpenter or the

blacksmith. And, while no real skill can be acquired without practice - according to the true saying, "The only way to learn to preach is to preach" - yet mere practice will never bring the highest skill; it must be heedful, thoughtful practice, with close observation of others and sharp watching of ourselves, and controlled by good sense and good taste.

Now in respect of skill, preaching is an art; and while art cannot create the requisite powers of mind or body, nor supply their place if really absent, it can develop and improve them, and aid in using them to the best advantage. To gain skill, then, is the object of rhetorical studies, skill in the construction and in the delivery of discourse.

(**Day's Art of Discourse*, p. 18.)

The Sanctity of Marriage

By Don Berry

"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:5-6).

I stand in total awe at the dismay and shock that Christians are displaying over same-sex marriages. What truly amazes me is that Christians would expect a lost and depraved world to hold anything sacred, especially something that Christians themselves have shown so little regard for. Do we really expect a secular government to defend traditional marriage when Christians themselves have been abandoning that divine institution in alarming numbers? The divorce rate in America has well surpassed the 50% mark; and the numbers for Christian marriages is nearly identical. Christians have failed to preserve their own "traditional" marriages and yet we scream bloody murder when the homosexuals try to hijack what is left of what we have abandoned and treated with disdain.

Please don't misunderstand me; I am totally against same-sex marriages. The Bible describes the homosexual relationship as an "abomination". See Leviticus 18:22: **"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination."** I am against any sin, and the Bible classifies this as sin. See 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: **"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."** No unrepentant sinner shall inherit the

kingdom of God; and the sin of homosexuality is not exempt from this list. With that being said, we Christians are being more than a little hypocritical by trying to defend with our protests that which we are not willing to try to preserve in our own lives. We Christians need to very quickly get our own lives and testimonies in order. Then, and only then, will we be in a position to enter into this, the most crucial of battles, without being more of a detriment to our own cause than those we are trying to oppose.

Marriage needs to be restored to what God ordained it to be, a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman. Those in our churches who commit adultery against their spouse should be swiftly and biblically disciplined, including, and especially, those in the ministry. Contrary to what television evangelist may think, this is not something that can be corrected by fund-

raisers. We Christians have made money our God and our response to everything seems to be fund-raisers.

Our pastors should have been waging this battle from the pulpits long ago. We, as pastors, have failed most miserably in this area. God does not see divorce as just another fact of life, and neither should we. Pastor's need desperately to focus more attention on dealing with marriages and families, instead of trying to come up with new programs for divorces that have already taken place. Preach about God, faith, love, and commitment. Until we start boldly preaching the Word of God from the pulpits, we, and our churches, will be ill prepared for any conflict.

Until Christians are willing to uphold the sanctity of their own marriages, until we are willing to live by God's rules ourselves, how can we expect anyone to listen when we try to tell them what is right and what is wrong?

Is He Working?

By Shawn Berry

Bowling Green, Kentucky

I have felt a great burden recently to write an article on the subject of pastors and missionaries who work a regular job outside of the ministry that God has called them unto and those who don't. I have pastored a church where at times I had to work a regular job to supply the needs of my family. I remember all too well what a heavy burden that was to bear. I also know what it is like to be a missionary and work a full time job, as I have recently done this as well in order that I could pay off some unwanted debt. Now, that I have done that, I am enjoying the privilege once again of concentrating my full attention and time to the ministry that God has called me unto.

While being in the ministry the question has often come to my mind, "Is a God called pastor or missionary *required by scripture* to work a regular job outside of the ministry that the Lord has called him unto? I have tried to search out the scripture to find an answer for this question and I would like to share with you what I have found in God's word.

First of all, I would like to examine the qualifications of a minister. We find these qualifications mentioned in I Timothy chapter three. I would specifically like to draw your attention to verses, four, and five, which read: **"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"** (Emphasis added). I believe that ruling your house includes supplying the needs of your family. If I don't supply the needs of my family then I am worse than an infidel according to I Timothy 5:8 which reads: **"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."

From these scriptures, I would conclude that a man who would not supply the needs of his family would not even be qualified for the ministry. It is because of this that I say, "amen" to those pastors and missionaries who do not have enough financial support and *must work* a regular job in order to supply for their family. When you examine your priorities with the bible, I believe you would have to conclude that your family must come first in the life of a minister because, if his house is not in order, he does not even qualify for the ministry. It is because of this, that I greatly respect those who *have to work* and minister.

On the other hand if you have enough support to supply your family's needs and you still work, I believe this would make you selfish and greedy, if that is not too strong of words to use. Many times, we do not teach our families the difference between wants and needs. I have lots of wants, but the Lord has always supplied my needs. My family has more needs than just monetary needs. The bible shows me my responsibility as a husband and father, which go far beyond monetary needs. I am responsible for raising my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord in accordance with Ephesians 6:4, which reads: **"Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."** I am told that as a husband I am obligated to love my wife just as the Lord loved His church. If I neglect these scriptural obligations, am I not also sinning against God?

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Is He Working?

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The Lord also gave his ministers the obligation of feeding the sheep. Jesus told Peter that if he loved Him, he would feed the Lord's sheep in John 21. I believe we can learn much from Ezekiel 34:2 which reads: **"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"** I believe that God called ministers are shepherds (under the Chief Shepherd of course) and I believe we have an obligation to feed God's sheep. If we neglect feeding God's sheep spiritually because we are feeding our *wants* and not our *needs*, then is that not also a sin? I have learned that when you have to work and minister it takes away from your study time and your ability to minister. It takes away from the time that you get to labor preparing a good healthy meal of spiritual food for God's flock. So if we labor a secular job and *don't have to*, isn't that selfish?

What has really burdened me is that I don't find anywhere in the bible where a minister should be condemned for not working a regular job outside of the ministry. I agree that if a man doesn't work he shouldn't eat. I also agree that if you have a pastor that doesn't work, then you should get one who does. If you have a missionary that doesn't work, you should get rid of him. If you support a missionary that doesn't work, you should stop supporting him. The question is what is work? I believe we have misunderstood what work is. Let's examine what Paul says by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Let us first examine I Corinthians 9:1-15, which reads: **"Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, Have ye not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not the milk of the flock? Say I these things as man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? . . . Do ye not know that they which minister**

about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, that that any man should make my glorying void" (Emphasis added). I would like to first point out what Paul's work was. Paul says in verse one, **"are not ye my work?"** (Emphasis added). Paul was a preacher of the gospel and that was his work. God had called him unto that work. These people were his work in the since that God had called him to labor among them preaching the gospel. So if someone is called of God to preach the gospel they are working hard and laboring to do that then they are working.

Notice that in verse six he asks the question, **"Have we not power to forbear working?"** In other words, as a minister does he not have the right not to work with his hands but rather to live by what the people might give him as he labored spiritually? Paul goes on to verify that a minister does have that right although Paul chose not to exercise that right.

Notice in verse seven, that Paul asks the question, **"who goeth a warfare any time at his own charge?"** What Paul was making reference to here would be that in his day when a soldier went to warfare his needs were met by the people of which he was defending. So Paul is likening this to the ministers of the gospel who are called to be the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and are engaged in a warfare state, in fighting the good fight of faith, against Christ's enemies, and those enemies of His church. Should the ministry in which they serve the Lord not maintain them?

Paul is making the same illustration with the vineyard and with the flock. They are all teaching the same principle. Paul goes on in verse eight to explain that he is not just saying these things as a man but that God says them. He gives the illustration of not muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn. Paul goes on to declare that God has not written this for the sake of the ox but for the sake of the ministers of the gospel.

Paul declares it in a very plain to understand language in verse eleven. If the ministers of the gospel are sowing unto God's flock that which is spiritual, why should they not reap that which is carnal to supply their needs? In verse thirteen, Paul declares that those, which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple. I believe we can learn from these verses of scripture alone that we have no right to condemn the preacher of the gospel that does not work a regular job outside of the ministry that the Lord has called him unto, as long as he is laboring in the Lord's work. Now, if he isn't laboring in the Lord's work then

by all means get rid of him. He would be like the shepherds of Israel mentioned in Ezekiel 34. He would be feeding himself and neglecting the flock.

I find it interesting that Paul chose to labor with his hands as he states in verse twelve. I believe when he mentions the hindering of the gospel he speaks of those who would accuse him of being too sorry to work with his hands and accusing him of only wanting to preach the gospel for the sake of not having to work with his hands. He felt this would have the potential to give the gospel and its ministers a bad name. How sad such people were there to make Paul's ministry of the gospel harder. It is even sadder that we still have people today that make the same accusations causing some men who work a regular job outside of the ministry that the Lord has called them unto, not because they have to, but to keep from having their name ruined or the name of the gospel ruined. I think the true hinderers of the gospel are those who make such accusations against God's ministers. I also believe that the true hinderers of the gospel are those churches who are perfectly capable of supporting their pastor full time and won't.

I believe the scriptures teach us very clearly that God has given the ministers of the gospel the liberty to live of the gospel. I believe that the scriptures teaches us that the God called minister's

work is the work of feeding the sheep, the work of guarding the sheep, the work of defending the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the work of planting churches, etc. If a God called minister is not working (preaching, teaching and defending the truth, etc.) by all means, address the issue, but let's make sure we understand what his work is before we declare him slothful. I believe if a God called minister is laboring hard in the Lord's work, no man has a biblical right to ridicule him or call him slothful because they are not laboring at a second job. I believe God's word is very clear on this subject.

I believe every slothful servant of God will stand before God one day and be judged for their slothfulness. I also believe that every man and every church that puts an extra burden on the minister of the gospel will also be judged by God one day for doing so. I would like to conclude this article with the following scriptures: I Timothy 5:17-19 **"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses"** (Emphasis added).

Not Ashamed

By Arthur W. Pink

(1886 - 1952)

"They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied" (Psa. 37:19). Of whom is this declaration made? Of all the children of God? No, indeed. Only of those who are truly **"upright"** (v. 18) in their hearts and ways. If the reader will look up and carefully weigh Job 1:1, Psalm 37:37, Proverbs 14:11; 15:8; 29:27, it should at once be seen that the **"upright"** are they who walk with God, are in subjection to God, and live only to the glory of God. The **"upright"** are contrasted from those whose hearts are **"divided"** (Hos. 10:2)—half in Heaven, and half in the world; half occupied with God, half wrapped in self; and with real Christians who are in a backslidden state.

Now Psalm 37:19 plainly affirms that the **"upright"** shall not be ashamed in the evil time. And why? Because God is showing Himself strong on their behalf (2 Chro. 16:9), and doing for them what He is not doing for many others who bear His name. No good things do they lack (Psa. 84:11). Having sought first God's kingdom and righteousness (Matt. 6:33), their needs are being freely and abundantly met. An **"evil time"** has now come upon this perishing world, and we are acquainted with quite a number who are **"not ashamed,"** and who can joyfully

exclaim, **"The Lord is my helper."** On the other hand, we are acquainted with not a few real Christians who have every cause to be **"ashamed,"** for their present situation brings no glory unto God.

In an **"evil time"** like this, the lines ought to be so clearly drawn that even the world can discern **"between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not"** (Mal. 3:18). **"The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing"** (Psa. 34:10). Now let us ask our readers some plain questions. A few years back when "times" were "good" and money was plentiful, were you "seeking the Lord" when you bought a car for the pleasure of your family? Had you His glory in view when you purchased an electric sweeper, electric washer, and electric refrigerator? You wish now that you had in cash the money you then put into such extravagances. Yes, so does the worldling. But have you confessed unto God the sin of such extravagance?

And what of the silk stockings, the **"changeable suits of apparel"** (Isa. 3:22); and the many other luxuries which the worldlings were squandering their money upon? What too of being conformed unto the world in its wicked fashions: the

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Not Ashamed

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“bobbed” hair, the short skirts, the sleeveless waists? **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”** (Gal. 6:7). Having sown to the flesh, why think it strange if you are now reaping **“corruption”!** Perhaps some answer, “But I was liberal in giving to the Lord’s cause in those days.” Are you sure it was the Lord’s cause? Was the aiding in the erection of a costly “church house,” which still has a heavy debt upon it, “the Lord’s cause”?

Is there no remedy? Yes, thank God, there is. **“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”** (II Chro. 7:14). Ah, notice carefully what is said in the first clause: it is not “if the people,” but **“if my people shall humble themselves.”** How many Christians are genuinely surprised that we have not already witnessed a marked change on the part of the masses around us? But they need not be surprised: the “hard times” will make no impression for good on the multitudes until God’s own people humble themselves before Him! There is no need for the King of Great Britain or the President of the U.S.A. to appoint a day for national humiliation, fasting, and prayer, until Christians first get right with God.

What is meant by God’s people “humbling themselves?” This: getting down on their knees before God and owning with shamefacedness the fleshly and worldly manner in which they lived during the years of plenty, truly repenting for and sorrowfully confessing their covetousness, their carnality, their wastefulness. Then there has to be a sincere forsaking in full purpose of heart any continuance or repetition of their past Christ-dishonoring ways. Coupled with this must be the exercise of faith: that a merciful God will hear the penitent sobbings of a contrite heart, that He will graciously forgive, that He will blot out even the effects of their sins, and now **“heal their land”**—their present case and circumstances.

Not only must the four conditions of II Chronicles 7:14 be met, but the three closing promises of it must be trustfully appropriated and earnestly and persistently pleaded before God. Reader, let not the Devil put you off by saying that you were not guilty of such extravagance as were many of your neighbors; for most probably you were proportionately, and according to your station in life no more self-denying or thrifty than they. May the Lord search each of our hearts, quicken our memories, and convict our consciences.

Women’s Veils Spring 2004

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IS SELF-PITY SIN?

Bill James

This is an area of human experience where we risk being misunderstood. We do not wish to diminish in any way the proper expression of sympathy or the exercise of genuine care for others. However, neither do we wish to nurture and perpetuate unhealthy attitudes in people. There is a sort of pity that only serves to reinforce patterns of inherent selfishness. We do no one, including ourselves, any favors when we actually contribute to the fueling of self-pity. It crosses the grain with the gospel that teaches us self-denial and abstention from the proneness to self-pleasing.

First of all then, let us observe that the Bible does commend expressions of pity. The Bible teaches us that God pities sinners. We're told that He pities those who fear Him (Ps. 130:13). God also inclined those who held His wayward people captive to pity them (Ps. 106:46). God is said to be full of pity (Js. 5:11). The very heart of God is clearly seen in Christ's great compassion for the multitudes that were like sheep without a shepherd. Thanks be unto God for the multitude of His tender mercies.

It is entirely appropriate in many situations to show pity and would be a sin not to do so. For example, pity shown to the poor is so pleasing to God that He consider it as done to Himself and assures us that it's never in vain. **"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again"** (Pro. 19:17). Being full of pity is Christ-like.

So then, what is wrong with self-pity? Pity of self can be a very selfish thing indeed. Who will try to defend selfishness before God? Self would take the center stage and expect folks to make over them excessively. It would actually be offended with non-compliance here. Could the nurturing of self-pity reflect unfavorably upon God as though He were harsh and uncaring? Remember how the Israelites murmured and complained when their way seemed difficult and harsh. Was their self-pity legitimate or was their complaint with God Himself, who had chosen their paths marked out by the pillar cloud? Would it have been right for Moses to fuel their self-pity? Would he have honored God in so doing? Do Christians sometimes suspect God of not caring? **"Master, carest thou not that we perish"** (Mark 4:38)? **"Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone"** (Luke 10:40)? These two verses mark instances where the disciples felt Christ to be indifferent to their supposed plight. Their suspicions were, of course, unfounded and they stood to be corrected. We must be very careful lest self becomes the center instead of Christ. Christ, remember, pleased not Himself.

We wish to call your attention to the occasion when well-meaning Peter was an offence to Christ (Matt. 16:21-24). You will note in these verses that when Christ began to speak of His approaching harsh sufferings and death that Peter was very upset. He called Christ aside and verbally confronted Him. This revelation about suffering and death was extremely distasteful to Peter's carnal thinking. Peter said, **"Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."** This expression might be rendered *pity thyself* or *spare thyself* or *be merciful to thyself*, according to many reputable commentaries. Peter actually became the devil's spokesman when he uttered these words not savoring the things that be of God. Peter was a stumbling block when he sought to by-pass the cross. Peter interfered with God's will for His Son.

Christ would not pity or spare Himself. He refused the pity of weeping women in route to the cross (Luke 23:28). The Father's path for Him was self-denial and bearing the Cross. With Peter, and human nature in general, the path of self-denial and death to the self-life is highly unsavory. We would all, by nature, sooner pity ourselves than deny ourselves and thus despise the principles of the Gospel.

Oswald Chambers has a remark that might be helpful right there. "To choose to suffer means that there is something wrong; to choose God's will even if it means suffering is a very different thing. No healthy saint ever chooses suffering; he chooses God's will, as Jesus did, whether it means suffering or not. No saint dare interfere with the discipline of suffering in another saint." James says, **"Let patience have her perfect work."** Well-meaning people may, without realizing it, prove to be a stumbling block as Peter was. "None are more formidable instruments of temptation than well-meaning friends, who care more for our comfort than for our character" (BRUCE).

It is certain that Satan can make a handle of self-pity and pity misapplied. He is not above using the saints themselves if he can in order to trip us up. He obviously delights in self-centeredness and discontentment where he finds it and where he can promote it. Self-pity is sin. Self-pity can make a person forsake the post of duty and want to give up the fight. Elijah, under the juniper tree, supposed he alone was left of the servants of God. But God showed him there were 7,000 servants still in the battle for truth and unwilling to give homage to a false god. Elijah

went on farther adrift till his full recovery at Mt. Horeb.

Self-pity shuns the cross and retires from the fight. Christ would not and His true followers must not. Christ tells Peter and the other disciples, **"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."** Self-pity is sin!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Indore Baptist Church of Indore, WV and Pastor Paul Stepp will be having a Spring Fellowship Meeting. The meeting will take place on Wednesday April 21st thru Saturday April 24th. Service times are 6:30 p.m. Wednesday thru Friday, and at 10 a.m. on Saturday

The Scheduled speakers are Dan Stepp, Carl Barnett, Tom Ross, Tom Hysell, Benjamin Stepp, Billy Holbrook, Mark Minney, and Hank Bailes.

Also the church has a new website: www.indorebaptistchurch.org

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Galena, OH and Pastor Matt James will be hosting a Bible conference on May 7th and 8th. Services will begin on Friday evening at 6:00 p.m. and 9:30 a.m. on Saturday. The preachers will include Elders Bill Titus, Jerry Asbury, Mark Clark Sr., and Wayne Adams along with some to be announced. For more information contact Pastor Matt James at 614-409-2583 or via email at mattbrandy@sgbaptist.com.

The Landmark Missionary Baptist Church of Granite Bay, CA and Pastor Rick Perdue will be having revival services April 12th through the 18th with Bro. Jeff Short preaching. For more information contact Bro. Perdue at 916-791-7046 or by email at rperdue@jps.net.

The Calvary Baptist Church of Paris, TN is currently without a pastor. Any interested elder that would stand for grace and church doctrine not currently pastoring may contact Bro. Walter McCoy, 501 Terrapin Run Rd, Dover, TN 37058 or call (931) 232-5428.

The Grace Baptist Church of Corbin, KY will be having special services with Elder Jeff Short May 3rd thru 7th. Service time will be at 7:00 p.m. If you need directions or have any questions call Pastor Dana Douglas at

(606) 215-1028 or email him at dldouglas@hotmail.com.

Elder E. Howard Carter has retired from the pastorate of Harmony Baptist Church in Godfrey, IL., and is moving to 632 N. Duffy LN, Liberty, IN 47353. If you wish to reach him by phone the number is (765) 458-7168. He will be available for supply, etc. as time and opportunity permit.

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 2-1-2004 to 2-29-2004

Beginning Balance	\$2,366.76
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Berea B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary B. C., Everson, WA	200.00
Dividing check	200.00
.....	850.00
TOTAL	3,216.76
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	550.00
Dividing check	200.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	750.00
BALANCE	\$2,466.76

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,811.52
RECEIPTS:	
Total	1,811.52
EXPENDITURES:	
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,811.52

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 2-1-2004 to 2-29-2004

Beginning Balance	\$4,173.93
RECEIPTS:	
Arthur D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	28.89
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	2,060.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN	150.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL	100.00
Central Ave. B. C., Tampa, FL	25.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	20.00
Faith B. C., Seffner, FL	100.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Clarksville, TN	100.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace M. B. M., Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Joseph Jurzec, Lake-in-the-Hills, IL	25.00
Kenneth Weedin, Mabank, TX	250.00
L. H. Farrell, Kenner, LA	175.00
Landmark M.B.C., Moncks Corner, SC	25.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Lords Church, Goose Creek, SC	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	300.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Aztec, NM	25.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	75.00
Rick Wyatt, Kansas City, KS	16.00
Rose Young	21.50
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH	150.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC	100.00
West Milton B. C., West Milton, OH	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	200.00
Subscriptions	125.00
Dividing checks	500.00
Anon.	680.00
Sub Total	\$6,946.39
TOTAL	\$11,120.32
EXPENDITURES:	
Wages	3,680.00
Printing	517.06
Postage	757.99
Supplies	58.66
FICA taxes	299.89
Dividing checks	500.00
Total Expenditures	5,813.60
.....	5,306.72
Bank charge	-18.87
ENDING BALANCE	\$5,287.85

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