

The Berea Baptist Banner

Displaying Biblical truth for twenty-six years in the printed page.

Following Holiness

PART ONE

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

GENUINE
HOLINESS IS
INDISPENSABLE
TO
ACCEPTABILITY
WITH GOD

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).



Without holiness no one shall see the Lord. Obviously, the reference here must be to seeing Him in a favorable sense. In Revelation 1:7 we are told that every eye shall see Him when He comes in judgment, but that is a different sight from the seeing which will transform His people into His likeness (1 John 3:2). This is the seeing here referred to.

Now, our text says that we should follow peace with all men, and holiness--or, more accurately, the holiness--without which no one shall see the Lord. Evidently the Scripture and the testimony of experience agree that we do not yet enjoy peace with all men or holiness in the fullest sense, because we do not merely follow what we already fully possess.

Moreover, the word for "follow" is rather strong in the original, and could be translated "run after" or "pursue." The holiness without which no one shall see the Lord is worth our most diligent efforts to attain.

MEANING OF HOLINESS

"Holiness" and "sanctification" are two English words used to translate the same Greek word. The essential meaning is that of being set apart. So with the related words "holy," "saint," "sanctify," and "hallow." Any connotation of cleansing from sin is strictly coincidental.

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Why Did Adam Eat?

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

This is a topic that I have given much thought to over the years. When we think about the original condition of Adam and Eve in the garden, it was obviously not of immutable sinless condition, since they *did* eat and sin.



"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29).

Man was created mutable, but sinless. Upright, perfect and sinless (as God cannot create anything else!), but inherent in man's nature was a mutability that would allow him to choose good or evil. Hence God's commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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What Kind of Man Was Gehazi?

By Raymond Bennett
of Ithaca, New York

"But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well? And he said,

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Grace in Time of Need

By Wendell P. Furlong
of Burnside, Kentucky

"For we have not an high priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15-16).

According to these verses, the priesthood of Christ is based upon the perfection of His humanity. Because tempted in all points like as we are, therefore, He can show mercy, and grant help. Whatever destroys the conception of His humanity does in that same degree overthrow the notion of His priesthood.

Our subject is the Priestly Sympathies of Christ. But we make three preliminary observations.

The perfection of Christ's humanity implies He was possessed of a human soul as well as a human body. There was a view held in early times, and condemned by the church as a heresy, according to which the body of Christ was an external



framework animated by Deity, as our bodies are animated by our souls, what the soul is to us, Deity was to Christ. His body was flesh, blood, and bones--moved, guided, ruled by indwelling Divinity.

But you perceive at once that this destroys the notion of complete humanity. It is not this tabernacle of material elements which constitutes our humanity: you can not take that pale corpse from which life has fled, and call that man. And if Deity were to take up that form and make it its abode, that would not be a union of the Divine and Human. It would only be the union of Deity with certain materials that might have passed into man, or into an animal or an herb. Humanity implies a body and a soul.

Accordingly, in the life of Christ
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From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



Three Days and Three Nights

"Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and

three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:38-40).

Since Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Jews demanded a sign of Him to prove His claim. Jesus could give them no better proof that He was the Christ than the literal fulfillment of the well-known sign of Jonah (Luke 11:30). If this sign were not literally fulfilled, it would prove

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Are you a shining light for Jesus? or a burnt out bulb for the devil.

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

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

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Following Holiness

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That the essential meaning of "sanctify" is simply to "set apart" is manifest in the use of the word in I Peter 3:15:

"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts."

Certainly God needs no purifying or cleansing from sin. But we are to set *Him apart* in our affections as the supreme and unrivaled object of devotion; or, in Old Testament language, we must have no other gods in His presence.

We can avoid much misunderstanding of the Bible doctrine of holiness if we will keep in mind that in *Biblical usage the words "holy," "sanctify," etc., do not always or necessarily involve any change in the condition or nature of the things, or persons sanctified, but simply that in some sense they are SET APART for some special reason or purpose.*

HOLINESS IN PATTERN

The God Who created man in His own image is preeminently the holy God. **"Holy and reverend is his name"** (Ps. 111:9).

Moses repeatedly received from God and transmitted to the people the testimony that *God is holy*. Isaiah in vision heard the seraphim crying, **"Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of armies!"** (Isa. 6:3 imp. trans.). And John on Patmos tells of seeing in and around the throne of God in heaven four living creatures who **"rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come"** (Rev. 4:1-8).

So outstanding is holiness as a characteristic of God that the third person of the trinity is generally called in the Bible the *Holy Spirit*.

And *when God became man He remained holy, and provided in Christ the perfect pattern of what a man ought to be, and of what redeemed man must become:*

"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 7:26; 4:15).

"Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. . . . In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:11, 18).

HOLINESS IN POSITION

Substitution is the core of the gospel message, and when Satan persuades men to reject the Bible doctrine of substitution he has turned them away from the Christ of the Bible, though they may still use His name in vain.

In the Old Testament types, the innocent animals died as *substitutes* for sinful men and the blood of the sacrifices made an atonement [covering] for the souls of men. In the New Testament

fulfillment,

"Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12).

This holy or sanctified position of God's people, provided for through the blood of Christ shed on Calvary, is made real and effective in human experience by faith. The blood, we say, is applied by faith: that is, the merits and benefits of the blood become effective by faith. So Christ sent Paul as a minister and witness to the Gentiles.

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

It is in the sense of position that all God's people, all true believers, are called saints in the Bible. This position, once gained, can never be lost:

"We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. . . . For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:10, 14).

HOLINESS IN PRACTICE

Our secure position in Christ is designed for the comfort and encouragement of true saints, not for the delusion of hypocrites: though unlearned and unstable souls may twist scripture truth to their own destruction (II Peter 3:16).

But God's Word calls upon His people in their sanctified position to *sanctify themselves in their practice, their conduct, their behavior.*

"As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [conduct]; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15, 16).

"Be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 6:17-7:1).

"If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:13, 14)?

HOLINESS IN PROSPECT

Unlike some deceived souls today, the apostle Paul did not pretend to have attained "sinless perfection" in the flesh, but rather looked forward to attaining it in the resurrection:

"I count all things but loss for the

excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: . . . if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:8-12).

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: . . . Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (I Thes. 5:23, 24---note future tense).

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, . . . And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:2, 27).

So for eternity our holy God will be Himself the temple and the light in that holy city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10); *His glorified saints shall serve the Lamb Who redeemed them, "and they shall reign for ever and ever"* (Rev. 22:3-5).

ONLY THE CHRIST OF GOD'S HOLY WORD CAN TAKE US TO A HEAVENLY HOME

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isa. 35:8).

Whatever this text may mean in terms of a millennial kingdom, the primary and ultimate spiritual reference must be to the Messiah, the Christ, in all ages the one and only Way of Life for his people. **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,"** said Jesus (John 14:6); and this is just as true today as it will be in any future age.

A HIGH WAY

Let us note first, then, that this way of life, this way of holiness, is a high way. In fact, *all the ways of God are high above the ways of men:*

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8, 9).

God's way in Christ, however, is so high that we cannot possibly reach it of ourselves: *only in humble surrender to his saving grace do we find ourselves transported into the way of holiness:*

"For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth

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himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14).

A NARROW WAY

Jesus Himself warns us that the way of life is a narrow way:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13, 14).

This is not popular religion, but we had better be clear in our minds whether we wish to be popular with the world or accepted with God. We cannot be both. God's way is a narrow way. *Boasting of broadmindedness in religion is mere scatterbrained foolishness.* The only right way is God's way, and His way is Christ, and His Christ is the Christ of the Bible.

A HOLY WAY

The way of life is the way of holiness. Let us not shrink from this doctrine merely because some people have misunderstood it. Certainly we are not yet what we ought to be and what we want to be, but *if we are children of God we are a holy people:* that is, a people set apart.

Nothing that defiles shall enter the heavenly city (Rev. 21:27), and it is written of the way of holiness in our text that **"the unclean shall not pass over it."**

God's declared will for His people is their sanctification, or holiness, and without holiness **"no man shall see the Lord"** (I Thes. 4:3; Heb. 12:14).

Holiness for the true child of God must be not only a matter of legal position and heavenly prospect, but also a matter of living practice. God's choicest promises of fellowship and blessing are for those of His people whose lives in daily conduct are set apart to Him. So let us walk in the way of holiness:

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1).

A PLAIN WAY

"Wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Surely this is an extraordinary and exciting statement. Obviously it cannot mean that any of God's children in this world are incapable of error. What then?

The word "therein," though supplied by the translators, offers one answer. *Any errors we make are not in the way of holiness, but beside the way.* That is, we err when we momentarily step out of the right way. This is true, but I rather doubt that it is the intended meaning.

More likely, the truth here expressed is that men brought into this way by the grace of God will not err to the extent that they depart from or lose the way.

Children of God may act very foolishly sometimes, but *if they really are His children they will persevere in the way of holiness.*

It is true also that the way of holiness is plain enough even for a fool to find. *If sinners go on to destruction, it is not because they cannot find the way: it is because they refuse to come this way even when it is pointed out to them.*

A SAFE WAY

"No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there" (Isa. 35:9). We may be physically hurt or killed, but *no real or lasting harm can come to us if we are living in Christ.*

If we are in the way of holiness, we are in the hand of Christ and of God, and no one can pluck us out. (John 10:28-30.) If we have found ourselves in the love of Christ, we can be sure that no power in heaven, earth, or hell **"shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (Rom. 8:35-39).

A SURE WAY

"And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion" (Isa. 35:10). Perhaps Isaiah was thinking about Israel returning to earthly Zion, but believers in Christ have come (spiritually) **"unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem"** (Heb. 12:22).

Some natural highways are beautiful but unfinished. None of them go far enough to reach an eternal goal. But *the way of holiness has been completed: Jesus finished it on Calvary's cross.* And if He has brought us into His way, He will stay with us to the end, of the journey. *He has never lost a soul that trusted Him, and He never will.*

"I am the resurrection, and the life," said Jesus. **"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"** (John 11:25, 26).

Nowhere is there another road like this way of holiness, in which every traveler is sure to reach his promised destination. It is a sure way, because *Jesus has not only opened the road but also provides the spiritual power to take us through to the end of the journey.*

A JOYFUL WAY

"They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10). That is the climax, but it is written of people who **"come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."**

Joy unmixed with sorrow awaits us at the end, but joy in the midst of sorrow encourages us on the way. *The way of holiness is a joyful way, and gloomy Christians misrepresent it.* They need to pray as David did **"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation"** (Ps. 51:12).

"The joy of the LORD is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). The blessed (happy) God wants His people to be blessed (happy). *If you cannot enjoy God and His Word and work, may He make you miserable enough to surrender to His will in Christ, that He may lift you up and set your feet in the way of holiness, the way of everlasting joy.*

COMPLETE HOLINESS IS ULTIMATE GOAL OF EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE

"And may the God of peace himself sanctify you to perfection; and may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blamelessly in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (I Thes. 5:23-24, improved translation).

Language staggers at the task of transmitting the full meaning of this text which at first sight seems so simple. In the midst of a series of exhortations to practical obedience on the part of God's people, the inspired writers, as if realizing anew the inability even of saints to respond without divine help, suddenly break forth in the sanctification of His people.

IMPROVED TRANSLATION

"May the God of peace himself sanctify you"---so far we can translate with comparative ease, though understanding and interpreting the translation is another matter. But what next?

"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," says King James. But the word rendered "wholly" is a compound adjective in the original, not an adverb, and commentators disagree on its intent here. Tyndale said "thorow out," or, in modern spelling, "throughout," which KJ changed to "wholly." Some have suggested simply "all," meaning that Paul and his associates in writing this letter were praying for all the members of the Thessalonian church.

But the adjective in dispute is compound, made by combining the words for "whole" and "end." Perhaps the idea in view here is *sanctification to the extent that the sanctified will be wholly finished, completed, or perfected,* and so I have freely translated the adjective by a phrase conveying this idea.

"Your whole spirit," etc., is not an exact translation, as the adjective rendered "whole" is predicate rather than attributive, but it is practically impossible to render accurately the Greek construction and word order here in readable English.

More important is the corrected rendering "blamelessly" instead of "blameless." *The prayer was not that the Thessalonians should be blameless but that they should be blamelessly preserved.*

PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

Let us remember that in Biblical usage **"sanctify"** means "set apart," and that these Thessalonian saints had already

been sanctified or set apart as God's people. So in II Thessalonians 2:13 (imp. trans.) we read:

"God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

In Biblical language all saved people, all children of God, all true believers in Christ, are saints. These terms are different ways of describing the same people. But *"saints" may be more or less "saintly," holy, or sanctified:* hence the frequent commands and promises of greater holiness to an already holy people.

Now, the prayer of our text is that *God will so sanctify that the persons sanctified will be quite complete, wholly perfect, finished products of God's redeeming grace. Nothing less than this should be the goal and ambition of every true child of God.*

How much holiness or sanctification have we experienced? To what extent have we been sanctified or set apart to the God Who commands us to sanctify Him in our hearts? (I Pet. 3:15.)

The three-fold division of our nature as set forth in our text offers a practical outline for self-examination.

SANCTIFICATION OF SPIRIT

"Peter. . .to the strangers. . .elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. . ." (I Pet. 1:1-2). See also II Thes. 2:13, already quoted.

It is probable that the primary reference here is to the Holy Spirit, but His work of sanctification is first of all with the spirit of man. See I Corinthians 2:9-12.

So we are sanctified or set apart in spirit unto God at the very beginning of our Christian experience. So complete and permanent is this sanctification of spirit, inseparably connected with the new birth, that we read:

"Everyone that has been born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God" (I John 3:9 imp. trans.).

And again:

"We know that everyone that has been born of God sinneth not; but he that was born of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one does not touch him" (I John 5:18 imp. trans.).

Here is real "sinless perfection"! And note that in the Bible this claim is not made merely for a limited advanced class of God's people who are supposed to have obtained a "second blessing" or to have attained a "higher" or "deeper" spiritual life than ordinary Christians! No: *the Bible claims this "sinless perfection," this absolute separation from sin, for "everyone that has been born of God."*

On the other hand, of these same

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children of God, the same inspired writer says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8).

"If I do that I would not," says Paul, "it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." So, in Romans 7:20, is the paradox resolved. As also in verse 25: "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

SANCTIFICATION OF SOUL

Obviously, then, scriptural sanctification in this life is NOT the "eradication of the old nature." The old man may be crucified, put off, and reckoned dead, but he is still with us while we live in this world.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

Now, the "soul" spoken of in our text seems to be or to include the permanent self, the ego, the conscience, the personal life which constitutes at once the battleground and, under God, the arbiter of this conflict between flesh and spirit.

It is this "soul" or "life" (the same word in the original) which in Matthew 16:24-27 Jesus commands His disciples to lose for His sake that they may find it. And our eternal rewards will be according to our works: that is, the degree to which our souls (lives) are sanctified (set apart) in His service.

Further sanctification of soul or life in order to a fuller manifestation of the divine relationship is the objective held forth in II Corinthians 6:11-7:1):

“. . . Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: . . . for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; . . . Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

SANCTIFICATION OF BODY

Ceremonially and momentarily these bodies of flesh and blood are sanctified to divine service whenever we "through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body" (Rom. 8:13). But this momentary sanctification, though it becomes habitual in the life of a true Christian, does not in any wise change the sinful nature of corruptible flesh.

Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, who no doubt attained a higher degree of sanctification in his life than anyone on earth today, testified of himself in the present tense:

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18).

Moreover, the same apostle informs us:

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:50-53).

So it is not until the resurrection that the bodies of the saints will be finally, completely, and forever sanctified or set apart from sin and the sorrow, pain, death, and corruption that result from sin, to be henceforth for eternity a perfectly holy people in the presence of their holy God and Savior. (Rev. 21:1-4.)

Is it really possible for God's people that our "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blamelessly in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"? The prayer already has its answer: "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

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Grace in Time of Need

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we find two distinct classes of feeling. When He hungered in the wilderness--when He thirsted on the cross--when He was weary at the well at Sychar--He experienced sensations which belong to the bodily department of human nature. But when, out of twelve, He selected one to be His bosom friend--when He looked round upon the crowd in anger--when the tears streamed down His cheeks at Bethany--and when He recoiled from the thought of approaching dissolution: these--grief, friendship, and fear--were not the sensations of the body, much less were they the attributes of the Godhead. They were the affections of an acutely sensitive human soul, alive to all the tenderness, and hopes, and anguish with which human life is filled, qualifying Him to be tempted in all points like as we are.

The second thought which presents itself is that the Redeemer not only was, but is man. He was tempted in all points like us. He is as a high-priest which can be touched. Our conceptions on this subject, from being vague, are often very erroneous. It is fancied that in the history of Jesus' existence, once for a limited period and for definite purposes, He took part in frail humanity; but that when that purpose was accomplished, the man forever perished, and the Spirit reascended, to unity again with pure unmixed Deity. But Scripture has taken peculiar pains to give assurance of the continuance of His humanity. It has carefully recorded His resurrection. After that He passed through space from spot to spot: when He was in one place He was

not in another. His body was sustained by the ordinary ailments--broiled fish and honeycomb. The prints of suffering were on Him. His recognitions were human still. Thomas and Peter were especially reminded of such incidents before His death, and connected with His living interests. To Thomas He says--"Reach hither thy hand." To Peter--"Lovest thou me?"

And this typifies to us a very grand and important truth. We think of God as a Spirit, infinitely removed from and unlike the creatures He has made. But the truth is, man resembles God: all Spirits, all minds, are of the same family. The Father bears a likeness to the Son whom He has created. The mind of God is similar to the mind of man. Love does not mean one thing in man, and another thing in God. Holiness, justice, pity, and tenderness--these are in the Eternal the same in kind which they are in the finite being. The present manhood of Christ conveys this deeply important truth, that the Divine heart is human in its sympathies.

The third observation upon these views is that there is a connection between what Jesus was and what Jesus is. He can be touched now, because He was tempted then. The incidents and the feelings of that part of the existence which is gone have not passed away without results which are deeply entwined with His present being. His past experience has left certain affects durable in His nature as it is now. It has endured Him with certain qualifications and certain susceptibilities, which He would not have had but for that experience. Just as the results remained upon His body, the prints of the nails in His palms, and the spear-gash in His side, so do the results remain upon His soul, enduring Him with certain susceptibilities, for "He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;" with certain qualifications, for "He is able to shew mercy, and to impart grace to help in time of need."

To turn now to the subject itself, it has two branches.

I. The Redeemer's preparation for His Priesthood.

II. The Redeemer's priestly qualifications.

His preparation: The preparation consisted in being tempted. But here a difficulty arises. Temptation, as applied to a being perfectly free from tendencies to evil, is not easy to understand. See what the difficulty is. Temptation has two senses: it means test as probation; it means also trial, involving the idea of pain or danger. A common acid applied to gold tests it, but there is no risk or danger to the most delicate golden ornament. There is one acid, and only one, which tries it, as well as tests it. The same acid applied to a shell endangers the delicacy of its surface. A weight hanging from a bar of iron only tests its strength; the

same, suspending from a human arm, is a trial, involving, it may be, the risk of pain or fracture. Now a trial placed before a sinless being is intelligible enough in the sense of probation--it is a test of excellence; but it is not easy to see how it can be a temptation in the sense of pain, if there be no inclination to do wrong.

However, Scripture plainly asserts this as the character of Christ's temptation. Not merely test but trial.

First, you have passages declaring the immaculate nature of His mind--as here, "without sin." Again, He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). And again, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). The spirit of evil found nothing which it could claim as its own in Christ. It was the meeting of two elements which will not amalgamate--oil and water could as easily bond, as the mind of Christ with evil, as a mustard seed with a pumpkin seed. Temptation glances from His heart as the steel point does from the surface of the diamond. It was not that evil propensities were kept under the power of the Spirit in His--He had no evil propensities at all. Obedience was natural to Him.

But then we find another class of passages such as this: "He himself suffered, being tempted." Those were not mere tests in the temptation, but there was also painfulness in the victory. How could this be without any tendency to evil?

The answer is this, let us analyze sin. In every act of sin there are two steps: There is the rising of a desire which is natural, and, being natural is not wrong. There is the indulgence of that desire in forbidden circumstances; and that is sin. Let injury, for example, be inflicted, and resentment will arise. It must arise spontaneously. It is as impossible for injustice to be done, and resentment not to follow intense torture. Resentment is but the sense of injustice, made more vivid by its being brought home to ourselves; resentment is beyond our control, so far. There is not sin in this; but let resentment pass into, not justice but revenge; let it smolder in vindictive feeling until it becomes retaliation, and then a natural feeling has grown into a transgression. You have the distinction between these two things clearly masked in Scripture. "Be ye angry"--here is the allowance for the human, "and sin not"--here is the point where resentment passes into retaliation.

Again, take the natural sensation of hunger. Let a man have been without food; let the gratification present itself, and the natural desire will arise involuntarily. It will arise just as certainly in a forbidden as in a permitted circumstance. It will arise whether what he looks on is the bread of another or his own. And it is not here, in the sensation of hunger that the guilt

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Grace in Time of Need

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lays. But it lies in the willful gratification of it after it is known to be forbidden.

This was literally one of the cases in which Christ was tried. The wish for food was in His nature in the wilderness. The very mode of gratifying it was presented to His imagination, by using Divine power in an unlawful way. And had He so been constituted that the lower wish was superior to the higher will, there would have been an act of sin; had the two been nearly balanced, so that the conflict hanged in doubt, as there was an inner struggle, there would have been a tendency to sin: what we call a sinful nature. But it was in the entire and perfect subjugation of desire to the will of right that a sinless nature was exhibited.

Here then is the nature of sin--sin is not the possession of desires, but he having them in uncontrolled ascendancy over the higher nature. Sinfulness does not consist in having strong desires or passions; in the strongest and highest natures, all, including the desires, are strong. Sin is not a real thing. It is rather the absence of something, the will to do right. It is not a disease or taint, an actual substance projected into the constitution. It is the absence of the spirit which orders and harmonizes the whole; so that what we mean when we say the natural man must sin inevitably, is this, that he has strong natural appetites, and that he has no bias from above to counteract these appetites: exactly as if a ship were deserted by the crew, and left on the bosom of the Atlantic with every sail set and the wind blowing. No one forces her to destruction, yet on the rocks she will surely go, just because there is no pilot at the helm. Such is the state of ordinary men. Temptation leads to a fall. The gusts of instincts, which rightly guided would have carried safely into port, dash them on the rocks. No one forces them to sin; but the spirit--pilot has left the helm--(Fallen Nature). Sin, therefore, is not in the appetites, but in the absence of that which controls the will (I Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:8-9).

Now contrast this state with the state of Christ. There were in Him all the natural appetites of mind and body. Relaxation and friendship were dear to Him--so were sunlight and life. Hunger, pain, death--He could feel all, and shrank from them. Conceive, then, a case in which the gratification of any one of these inclinations was inconsistent with His Father's will. At one moment it was unlawful to eat, though hungry; and without one tendency to disobey, did fasting cease to be severe? It was demanded that He should endure anguish; and willingly as He suffered Himself, did pain cease to be pain? Could

the Spirit of obedience reverse every feeling in human nature? When the brave man gives his shattered arm to the surgeon's knife, will may prevent even the quiver of an eyelid, but no will and no courage can reverse his sensation from inflicting pain. When the heart is raw, and smarting from recent bereavement, let there be the deepest and most reverential submission to the highest will, is it possible not to wince? Can any count demand for submission extort the profession that pain is pleasure?

It seems to have been in this way that the temptation of Christ caused suffering. He suffered from the force of desire. Though there was no hesitation whether to obey or not, no strife in the will, in the act of mastery there was pain. There was self-denial--there was obedience at the expense of tortured natural feeling. He shrank from Peter's suggestion of escape from ignoring as from a thing which did not shake His determination, but made Him feel, in the idea of bright life, vividly the cast of His resolve. **"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence."** In the garden, unswervingly, **"not as I will, but as Thou wilt."** There was no reluctance in the will. But was there any struggling--any shudder in the inward sensations--any remembrance that the cross was sharp--any recollection of the family at Bethany, and the pleasant walk, and the dear companionship which He was about to leave? **"My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death."**

So that in every one of those cases--not by the reluctance of a sinful sensation, but by the quivering and the anguish of natural feeling when it is trampled upon by lofty will--Jesus suffered, being tempted. He was tempted like as we are. Remember this. For the way in which some speak of the sinlessness of Jesus reduces all His suffering to physical pain, destroys the reality of temptation, reduces that glorious heart to a pretense, and converts that whole of His history into a mere fictitious drama, in which scenes of trial were only represented, not really felt. Remember that, **"in all points,"** the Redeemer's soul was tempted.

It is a fact Jesus was not like the first Adam, that was a mere mortal, who could and did sin. Any individual who cannot see and understand man's totally depraved nature experimentally will go wrong on other teachings of God's Word. That is a settled fact; there is no question about that. You learn it, first, from the study of God's Word, and second, experimentally under Holy Spirit convictions. You read in your Bible that **"men loved darkness rather than light"** (John 3:19).

The reason some people lie, plot, plan, steal and adulterize is because no restraining power is in their life that enables them to just say, "NO" to their greed, thirst, lust for power, control, and worldly preeminence. However, "they

shall reap what they sow" (Gal. 6:7-8). They have and do offend God's little ones, and heap it on their lust (Luke 17:2).

CONCLUSION

The Lord has always had a way to bring order out of disorder (Gen. 1:2).

The Lord delivered Joseph from Potiphar's wife, who, filled with lust, tried in vain to seduce Joseph (Gen. 39:12).

Jezebel conspired against Naboth to get his vineyard by recruiting baser sort of men (I Kings 21:10).

The wicked Jews of Paul's day used the lewd and baser sort to attack Paul and Silas (Acts 17:5).

No one can say a Houdini was so skilled in seduction that he caused me to sin and commit adultery, and has caused me to become censorious to others. Back in the farming country where I was born and reared, I have seen this. A farmer would have a good stock dog. The neighbor would have a sheep killer. Together they roamed the country and both dogs became sheep killers. The old farmer destroyed both dogs. He remarked that it was in them, and the same penalty applied.

Lastly, it is the same human sympathy which qualifies Christ for judgment. It is written that the Father hath committed all judgment to Him, because He is the son of man. The sympathy of Christ extends to the frailties of human nature, not to its hardened guilt: He is **"touched with the feelings of our infirmities."** There is nothing in His bosom which can harmonize with malice; He cannot feel for envy; He had no fellow-feeling for cruelty, oppression, hypocrisy, bitter censorious judgments. Remember He could look around about Himself with anger. The sympathy of Christ is a very comforting subject. It is, besides, a tremendous subject; for on sympathy the awards of Heaven and Hell are determined. **"Except a man be born again"**--not *he shall not*, but--**He can not see the kingdom of God."** There is nothing in Him which has affinity to any thing in the bosom of the judge. A sympathy for that which is pure implies a repulsion of that which is impure. Hatred of evil is in proportion to the strength of love for good. To love good intensely and consistently is to hate evil intensely and consistently. It was in strict accordance with the laws of sympathy that He blighted Pharisaism in Matthew 23. He will say to hypocrites **"I never knew you, depart from me"** (Matt. 7:21-23).



Why Did Adam Eat?

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My question of the Original Sin always comes back to "Why would they sin?" I mean, they had *everything* their hearts (pure and sinless) could desire! They had

all the love, joy, peace, tenderheartedness, etc., that would make life wondrous and as my mind looks forward to our eternity future, *satisfied* with God!

To rebel and eat the fruit, I think, would have been an *impossibility* for Adam and Eve to even *naturally* consider. (They *naturally* chose holy things in their holy heart.) I think it would have to take something *external* to cause them to even do a double-take on the forbidden fruit. Which is what happened. . . Enter the evil thought-producer Satan.

"And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Tim. 2:14).

This all-expressive verse gives the details to the passage of the fall in Genesis. Eve truly did not know that what she was doing was indeed sinful. The vile serpent came into Paradise and lied a weave around her and she fell. I'm not excusing her. She had the resources necessary. She could have asked the Living Word about it (God/Jesus). She could have run to Adam and talked it over with him. But she didn't. She acted on impulse and pure emotion, and she fell and died.

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren" (Jas. 1:14-16).

I think this verse teaches that Eve could have touched the fruit. Dangerous, sure, but the commandment was not to eat thereof. But considering it and (lusting?) it, she should have chosen obedience to God over the mounting crescendo of deafening lies the serpent was spinning. She should still yet have thrown the fruit to the ground and fled the scene. **"But thou, O man of God, FLEE THIS THINGS; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses"** (I Tim. 6:11-12). **"Submit yourself therefore to God. RESIST THE DEVIL, and he will flee from you. DRAW NIGH TO GOD, AND HE WILL DRAW NIGH TO YOU. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded"** (James 4:7-8).

So Eve was deceived as she was tempted by the wily deceiver, who caught her alone in the garden. We'll get to him later, but imagine the scene that Adam returns to. This scene *must* be true, due to the fact that he *was not* deceived. **"And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression"** (I Tim. 2:14).

He comes "home" and finds Eve in this compromised position. Possibly as close as with the fruit still with one bite taken

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Why Did Adam Eat?

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and her eyes wide open with the horror of what she'd done. Even with the juice of the delicious fruit (made by the perfect God) still dripping from her crestfallen chin.

Do you know what Adam saw? He saw and recognized a *dead woman*. *His wife!* Can you imagine the keening of sorrow that rose from his heart? His beloved! *Dead!* No hope! Gone, beyond reach...Beyond help...Dead.

No, Adam was *not* deceived. He knew what Eve had done. His heart hardened with the realization that she could *never* be saved. She had *infinitely* defied the *Infinite* One. Such a horror as Death was her only possible judgment. Adam positively *knew!*

So *why* in the world did Adam eat? Doesn't even rate a whole verse to itself, but there it is in four damning words. **"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; AND HE DID EAT"** (Gen. 3:6).

Perhaps we could look at it as a noble deed. Adam, in his wisdom that Solomon could only yearn for, that depravity and carnal flesh shadow us from his clarity and spirituality, *perhaps*, saw that his treasured wife was dead and saw in a moment that her only hope was if he died too. That then God would *have* to find a way to save them both. He didn't want God to make him another perfect wife and move them away from that "horrible" tree. He wanted *Eve!* We can understand such a romantic urge, can't we? We can even find a picture of Christ in this scenario. How He gave Himself *utterly* to restore His people.

Only problem is that Adam *couldn't* restore Eve with another Unrighteous Act. We have entered the realm of hypothetical analysis, where we must tread carefully, but what if Adam had *not* eaten the fruit. You know, maybe *trusted* God? Perhaps trusted in God's mercy and grace? His *love?*

No, Adam's act was not a noble, romantic gesture to save Eve's life. It was *sin*. It was the act of shaking his fist at God and saying, *I know what you said! I know it's wrong! But I love her more than you and I'm gonna eat!* "...and he did eat."

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21). I truly believe that Adam and Eve were both saved, as pictured here. I just cannot fathom Adam living the rest of his life, seeing the murder of his son, the evil depth of depravity that his children and grandchildren to the seventh, eighth, etc., degree plunged into without taking

his own life---knowing as he looked upon every hurt, every sin, every depraved action---"I did this. I caused all of this the day that I ate of the fruit of the garden."

No Adam was saved from that state by a merciful and gracious, loving God! **"And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living"** (Gen. 3:20). This is the most wonderful statement Adam ever made! He looked beyond the sin in his future. He looked beyond the curse just placed upon himself and his beloved wife. And he *saw Christ!* Notice he named her *Eve*, the mother of all *living!* *Not dead*, anymore! She is alive by the grace, unmerited favor of God! None of his actions accomplished anything but only more death! *But God accomplished life!* *But God!* How I love that phrase!

"BUT GOD, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us" (Eph. 2:4).

"For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: BUT GOD had mercy on him; and not on him only, BUT ON ME ALSO, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow" (Phil. 2:27).

"For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: But God gave it to Abraham by promise" (Gal. 3:18).

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. BUT GOD hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:9-10).

Surely, the way of God is the way of grace. **"Not of works, lest any man should boast"** (Eph. 2:9). What was Adam thinking? He was thinking a "works salvation," at best---something he could do to help out a terrible situation. At worst, it was plain rebellion against a loving God that had provided all his needs and promised him eternal life, if he just trusted and obeyed.

Beloved reader, we need to learn from this lesson of Adam and Eve. God's plan is always grace. Abraham! Sarah! You don't need to fornicate with Hagar to

"help out" God's promises. Trust in His promises, depend on His grace. It will work out much better and with *much* less sorrow! (Just see how much affliction the Ishmaelites down through the ages have caused Isaac's children!)

Go ahead and sacrifice Isaac, Abraham. I know you don't understand the why and wherefore. Is it not enough that you *know* that your God commands? Yes, I see it is now enough! Praise the Lord! Father of the faithful! Well-named! To give up the thing in this life that you love the most---for the love of your God! **"And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: FOR NOW I KNOW THAT THOU FEAEST GOD, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me"** (Gen. 22:12). *Abraham loved God more than Isaac!* And God counted it unto him for righteousness!

Adam, Adam! Could you not love your God enough to trust Him? In this awful time when your perfect world was rocked by the sight of your love--your soulmate, your wife---helplessly sprawled in shame and death?

Trust God! Collapse upon His tender bowels of mercy! Throw yourself at His plenteous heart of grace! But he didn't. And now we will never know---Never see the marvelous plan of grace in action for Eve.

But, cheer up, beloved reader! As we leave the hypothetical realm of "what if," we can turn our attention to the *reality* of the grace that the Lord God Almighty has ordained all along for *you!* You see, Eve was indeed the mother of all living. Eve's seed was a Sure Rock of Salvation in her future. In Abram's future. Moses looked forward to Him with all the prophets of old! **"But when the fulness of time was come, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON, MADE OF A WOMAN, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"** (Gal. 4:4-5).

You see, your works, no matter your intelligence, your good intentions, your hard labor---*cannot* save you. You like Adam and Eve, have sinned *infinitely* against the *Infinite* God. You are culpable. You are right at this moment, under the condemnation of a righteous God. **"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only**

begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

Beloved reader, you have no hope outside of the sacrifice and atonement made on the cross of Calvary! Flee to the pure and holy One of God. Trust in His invitation of deliverance. **"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME, AND DRINK"** (John 7:37).

If the Holy Spirit has convicted you of your guilty state before a stern and holy God, then He has indeed begun a work in you. Fall upon your knees, *thirsty one*, and flee to the mercy of the Son of God! He has gifted you with that faith necessary to believe and the repentance of godly sorrow!

I trust that these word pictures have been a blessing to you. May God bless!



What Kind of Man

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All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow" (II Kings 5:20-27).

Look at the man, Naaman. Naaman was really a very normal man, as James says about Elijah, **"...subject to like passions as we are..."** (James 5:17). We were allowed to see his good points but also allowed to see that Naaman had feelings like we do, wanting the courtesy, attention, and treatment that we also want, and sometimes getting angry when he didn't receive that treatment. Nevertheless, we can look at Naaman and say, "there is a man I'd like to emulate."

But sometimes it is equally beneficial to look at a man we *don't* want to be like.

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What Kind of Man

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Such a man was Gehazi.

We don't know much about Gehazi, or of any of the servants of the prophets, so we must glean from the general picture we see of the prophets and their servants over several occasions.

Prophets were not unique to the Kingdom days. Jesus attributes prophet status to Abel (Luke 11:50-51), and of course we know from Jude's reference (Jude 14) that Enoch was a prophet. We don't read of any plurality of prophets until I Samuel when, **"the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"** but from that reference we conclude that there seems to have been a class of people who were prophets, a part of the clergy of that era, if you please. It appears that Samuel established schools of the prophets (I Samuel 19:19-20) which were common in the days of Elijah and Elisha (II Kings 7:1-18) where Elijah and then Elisha taught.

This becomes important to our study of Gehazi because we don't see "servants" of the prophets until Elijah and Elisha. Elisha became Elijah's servant, (I Kings 19:21) **"...Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him"** and went on to be Elijah's replacement. One wonders, then, were Elijah's and Elisha's servants their understudies?

We first meet Gehazi in II Kings 4:12-14 where it appears that Elisha is trying to give Gehazi some one on one teaching and testing Gehazi to see how much he had learned. **"And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old"** (II Kings 4:14). Later in that same chapter we get our first glance at Gehazi's character. **"... And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away..."** (v. 27).

Gehazi, who knew the woman's need earlier, now had no compassion for her grief. We may not know what another's grief is, but we must not be cold and uncompassionate just because we don't know all the facts. Our cold doctrinal legalism too often makes us uncaring! More often than not, we *don't* know all the circumstances. *The man of God must be compassionate.*

We find three other weak points in Gehazi's makeup.

Lack of compassion often shows itself in merchandizing of our services. Too many of God's servants want to sell their services and gain a higher salary. Granted, many small churches cannot pay a living wage to their pastor. We mean no condemnation of the pastor of such a church who must work another

job to meet his expenses. We only emphasize, as does Peter, that it is only in our country that the pastor is expected to have the best suits and a better standard of living than those in his church. Big salaries, or even big congregations, must never be the criterion for accepting or leaving a given ministry. **"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind"** (I Peter 5:2).

This, by the way, is why *this* pastor prefers a box at the back of the sanctuary for people to put their tithes and offerings instead of a collection plate passed in front of visitors. Our Gospel is free. If God does not provide the needs of a ministry without soliciting money from the unsaved, that ministry should not be. There would be less theological confusion, more funds available for legitimate local Church ministries and less scorn for gospel preachers if there were less solicitation by the Gehazis of this world.

Gehazi, like Judas, saw the opportunity to gain wealth and provision from the gratitude of Naaman. He did not want this gain for his master! There might have been some legitimate motivation had he thought the way Joshua thought for Moses. **"But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them"** (Num. 11:26-28). Joshua was concerned for Moses' glory, but Gehazi wanted these gifts for *himself*. (See verse 24 in our text.)

Another flaw in Gehazi's character is seen in verses 25-26. Gehazi sought to hide his ill gotten gain, as did Achan in Joshua 7. Then he compounded his error by lying about it. **"And he said, Thy servant went no whither."** Like so many would-be servants associated with the clergy, Gehazi wanted to appear to be more righteous than he actually was.

Some men make a big issue of their past sins, to the point that you would think that if one hasn't been saved from a life of crime, drunkenness or addiction, they aren't as knowledgeable about God's grace. In the flaunting of their supposedly spectacular conversions they do more to draw others into those sins than keep others out of those sins.

At the other end of the spectrum, some make a big issue out of the purity of their lives even before conversion. These convey the attitude that they are a little more spiritual, a little superior to the

other believers, often doing more to drive the unsaved from our doors than actually being a witness.

And finally, verse 26 **"And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee."**

Gehazi lacked discernment. In the miracles he had witnessed and the power he had seen in Elisha, had he not learned of God's revelation to Elisha? Elisha might well have said to Gehazi, as Joseph did to his brothers nearly 1,000 years earlier, **"wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine"** (Gen. 44:15)?

May God make us, especially those of us who seek to serve God, to be compassionate, knowledgeable of grace, and discerning, and may God keep us from the love of money and the desire for personal gain from the service we do in God's name.



Three Days Three Nights

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unto them that He was not the Messiah. This was the only sign Jesus ever gave them to prove His Messiahship. Hence the great need for Him to do exactly what He promised them to do.

Mark 8:31 tells us: **"And He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and AFTER THREE DAYS rise again"** (emphasis MRC). Did Christ mean what He said? Did He really expect to be buried in the earth for three days and three nights? Jesus did not say "after two nights and one day" I will rise again. He said after three days I will rise again. He meant three days and three nights---a full 72 hours!

The Jews remembered this sign when He was crucified. **"Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first"** (Matt. 27:62-64). They did all they could to prevent His resurrection. They got the watch, made the sepulcher sure, and sealed the stone. **"After three days I will rise again"** was necessary to fulfill the Jonah sign.

Modern interpreters of the Bible make Jesus Christ a liar. They say Jesus was crucified on Good Friday, buried about sundown the same day, and arose on the next Sunday about daybreak in contradiction to the Scriptures! Any

school boy knows that this is only two nights and one day. If He were crucified on Good Friday and arose Sunday morning as they say, then He did not literally fulfill the sign of Jonah. If He did not fulfill this sign as He promised the Jews, then He was an impostor and not the Messiah! In other words, Jesus Christ lied to the Jews about His burial and resurrection.

Our children are being taught in public schools that one day and one night are 24 hours, and three times this is three days and three nights. Then in Sunday school and church they are being told that **"three days and three nights"** means one day and two nights! This is enough to make infidels out of them, seeing they cannot believe the Bible to be literally true. If the Good Friday theory is correct as some teach, then the Bible contains "highly figurative language" which requires a human interpreter to tell people what the verses really mean.

By this same liberal method of interpreting the Scriptures you can destroy every basic doctrine in the Bible. By this method false cults put the fire out of Hell, universal, invisible church men prove the big church theory, and others do away with water baptism. If **"three days and three nights"** can be reduced to 36 hours---one half, so can all other parts of the Bible be reduced one half! This would make Israel's wilderness wanderings into 20 years instead of 40, the Babylonian Captivity to be 35 years rather than 70 years, and the Millennium to be 500 years rather than 1,000.

I do not care very much for what scholars say! Nor am I concerned with being popular with the theological world! But I am greatly concerned about not accusing my Lord of lying! Jesus Christ plainly said He would be in the grave **"three days and three nights."** He emphatically declared He would rise again **"after three days."** I believe He fulfilled the sign of Jonah and vindicated His Messiahship. In Matthew 28:6 we read this testimony of the angel at the tomb: **"He is not here: for he is risen AS HE SAID!"** (emphasis MRC) He said He would be in the grave **"three days and three nights"** and **"after three days"** He would rise again. Jesus did fulfill the Jonah sign. He is the Messiah. But He was not crucified on Good Friday, nor did He rise on Sunday morning!

THE PART OF A DAY THEORY WRONG

Men, in order to get the Bible out of an embarrassing situation, allege that the Jews counted a part of a day as the whole day. Such passages as Genesis 42:17-18, I Samuel 30:12-13, Esther 4:15-17, I Kings 20:29, and I Chronicles 10:5 are cited to prove this theory. However, none of these passages prove **"three days and three nights"** means two nights and one day. Only one of them even contains the

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Three Days Three Nights

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expression **“three days and three nights”** (I Sam. 30:12). But there is absolutely no reason to give **“three days and three nights”** in I Samuel 30:12 any meaning except their literal meaning. Divine inspiration declares the young man **“had eaten no bread nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.”** What authority has any man to contradict these plain words by affirming the time was not so long? The expression, **“three days, night or day,”** in Esther 4:15 is not the same wordings as **“three days and three nights”** in Matthew 12:40. There is no mention of any nights at all in the other passages; therefore, they give no evidence as to the meaning of **“three days and three nights.”** There is no reason to take any of the passages cited in any sense except their literal sense, unless one has a theory to prove. The **“three days and three nights”** in Jonah 1:17 are to be taken in their literal sense.

Granting that some of the Jews did count a part of the day for the whole day, can it be proven that this is what Jesus meant? Can it be proven that the Jews counted a part of a day as a whole day and a whole night? Where is the proof in the inspired Word? Yet proponents of the Good Friday tradition want us to believe that a part of a day meant a whole day and a whole night. Men who believe the Bible to be literally true dare not accept such reasoning.

THE MEANING OF DAY IN THE BIBLE

The word “day” in the Bible in its primary sense means the interval between dawn and darkness. **“And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night”** (Gen. 1:5, 14-18, 8:22). This is the first occurrence of the word “day” in the Bible, and the Lord God Himself gives its meaning. Jesus believed there were 12 hours in a day. He asked in John 11:9: **“Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.”** Jesus made a day and a night consist of 24 hours. Can there be any higher authorities than the Lord God and Jesus Christ? Do not such authorities settle the matter for all true believers?

In the Bible a day is the interval of time comprising the period between two successive risings of the sun (Gen. 7:24). The Hebrews reckoned it from evening to evening (Ex. 12:18) **“From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath”** (Lev. 23:32). The 12-hour night began at sunset and ended at sunup. It was counted before the 12-hour day. **“And the evening and the morning were the first day”** (Gen. 1:5). Hence a new day began at 6:00 p.m. in the evening and lasted until the same time the next evening--

--a period of 24 hours---a 12 hour night followed by a 12-hour day!

THE GOOD FRIDAY HOAX

The Bible nowhere says or implies that Jesus was crucified and died on Good Friday! It is said that Jesus was crucified on **“the day before the Sabbath”** (Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42). As the Jewish weekly Sabbath came on Saturday, scholars have assumed Jesus was crucified on Good Friday. This is poor reasoning because the Bible bears abundant testimony that the Jews had other Sabbaths beside the weekly Sabbath which fell on Saturday.

The first day of the Passover week, no matter on what day of the week it came, was always an annual Sabbath. **“And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein”** (Lev. 23:6-7). On the seventh day of this feast, the 21st of Nisan, was another annual Sabbath: **“In the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein”** (Lev. 23:8). Tishri 1st was an annual Sabbath of the trumpets (Num. 29:1; Lev. 23:24). Tishri 10th was the annual Atonement Sabbath (Num. 29:7; Lev. 23:27). Tishri 15th was the first annual Sabbath of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34; Num. 29:12) and Tishri 22nd was the second annual Sabbath of this feast (Lev. 23:36; Num. 29:35). The day of Pentecost was an annual Sabbath (Num. 28:26). This is the reason we read about Sabbaths in the plural number in the Old Testament (Lev. 26:2, 34-35, 43).

The Bible makes it plain Jesus was crucified and buried on **“the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath”** (Mark 15:42). John tells us: **“And it was the preparation of the Passover”** (John 19:14). It was the preparation day on which the Passover Supper was made ready, the 14th of Nisan (John 13:1, 29; 18:28). It was the preparation to keep the Passover Sabbath---the annual Sabbath which always came on the 15th day of the first ecclesiastical month. John 19:31 adds: **“For that sabbath day was an high day.”** Its greatness was due to the fact that it was the annual Sabbath of the Passover Festival.

TWO SABBATHS THAT WEEK

Matthew makes it plain that two Sabbaths had passed since Jesus was crucified. The KJV has this rendering: **“In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher”** (Matt. 28:1). On this verse nearly all translators have allowed tradition to control their translation. It is not “Sabbath” but “Sabbaths” in the Greek text *σάββατου* ---(the genitive case and the plural number). The verse properly translated would read: **“In the end of the Sabbaths.**

.” This allows for an annual Sabbath on Thursday and a regular Sabbath on Saturday.

When Jesus was buried near sun down on the Day of the Passover, **“Mary Magdalene and the other Mary”** watched the burial (Matt. 27:58-61). Immediately after the burial Luke says: **“And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on”** (Luke 23:54). This Sabbath was an annual Sabbath on Thursday. The day after the annual Sabbath the women bought spices (Mark 16:1). Luke tells us that the women after preparing the spices on Friday **“rested the sabbath day according to the commandment”** (Luke 23:56).

The traditional interpretation makes Mark and Luke contradict each other. In Mark 16:1 we are informed that the Sabbath was past when the spices were purchased. “Had” is inserted without any authority from the Greek text. “No reason can be given for the variation--- **bought sweet spices.** Not had bought” (AN AMERICAN COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT, Vol. II, p. 251). In Luke 23:56 we are told that the women prepared the spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day. If Jesus lay in the grave one Sabbath only, Mark and Luke contradict each other. But if He lay there two Sabbaths having a work day between them, then Mark and Luke harmonize to perfection.

THE RESURRECTION LATE SATURDAY EVENING

When does the Bible say that Jesus rose from the dead? The two Marys came to the tomb **“in the end of the sabbath”** (Matt. 28:1). The Sabbath always ended at sunset: **“From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath”** (Lev. 23:32). Then they went to the tomb before sunset on Saturday. Jesus had risen from the dead before their arrival (Matt. 28:1-8). According to the Bible, Jesus Christ arose before sunset on Saturday. Christ did not rise on Sunday morning, for the two Marys saw Him, heard Him speak, and held His feet just as the Sabbath ended and the first day of the week began. **“In the end of the sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week. . .”** (Matt. 28:1).

Commenting upon Matthew 28:1, A. T. Robertson says: “This careful chronological statement according to Jewish days clearly means that before the sabbath was over, that is before six p.m., this visit by the women made ‘to see the sepulchre’ . . . Both Matthew here and Luke (23:54) use dawn (*ἔπέφωσκε*) for the dawning of the twenty-four hour day at sunset, not of the dawning of the twelve-hour day of sunrise” (WORD PICTURES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, Vol. I, p. 240).

Mark 16:9 tells us Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene early the first day of the week, which was Saturday after sundown. The nearer after sunset this

happened, the earlier in the first of the week it was. Mark does not say that she was alone at the time she first saw Jesus, and Matthew tells us that **“the other Mary”** was with her (Matt. 28:1).

THE DATE OF THE CRUCIFIXION

Having shown from Matthew 28:1 that Jesus rose from the grave as the Sabbath ended at sunset and the first day of the week began, this would put the crucifixion on Wednesday at sunset just as the preparation day ended and the annual Sabbath commenced. According to the Gospel writers, Jesus died at the ninth hour (3:00 p.m. our time) and was buried about sunset that same day (Luke 23:44-45, 50-54; Mark 15:33-38, 42-47).

If Jesus were buried at sunset on Wednesday and arose at sunset on Saturday, He fulfilled the sign of Jonah. He would have been in the grave Wednesday night, Thursday night, and Friday night---a full **“three nights.”** He would have been in the grave during the daylight of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday---a full **“three days.”** All together a full **“three days and three nights.”** Thus we have a literal fulfillment of the words of Christ in Matthew 12:40. Hence there is no need to follow Roman Catholic tradition which made Jesus Christ a liar. Truly, **“he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”** (I Cor. 15:4), not the second day according to Roman Catholic tradition!

THE THIRD DAY

Some Scriptures speak of His resurrection **“after three days”** (Mark 8:31; 9:31 R.V.; 10:34 R.V.; Matt. 27:63). Other verses say **“three days”** (Matt. 26:60-61; 27:39-40; Mark 14:58; 15:29-30; John 2:19-20). Still others speak of **“the third day”** (Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:64; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:6-7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40; I Cor. 15:4).

Some make much over **“the third day”** in Luke 24:21, and they affirm that if the crucifixion took place on Wednesday, Sunday would be the fourth day since these things were done. But the answer is simple. These things were done just as Thursday was beginning at sunset on Wednesday. They were therefore completed on Thursday, and the first day since Thursday would be Friday, the second day since Thursday would be Saturday, and **“the third day since”** Thursday would be Sunday, the first day of the week. So the supposed objection in reality supports the Wednesday crucifixion. But if the crucifixion took place on Friday, by no manner of reckoning could Sunday be made **“the third day since”** these things were done.

Unless we believe the Bible contains errors, we know that all passages must harmonize. Therefore, **“after three days”** (Mark 8:31) must mean the same as **“the third day”** (Matt. 16:21). The only way this is possible is to accept the view I have just stated.

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PALM SUNDAY A FRAUD

In Christendom some consider the Sunday before Easter as Palm Sunday. They say this day commemorates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem when palm branches were thrown before Him. But there is no command to observe Palm Sunday in the Bible. The Bible teaches that Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Saturday, the 10th of Nisan. John 12:1 tells us that Jesus went from Jericho to Bethany six days before the Passover-- six days before Thursday, which would have been Friday.

It was on the next day that the entry into Jerusalem was made (John 12:12). This would have been Friday, the 10th of Nisan. He did not cleanse the temple on this day as some say (Mark 11:11), for it was the Sabbath. The temple was cleansed the next day, the 11th of Nisan (Mark 11:15-18).

Those who accept the traditional view that Jesus was crucified on Good Friday and ate the Passover on the regular day of the Passover have Jesus making the journey from Jericho to Bethany on the Sabbath. Remember Jesus went to Bethany six days before the Passover (John 12:1). This would have violated the Sabbath law. But if Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the Jewish Sabbath, Saturday, then all is well. The Bible tells us that Bethany was a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem (Acts 1:12; Luke 24:50).

ANOTHER QUESTION

Matthew 27:62 tells us that the guard was placed at Jesus' tomb **"the next day, that followed the day of the preparation,"** then there were no guards stationed at His tomb until sometime Saturday. If the Good Friday theory is true, Jesus arose about sunset of that same Saturday (Matt. 28:1). Then how could the soldiers have said: **"His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept"?** (See Matt. 28:13). It would have been foolish for the elders to give the soldiers money for such a lie (Matt. 28:11-15), for if the Good Friday theory is true, they never guarded the tomb one single night! This will only make sense if you place the crucifixion on Wednesday and allow a literal **"three days and three nights."**

SUMMARY

There is nothing in the Bible to favor the Good Friday crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Biblical Record harmonizes with a Wednesday crucifixion and Saturday evening resurrection--a full 72 hours. This view allows for a literal interpretation of **"three days and three nights."** It allows for the words **"after three days"** to mean just that. It proves that Jesus Christ fulfilled the sign of Jonah and thus proved His Messiahship

to the Jews.

The errors of the Good Friday tradition are many. First, it makes **"three days and three nights"** into two nights and one day. Second, it ignores the two Sabbaths that week, one an annual and the other weekly. Third, it makes Mark and Luke contradict each other. Fourth, it ignores the various annual Sabbaths in Israel. Fifth, it ignores God's definition of what is meant by the word "day" in the Bible. Sixth, it ignores the time the Bible says Jesus arose in Matthew 28:1.

Seventh, it gives a meaning of **"the third day"** which is contradictory to **"after three days"** and **"three days and three nights."** Eighth, it makes Jesus violate the Sabbath by making the journey from Jericho to Bethany on the day of rest. Ninth, it perverts the Greek text to favor its position. Tenth, it allows for no soldiers at the tomb of Christ at night, although the Bible mentions some (Matt. 28:4).



THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

NATIONAL GUARD NEEDS CHAPLAINS

(EP News)--The Army National Guard needs chaplains and is offering nearly \$35,000 in incentives to attract candidates. The Guard is operating at 40-percent chaplain capacity. That means there are more than 300 open positions. To fill that need, the Guard is offering a \$10,000 signing bonus on top of a \$20,000 student-loan repayment and a \$4,500 college-scholarship package to men and women age 21-to-42 who have a seminary degree and the endorsement of their denomination. The Guard has also set up a special recruiting Web site and sent DVDs to prospective chaplains.

UTAH BECOMES FIRST STATE TO APPROVE VOUCHER PROGRAM

(EP News)--The Utah Senate passed a bill Feb. 9 that would allocate up to \$3,000 for every school-aged child that could be used toward private-school tuition. The House also passed the bill, and Gov. John Huntsman is expected to sign it into law. This makes the Utah legislature the first in the nation to pass a statewide voucher program. Zack Dawes, state advocate for the Alliance for School Choice, said parents will be able to choose from a variety of options for their kids' education -- including private and religious schools. Republican Rep. Stephen Urquhart, the bill's sponsor, successfully mollified concerns that the public education system would suffer a financial strain if money was diverted to vouchers. In fact, lawmakers ensured districts wouldn't lose money -- any district that can show a loss will be reimbursed.

VIRGINIA EPISCOPAL BISHOP SUES EXITING CHURCHES

(EP News)--A split within the Episcopal Church has begun and is on its way to court. More than 100 Episcopal parishes-- and some dioceses -- have either left the denomination

or requested alternative oversight within the worldwide Anglican Communion. One of them is St. Stephen's Church in Heathsville, Va. "We left the Episcopal Church because we could no longer be under the leadership of people who have the attitude that they did about the authority of Scripture," said Jeffrey Cerar, rector of St. Stephen's. "Starting several years ago, the Episcopal Church elected and put in place a homosexual bishop and did so in disregard of the Scriptures. It was just a symptom of a much larger problem, which is that the leadership of the Episcopal Church does not regard Scripture as authoritative in the same sense that Christians always have before." Cerar's church is one of 11 that recently left the Virginia diocese. Bishop Peter Lee, in return, filed suit against each of the 11, seeking to confiscate the church properties -- and has taken steps to defrock 27 clergy associated with those churches.

PORNOGRAPHY A THREAT TO CHILDREN AND TEENS

(EP News)--The threat of pornography to children and teens is even more serious than indicated in research results just reported in the current issue of "Pediatrics," a veteran expert in the field said in early February. University of New Hampshire (UNH) researchers reported in the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics that 42 percent of Internet users ages 10-17 surveyed said they had seen online pornography in the previous year. Of those, 66 percent said the exposure was unwanted. "The UNH study is welcome and useful, but we believe the percentages are even higher," said William C. "Skip" Mathews, president of Integrity Online, the nation's oldest and largest Internet filter solution provider. "The data is already outdated, other studies have shown higher exposure, and our own experience says otherwise. Plus, children and teens often don't respond openly and honestly to researchers, especially discussing

something as uncomfortable as pornography.

SEN. COBURN SAYS GLOBAL AIDS FUND UNACCOUNTABLE

(EP News)--Family advocates on and off Capitol Hill are calling on Congress to demand information from an international organization that receives massive amounts of tax dollars to fight AIDS. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is a \$9 billion public/private international partnership and supports AIDS programs in 136 countries -- especially in AIDS-ravaged Africa. "There is quite a bit of waste, and there is no transparency into how the money is being spent," Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., told CitizenLink. "So, we're trying to get an amendment that will make transparent where they spend the money." The Global Fund has already received nearly \$2 billion from the U.S. government -- and this year, the U.S. is contributing more than \$700 million. Shepherd Smith, president of the Institute for Youth Development in Washington, D.C., pointed out the president asked for much less.

BABY BORN AFTER 22 WEEKS GESTATION GOES HOME

(EP News)--Senator John McCain made headlines by expressing his view that Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion on demand in this country, ought to be overturned. But it's possible that the biggest pro-life news of the year came when little Amillia Sonja Taylor went home from the hospital in late February. Little Amillia was born in October after only about 5 months of gestation. At birth, Amillia was just nine-and-a-half inches long and weighed less than 10 ounces. According to reports, she is the first baby "known to have survived after a gestation of fewer than 23 weeks." According to pro-life activist Gary Bauer, "When America's abortion regime was established by judicial fiat in Roe v. Wade 34 years ago, viability was thought to be as late as 28 weeks. But, clearly, modern medicine has once again moved the "goal posts" of viability, and it's time for the law to catch up."

RHODE ISLAND OFFICIAL SEEKS RECOGNITION OF GAY MARRIAGES

(EP News)--Rhode Island's attorney general said Feb. 21 that gay state employees who are married in Massachusetts should have those unions recognized and receive benefits. According to The Associated Press, Attorney General Patrick Lynch based his opinion on the fact that his state has no law banning gay marriage. The advisory opinion is not binding. "It's essentially guidance," Lynch said. "It's my interpretation of the law." But the document was written with far more confidence. "Rhode Island will recognize same sex marriages lawfully performed in Massachusetts as marriages in Rhode Island," Lynch wrote.

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Does the Bible intend for the unsaved to pray to God for Salvation? If not, please explain what "come to Christ" means? - Florida

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This is an interesting question that is worthy of our attention. Strictly speaking the grace and privilege of prayer is reserved for those who have been given a spiritual nature in the new birth. The moment one of God's elect is called out of the darkness of spiritual death into His marvellous light they respond with godly sorrow, repentance, and saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The very second a poor sinner is given spiritual life the love of God is shed abroad in their heart enabling them for the first time to cry out Abba Father through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. What a joyous day it was when the burden of sin was taken away and prayer flowed from my changed heart! I had been born of the Spirit, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and now enjoyed for the first time ever the experience of the throne of grace. I didn't know any theology or doctrine. All I knew is that God had saved me by His amazing grace and my heart was filled with thanksgiving for this unspeakable gift. I immediately thanked God for the forgiveness of sins. This is a normal response of one who has been translated out of the deadness of sin and the dominion of Satan into the glorious kingdom of God's dear Son. Prayer is the fruit of the salvation experience, not the cause of it.

Genuine prayer is a spiritual exercise that is pleasing to God. The Bible clearly states that the unsaved are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), therefore incapable of producing any spiritual fruit. Romans 8:7-8 states the condition of the wicked thusly: **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."** Since the wicked are without spiritual life they are incapable of performing spiritual activities. Proverbs 21:10 and 27 declare: **"The soul of the wicked desireth evil...The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?"** Proverbs 28:9 describes how God views the prayers of the unregenerate: **"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even**

his prayer shall be abomination." Only those who are born of God possess a new nature that enables them to delight in rather than despise the law of God. Romans 7:22 states this truth plainly: **"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man."**

I found it interesting by comparing Scripture with Scripture that there is a real contrast between God hearing the prayers of the righteous, and not acknowledging the prayers of the wicked. Psalms 34:15-17 declares: **"The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."** Proverbs 15:8 and 29 serve to shed further light on this truth: **"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight... The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous."** The reason why God hears the prayers of the righteous is because of their position in Christ. Because God's elect are accepted in the Beloved they are able to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. Hebrews 13:15 supports this conclusion: **"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."**

There are many in our day who follow the traditions established by Charles G. Finney in the 1800's. Finney was an evangelist who urged sinners to go to the "altar" or the "mourner's bench" and pray for God to save them. Through the years an entire evangelistic system evolved that culminates in sinners praying the so called "sinner's prayer" using the example of the publican who cried out **"God be merciful to me a sinner."** We find Scriptures that command lost sinners to seek the Lord, to repent, and to believe on Christ. When the Philippian jailer asked the all important question **"What must I do to be saved?"** Paul replied: **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"** (Acts 16:30-31). Paul didn't ask the jailer to repeat a prayer, rather he pointed the sinner to trust in Christ alone. Later Paul would preach repentance and warnings of judgment, not the "sinners prayer" to the unsaved at Athens: **"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the**

world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

Now to answer the second part of the questions with regards to coming to Christ. It is the drawing power of God that brings a man to Christ, not his prayers. John 6:44 declares: **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."** When the Holy Spirit regenerates one of God's elect, they immediately receive the gifts of repentance and saving faith. The evidence of the new birth is an instantaneous change of mind and heart. The sinner who had been alienated now desires Christ as Lord and Saviour more than anything else in the world. The sinner abandons his false impressions of self righteousness, his religious opinions, and sins turning to Christ alone as the only One who can save. This is what coming to Christ is all about. It is not a neatly packaged prayer or formula. Rather it is the result of the powerful working of the Spirit bringing a dead sinner to life, out of the darkness of sin into the glorious light of Christ, causing him to want Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

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God's Word is not written to the unsaved first of all. **"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"** (II Tim. 3:16,17). Any act of righteousness ascribed to man cannot be accomplished without the aid of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Prayer is a Holy communication to a Holy God that accepts only sacrifices of Holiness from those who have been made Holy by Jesus Christ. **"Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth"** (John 9:31).

The term "come to Christ" I, too, would like to have someone explain to me because it is not found in God's Word. The closest I can come to "come to

Christ" is our Saviour Himself speaking about the Elect being drawn to Him or all that the Father hath given Him shall come to Him (John 6:44, John 6:37).

"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). This verse indeed should show us that telling the lost to come to Christ, or to pray for salvation is unbiblical to say the least.

"But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20). This indeed is the proper message that we are to bring to the sin sick unregenerate people of this world. Sinners are to repent of sins not pray. Prayer is for the Saints that are to our Father God. **"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand"** (Rev. 8:4).

MIKE DEWITT

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The debate about the sovereignty of God in election and the responsibility of man in salvation is one that will never be settled, even with genuine Bible believing Christians, until or unless the Holy Spirit grants conviction and insight. Even those of us who are firmly entrenched in Sovereign Grace Circles cannot fully explain it.

So before trying to answer this question let me present these verses which, I think, should pretty well cement the doctrine for those who will take the Bible for what it says, in literal interpretation and logical application.

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44).

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power..." (Ps. 110:3). **"...quicken us, and we will call upon thy name"** (Ps. 80:18).

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

These verses teach us:

a. No man can come to Christ apart from divine calling. This is because of human depravity. Dead men cannot respond physically, neither can spiritually dead men respond spiritually.

b. Under God's power (effectual call, cf. the dry bones of Ezekiel 37) all the elect will come.

c. Any and all that come to Christ will

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Will America, as a nation, be in the Tribulation period? – West Virginia

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I'll give you a very deep profound answer. I don't know.

Seriously, there really is no answer for this question. Prophetic questions of this sort are the source of much debate and, I fear, take too much attention away from the far more important question of *you* being ready for the Lord's return. These questions serve no purpose except debate and curiosity. **"But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes...But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain"** (II Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9).

Most or northern Europe, most of Africa and the entire Western Hemisphere were unknown to the Biblical writers and are not mentioned in any specific way in the Bible. By tracing the genealogies of Noah's sons we know that, prior to modern travel, the descendants of Japheth populated Europe, the sons of Ham populated eastern Asia, most of Africa and migrated to the western hemisphere long before Columbus or the Vikings, although some stayed in the land we now know as the "Holy Land," and the sons of Shem pretty much stayed in the Middle East.

But the participants in the Revelation accounts are not identified by family! The events of the Revelation account are not given in a manner that identifies specific nations, other than some think Ezekiel 38 seems to identify Russia as the leader of the forces of the north. But even that isn't specific because the genealogy through Magog and Gomer would cover most all of Europe. In the immediate context the families mentioned were in the area immediately north of the Black Sea.

The important issue here is not whether America (United States) as a nation will be in the tribulation, but will *you* be in the tribulation. The prophetic period known as the tribulation is the time of God's wrath being poured out on those who have adamantly refused and rejected God's Word and Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is not just a time of intense persecution of believers although there will be believers that will come out of the tribulation period (Rev. 7;

12:11 and other such passages) but these believers appear to be either those sealed in chapter 7 or believers who have turned to the Christ because of the events of Revelation.

I suggest that if we understand that one simple fact, all other eschatological arguments will fall into line. **"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Thess. 5:9).

"Us" is believers, Christians, the elect. God did not save His people from wrath and then subject them to wrath. For the saved to be subjected to the wrath of the tribulation is as much spiritual double jeopardy as to teach, as some do, that Christ died for the sins of people who are in Hell.

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Yes, the nation of America will be in the Tribulation Period. All the nations of the earth will suffer as God systematically pours out His wrath upon the unbelieving inhabitants of the earth during the Tribulation Period. For details read Revelation chapters six through nineteen where the seals, trumpets, and vials of God's wrath are revealed.

Thankfully, those who are saved will be raptured and taken to Heaven prior to the seven year Tribulation Period. I Thessalonians 1:10 declares: **"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."**

At the end of the Tribulation the inhabitants of the earth will experience judgment as Revelation 6:15-17 declares: **"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"**

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"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Rev. 13:7). By God's determinate council in eternity past His Holy Word tells us that all nations will go through the tribulation period. The only way that this wicked and adulteress nation will not be in the tribulation is that it ceases to be a nation before the rapture occurs. We should not try to seek to explain away God's word when it plainly states all nations. God sees all and knows all and when Jesus Christ dictated to John the book of Revelation He said "all nations," didn't He?

MIKE DEWITT



Forum #1

(Continued from page 70) ◊

be accepted.

So then, let us speak to the question.

A gospel quartet in my area has a song entitled, "God wouldn't say do it if it couldn't be done." The subject of the song isn't salvation, but the principle may be applied here. There are several verses in the Bible that clearly indicate lost man's responsibility to *"call upon the name of the Lord"* for salvation. I give you just two, Genesis 4:26: **"then began men to call upon the name of the LORD"** and Joel 2:32: **"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered."** This, of course, requires the quickening of the Holy Spirit, see Ps. 80:18 quoted above.

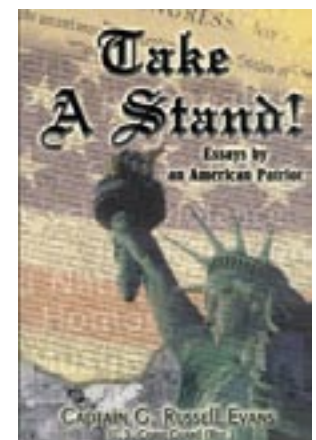
If these lost men do not "call upon the name of the Lord" they will remain lost. Whenever the phrase **"believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"** is seen, "believe" is active (*you* do it), imperative (command) and aorist (action in a point of time). That is, "do it, and do it now!" Lost man is given a command to believe and call on the name of the Lord. Failure to believe and obey results in condemnation! **"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed**

in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

Yes! The Bible *does* intend for the unsaved to pray to God for salvation, even though at the same time the Holy Spirit must give spiritual life to that unsaved man in order for him to do so.

That is what coming to Christ means. Coming to Christ is nothing more or less than a) obeying Christ's commands to believe, or call upon His name (praying); and b) trusting Christ *alone*, believing that His work on the cross was all that is needed for your salvation, nothing more and nothing less. It involves trusting Christ, not any other man or facility, i.e. the priest, the church, or the evangelist. **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."** (I Tim. 2:5)

RAY BENNETT



Take A Stand!

By
Capt. G. Russell Evans
\$9.95

The book is a combination of many articles that Capt. Evans has written over the years. I believe the readers of "The Berea Baptist Banner" will be interested in reading this book. Capt. Evans has taken a stand on many subjects in his articles, most of which were quite challenging. Please add \$2.50 for S/H.

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PASTOR SAYS SOLICITATION FOR SEX SHOULDN'T BE A CRIME

(EP News)—For years, Southern Baptist pastor Lonnie Latham preached against homosexuality, and even served as a spokesman for the denomination against same-sex marriage.

That's why it was a shock when the 60-year-old pastor of South Tulsa Baptist Church — and a former member of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee — was arrested for offering to engage in a lewd act after inviting a male undercover Oklahoma City police officer to his hotel room for sex on Jan. 3, 2006.

But Latham's lawyer Mack Martin has another shocker up his sleeve. He's saying that since 2003, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it is not illegal for consenting adults to engage in private homosexual acts, what Latham did is not illegal, and the law against soliciting sex from another adult is unconstitutional.

In a non-jury trial in Oklahoma County District Court, Judge Roma M. McElwee said she would rule on the case in about two weeks. Latham waived his right to a jury trial. Adding to the irony is the fact that the American Civil Liberties Union, a group that Latham had criticized when he was a Southern Baptist pastor, filed a brief in Latham's behalf, saying that his arrest violated his right to free speech.

National gay rights organizations have also come to the defrocked pastor's defense by saying that inviting someone to a hotel room for sex is not a crime.

If convicted, Latham could face a year in jail, a \$2,500 fine and 40 to 80 hours of community service.

JUSTICES REJECT POLYGAMY CASE

(EP News)—The U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the plea of convicted polygamist Rodney Holm, who argued his marriages should be legal based on the landmark 2003 ruling that struck down a Texas sodomy law. The high court refused to review Holm's appeal of his conviction four years ago on bigamy and two counts of unlawful sexual conduct with a minor. Holm argued that because the Supreme Court ruled in *Lawrence vs. Texas* that adult homosexuals are entitled to intimate relations without government interference, the government should stay out of his private affairs. Chris Stovall, an attorney with the Alliance Defense Fund, is breathing a sigh of relief the Supreme Court didn't take up the case or use *Lawrence* to ratify polygamy. "From a constitutional-law standpoint," he said, "it would have opened the floodgates on all manner of behavior and lifestyle for people living in all sorts of relationship(s)."

HOMOSEXUAL GROUP TO PROTEST CHRISTIAN COLLEGES

(EP News)—Gay-activist group Soulforce

is organizing protests of Christian colleges because of their codes that forbid sexual immorality. This is the second year in a row for the so-called "Equality Ride," and this year Soulforce plans to double its efforts. Two busloads of protesters, one for each half of the country, will target 32 Christian colleges and universities.

HISTORIC CROSS RETURNED TO WILLIAM AND MARY CHAPEL

(EP News)—After months of public outcry, an historic cross will be returned to the chapel at The College of William and Mary, The Associated Press reported. President Gene Nichol placed the cross in storage after a student complained it was offensive to non-Christians. More than 19,000 people signed petitions to have the cross restored. A longtime donor called Nichol's decision "unbelievable" -- then withdrew a \$12 million donation. On March 6, Nichol announced the 66-year-old cross will be given a "prominent" place with an accompanying plaque telling of the school's Anglican heritage. "The Wren controversy has been a decidedly difficult and sometimes painful one for this community," Nichol said. "It has touched depth of disagreement that I didn't fully anticipate."

STATE LAWMAKERS ATTEMPT TO UNDO ABSTINENCE LEGISLATION

(EP News)—Lawmakers in several states have launched an offensive to eliminate abstinence-only education. That campaign has advanced furthest in Washington.

The state Senate there passed a bill March 7, 30-19, that will mandate all public schools teach a Planned Parenthood-endorsed sex-ed curriculum that's used in Seattle schools.

"We're just sick about it," Sen. Val Stevens said. "It's probably the worst piece of legislation we've passed in the 15 years I've been in the legislature."

Stevens, a Republican from Arlington, added, "The bill will eliminate the opportunity for the schools to teach abstinence education, unless they also present the 'medically correct' -- as it is being called -- curriculum that will be developed by the state superintendent of public instruction."

LeAnna Benn, director of Spokane-based Teen-Aid, said the curriculum requires that students be taught about condoms and contraceptives.

"The state has already done training on a program called, 'Making Sense of Abstinence,'" she said. "Two of the chapters are on birth-control measures and how to have access for an abortion."

Benn said the legislation is being pushed by Planned Parenthood, NARAL and a gay-activist group, Equal Rights Washington.

Shepherd Smith, president of The Institute for Youth Development in Washington, D.C., said what's happening in the Pacific Northwest is just a symptom of a larger effort to undermine true abstinence programs. "One of the tactics is to say that the curricula used by abstinence educators do not contain 'medically and scientifically

accurate' information," he said.

Smith said, though that abstinence-only curricula in use today is highly credible. "We've been reviewing abstinence-education materials for about 10 years now," he said. "We find increasingly that there is very little, if any, information in them that is inaccurate from a medical perspective."

Linda Klepacki, R.N., M.P.H., analyst for sexual health at Focus on the Family Action, said no one should be misled -- opponents have no proof that abstinence-only curricula is inaccurate.

"What they are saying is that, in order to be medically and scientifically accurate, you must be verified and supported in your research by peer review," she said. "Abstinence education cannot get into peer-review journals because the journals are controlled by far-left liberal organizations that do not allow us to publish. That automatically eliminates abstinence-only education, from their standpoint."

Klepacki said challenges of scientific accuracy are in the hopper in the Colorado, Iowa, Hawaii and Arizona Legislatures. Other states may soon be added.

"We're seeing almost the same language in bill after bill, in state after state," she said. "It does look like there is a concerted effort to do this at the state level before a federal bill is released."

Benn said a federally mandated curriculum would likely mandate discussion of birth control and homosexuality.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION TO RE-EXAMINE EX-GAY THERAPY

(EP News)—Under pressure from homosexual activists, the American Psychological Association (APA) plans to re-examine its policy on therapy for gay men and women seeking change. At least two homosexual groups want the APA to get tough on anyone who tries to help gays change. The APA is inviting nominations for a five-member task force to consider the issue. Dr. Warren Throckmorton, associate professor of psychology and fellow for psychology and public policy at Grove City College, said the APA is responding to pressure, not science. He said a growing body of evidence suggests homosexuals can change, and that research is threatening to pro-gay groups.

OVER 1,000 UNITE TO DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

(EP News)—Over 1,000 North Carolina parents, children, legislators, community leaders and clergy met on March 6 to express their desire to have more choice in their children's education. The event was led by Parents for Educational Freedom in North Carolina and featured a keynote speech from Dr. Howard Fuller, a nationally-renowned activist who founded the Black Alliance for Educational Options and helped usher in Milwaukee's school choice program. "This is a movement that is building," said Darrell Allison, president of PEFNC, a nonprofit organization working to educate parents on

the benefits of educational freedom. "Frankly speaking, the turnout literally overwhelmed our staff and volunteers. We were expecting about 350 to be in attendance, but we nearly tripled that number with more than 1,000 coming out from nearly 20 different counties. There was a clear and strong message sent out on last night that parents want the freedom to choose the education that works best for their child."

CATHOLIC CHURCH LARGEST, FASTING GROWING

(EP News)—The Roman Catholic Church remains the largest church in the country according to the 2007 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, released March 5. The annual report is issued by the National Council of Churches. This year's book has data for 2005 that was reported by the denominations during 2006. The Catholic Church, with 69.1 million members, grew by 1.94 percent in 2005, making it not only the largest but the fastest-growing church in the country. Other fast-growing religious bodies included the Assemblies of God (1.86 percent) and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1.63 percent).

FOOT-WASHING CEREMONY CALLED A HEALTH RISK

(EP News)—A Georgia university has suspended members of a student group for washing new members' feet, claiming the ancient Christian practice is a health risk. Savannah State University in Georgia also said the group, Commissioned II Love, "harassed" other students by sharing their faith. Joseph Martins, an attorney with National Legal Foundation, has taken up the students' case. He said, "The university is essentially saying that Christian groups are okay unless they actually practice Christianity."

COLLEGE MEN PSYCHOLOGICALLY AFFECTED BY ABORTION

(EP News)—A UCLA psychiatrist has noted that many college-aged men she's counseled appear to have been impacted by abortion. Dr. Miriam Grossman noticed a significant number of young men reported a sleeping disorder. She began asking whether they had participated in an abortion. Most said "Yes." "I had a young man a few weeks ago who was very surprised that I was asking him," she said. "But, he did say, 'Yeah, about a month ago my girlfriend had an abortion. It was a whole big story, and he was pretty upset about it.'" There's little research on abortion's impact on men, but a study by Drexel University revealed 80 percent of men who were at the clinic the day their child was aborted called it one of the worst days of their lives. Dr. Karl Benzio, a psychiatrist with the Christian Medical Association, said it's no surprise the issue hasn't been properly studied, due in part to how abortion's impact is largely ignored. "We still have some difficulty in our country and the mental health profession understanding what a tragedy abortion is," he told Family News in

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Focus. "We don't appreciate the impact that that has on the father of the child."

BILL WOULD OFFER TAX RELIEF TO FAMILIES

(EP News)--Families could receive tax relief under a bill introduced in the U.S. House and Senate March 8. The Parents' Tax Relief Act would make permanent the \$1,000 child tax credit, which is set to expire in 2010. The bill would also eliminate the marriage-penalty tax, offer a dependent-care tax credit to stay-at-home parents, and extend \$2,500 in tax breaks to home-based businesses. And it promises to protect parents' Social Security by allowing up to 10 years of flexible employment credits for those who stay home to raise their children, age 6 and under. The bill is sponsored by Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., in the Senate and Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb., in the House.

JOINT CHIEFS CHAIRMAN CALLS HOMOSEXUAL ACTS "IMMORAL"

(EP News)--Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the nation's highest-ranking military officer, is taking unfriendly fire for calling homosexual acts "immoral."

"I believe that homosexual acts between individuals are immoral and that we should not condone immoral acts," Pace told the *Chicago Tribune* on March 12. "I do not believe that the armed forces of the United States are well served by saying through our policies that it's OK to be immoral in any way."

"As an individual, I would not want [acceptance of gay behavior] to be our policy, just like I would not want it to be our policy that if we were to find out that so-and-so was sleeping with somebody else's wife, that we would just look the other way, which we do not."

"We prosecute that kind of immoral behavior." In the military code of justice, adultery is a prosecutable offense.

Pace's comments were met with immediate demands for an apology from homosexual activists like Steve Ralls, director of communications for the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, which has represented members of the armed forces dismissed for homosexuality. He said the remarks were "disrespectful" to gay and lesbian service members, which his organization numbers at 65,000 on active duty.

Even Sen. John Warner, R-Va., ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, rebuked Pace, according to the *Tribune*.

"I respectfully but strongly disagree with the chairman's view that homosexuality is immoral," Warner said. "In keeping with my longstanding respect for the Armed Services Committee hearing process, I will decline to comment on the current policy until after

such hearings are held."

Warner's reference was to the "don't ask, don't tell" policy adopted by President Clinton, under which servicemembers who keep their homosexuality to themselves are left alone. Some congressional liberals are looking to rescind the policy legislatively.

Pace, apparently feeling the heat, issued a statement today, saying he regretted having stirred up the controversy and that he should have confined his remarks to official policy and "less on my personal moral views." In the Monday remarks he attributed his views to his "upbringing."

Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center for Military Readiness, said calls for an apology from Pace are "absurd," noting that the 1993 Homosexual Conduct law, which bans homosexuals in the military, is still in effect.

"He doesn't need to apologize for supporting that law," she said.

Donnelly said the ban on homosexuals serving in the military, she added, exists to protect good order, discipline and unit cohesion in "conditions of forced intimacy" in which military personnel may have little or no privacy from others who might be sexually attracted to them.

"The activists who are demanding an apology from General Pace have an agenda," Donnelly said, "an agenda that should not be imposed on the armed services, the Marine Corps or any branch of the military."

COMPANY OFFERS GREETING CARDS FOR ABORTIONS

(EP News)--A line of cards intended to lend support and encouragement to women who chose to end the life of their preborn child further proves that women don't walk away from that choice unscathed.

Exhale, an "after-abortion talk-line" that claims "support and respect are just a phone call away," offers the cards on its Web site.

"I think you're strong, smart, thoughtful and caring," reads one card. "I believe in you and your ability to make the best decision. I think you did the right thing."

Another reads, "May you find peace after your abortion," and yet another says, "There are not words to express my sympathy for your loss."

Caron Strong had an abortion. She is now national director of Operation Outcry and she's furious with Exhale.

"Can you imagine sending a woman a greeting card for murdering her 5-month-old son or daughter?" Strong told *Renew America*. "No moral absolutes whatsoever. It is absolutely tragic to affirm life in one card and support the taking of life in another."

Carrie Gordon Earll, senior analyst for bioethics for Focus on the Family Action, said while Exhale may have good intentions, the cards represent an attempt to de-stigmatize abortion.

"The cards beg the obvious question: If abortion is a good choice, why do you need a line of greetings cards to comfort those who choose it?" she said. "The message, 'I

care about the fact you're hurting' is further evidence that abortion is an unnatural act for a woman that carries unexpected consequences."

If Exhale wants to help women, Earll added, it would do better to market the cards to women before they chose abortion so they will know that grief and regret are a likely outcome.

GAY INDOCTRINATION INFURIATES CHICAGO PARENTS

(EP News)--Parents of freshmen at Chicago's Deerfield High School say students are required to attend lectures on gay sexuality, and then sign a contract forbidding them to talk about it afterward.

Ellen Waltz's son and his friends told her about the lectures -- delivered by other students -- and the contract.

"[They said,] 'We had to sit there and listen to them tell us about their feelings and what it's like to be gay,'" Waltz said. "They make them sign a contract stating that they won't say anything that's in the room."

Lora Sue Hauser, a school-issues adviser for North Shore Student Advocacy, said a group of boys told her school officials threatened those who were reluctant to sign the contract.

"[They were told] 'You will sign this or you will go to the dean,'" Hauser said.

Dr. Sue Hebson, vice-superintendent of the school district, told *Family News* in Focus that there is no contract. She also denied that the classroom discussions involve sexuality.

"That's not part of the conversation," Hebson said.

But Hauser said that's just not so.

"During the semester they have a panel of gay, transgender (and) bisexual students who speak to these freshmen," she said. "Sometimes they talk about statistics and causality."

Parents complained last year when the school asked students to match sexually deviant terms with their definitions. The school responded by posting the curriculum information behind a password-protected page on the school's Web site.

Matt Barber, policy director for cultural issues at Concerned Women for America, expressed concern over the school's practices.

"If you can maintain control of undeveloped and impressionable youth and spoon-feed them misinformation -- lies and half-truths about dangerous, disordered and extremely risky behaviors -- then you can control the future and ensure that those behaviors are not only fully accepted, but celebrated," Barber told *World Net Daily*.

Candi Cushman, education analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said it is important for parents across the nation to realize that this is not an isolated incident.

"Schools in many states are opening their doors to outside gay-rights groups who conduct so-called gay-awareness events or diversity days," Cushman said. "And there are now more than 3,000 pro-gay clubs in high schools nationwide."

Parents in Deerfield must take a stand,

she added.

"These public school officials are blatantly disrespecting local parents and students who hold different viewpoints," Cushman said. "But the good news is that parents and students can fight back by standing up for their equal access rights."

WISCONSIN REJECTS ABSTINENCE FUNDS

(EP News)--Wisconsin's governor Jim Doyle has turned down \$600,000 for abstinence education. Doyle objected to the federal requirement that the money only be used to teach the benefits of abstinence until marriage. Stephanie Marquis, Doyle's spokeswoman, said the governor wants to also teach kids about condoms. "With our state (and) other states turning down the money," she said, "we're hoping that it also sends a very clear message that we want to also be talking about how to prevent adolescent pregnancy." Wisconsin joins four other states that have rejected abstinence funds: California, Pennsylvania, Maine and New Jersey.

LINK FOUND BETWEEN ABORTION AND CHILD ABUSE

(EP News)--Women who have had an abortion are more likely to mistreat their children, according to new study in the *Internet Journal of Pediatrics and Neonatology*. Low-income women with a history of child mistreatment were the subjects of the study. "We found that the severity of abuse was more pronounced among mothers with a history of abortion compared to those without a history," Dr. Pricilla Coleman, the author of the study, told *Lifenews.com*. "This makes sense since we do know that abortion can precipitate difficult to resolve anger issues."

NATIONAL BRIEFS INDIAN GOVERNOR SIGNS ANTI-CONVERSION LEGISLATION

(EP News)--The Governor of the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, Shri Justice Vishnu Sadashiv Kokje, signed into law on Feb. 19 legislation that severely limits the fundamental rights of religious people across the state. The "Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Bill 2006" was passed by the Himachal Pradesh legislature on Dec. 19, 2006. Dr. Joseph D'souza, president of the Dalit Freedom Network and the All India Christian Council, said, "This law severely undercuts the fundamental right to freedom of religion, particularly for exploited Dalits and tribals. The assent of the governor amounts to an endorsement of the discrimination and persecution against religious minorities in that state." Anti-conversion laws have been used in other states to justify vigilante violence against Christians and Muslims. Such laws require fees and legal paperwork for religious conversions but exempt conversions to Hinduism.

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DARFUR WORLD'S WORST REGION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

(EP News)--The U.S. State Department has named the strife-torn Darfur region of Sudan as the site of the world's worst assault on human rights in 2006. A government report issued today blamed the Muslim regime in Khartoum and a government-backed Muslim militia for murdering 200,000 Sudanese -- and displacing more than 2.5 million over the last four years. Michael Cromartie, vice chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), isn't surprised. "Darfur is one of the worst places in the world today," he said. "Genocide and torture have occurred, people are starving and dying. The government is doing very little to stop the violence."



Christ Our Passover

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Cor. 5:7).

The paschal lamb has its counterpart in the New Testament, and it represented our Saviour Jesus Christ. He, as God's appointed Lamb, is the Antitype of the Passover lamb. Paul believed Christ had taken the place of the Passover lamb. When Christ was offered on the tree of the cross the paschal offering was designed to cease. Since Calvary believers have had a paschal Lamb which is more precious than the one the Israelites had in Egypt.

That the Jewish paschal lamb was a type of the Messiah is not disputed by the ancient Rabbis. They say, "The Schechinah (the name by which they understand the promised Messiah) delivered Israel out of Egypt, and was typified by the paschal lamb" (R. Menachem, Vol. 22, Col. 2). Hence they expect the coming Messiah, and their deliverance by Him on the Passover Feast.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

It is remarkable in Exodus 12 that the lamb is never mentioned in the plural. This was because it was God's chosen means of pointing to the one-coming Lamb of Calvary. In the Scripture Christ is often compared to a lamb. Of the Messiah the prophet said: **"He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter"** (Isa. 53:7). John the Baptist said concerning Him: **"Behold the Lamb of God"** (John 1:29). Both the Apostle John and Peter frequently represent Him under the emblem of a lamb in their writings.

The figure of a lamb is used to show the excellency of the character of the Saviour. Christ is as meek and humble, as simple and innocent, as patient and submissive as a lamb.

The paschal lamb was to be without blemish (Ex. 12:5; Lev. 22:21-22). Such is the distinguishing character of Christ, for Peter says Christ is **"a lamb without blemish and without spot"** (I Pet. 1:19). Jesus Christ was the perfect Passover lamb in Whom the Father was well pleased. Our Jesus is **"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"** (Heb. 7:26). Conceived without the stain of sin, He lived without sin and died without guilt. He conversed with the wicked world, yet He contracted none of its pollution. His bitterest enemies, both Jew and Gentile, joined to attest His uprightness.

The lamb used in the Passover Feast was to be a male of the first year (Ex. 12:5). The lamb was not to be too young or too old. He was to die in the fullness of his strength. Even so Christ was a male according to the flesh. He died, not in old age, nor in childhood, but in the fullness of His manhood. He was cut off **"in the midst"** of His days (Ps. 102:24).

THE MANNER OF HIS DEATH

The paschal lamb was to be taken out of the flock (Ex. 12:5). This points to the incarnation of Christ. He was made in all things like His brethren, a partaker of flesh and blood, in order to be our Passover (Heb. 2:17; Deut. 18:15). Christ was according to the flesh of the seed of Abraham and David.

The lamb was to be separated four days before it was killed (Ex. 12:6). Christ literally fulfilled this. He came to Bethany six days before the Passover, the 9th day of the month (John 12:1). The next day He made His public entrance into Jerusalem (John 12:12-13). This was the 10th day of the Jewish month Nisan. This was Israel's acceptance of the Passover Lamb. Then on the fourth day after this He was crucified.

Some make the four days refer to the four thousand years which elapsed before Christ died on the cross. This is also true. Others make the four days prophetic days---a day for a year (Ezek. 4:6). The type still holds good since Christ was crucified in the fourth year of His public ministry.

The Passover lamb was shut up to death and escape was impossible. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, was shut up by virtue of the Covenant of Grace to die at the appointed time. Peter declares this to be the case: **"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, but was manifest in**

these last times for you" (I Pet. 1:18-20) (emphasis MRC).

The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel was to kill the lamb (Ex. 12:7). This did not mean that every man, woman, and child did this; it meant they did it representatively. The head of the household acted on behalf of his family. Here again the type passes to the Antitype. The priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, and Sadducees all united and acted for the whole congregation of Israel in putting Jesus Christ to death (Acts 2:22-23; 4:10; 5:30).

The apostles **"lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done"** (Acts 4:24-28).

The blood of the paschal lamb was to be applied to the lintel and the two side posts of the house of an Israelite (Ex. 12:22). This is a typical picture of Christ upon the cross, although the picture is marred by the translation of the word "basin" in the Authorized Version. It is the Hebrew word SAPH which can mean "threshold" as it is rendered in Judges 19:27 and "door" in II Kings 12:9. The word is an old Egyptian word for the step before a door, or the threshold of a house.

The Septuagint renders Exodus 12:22 thusly: **"And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and having dipped it into some of the blood that is by the door, ye shall touch the lintel, and shall put it upon both doorposts, even the blood which is by the door. . ."**

This is an important point to be considered. The Passover lamb was slain at the door of the house. It was not necessary to put the blood upon the threshold for it was already there. What a picture of Christ on the cross! Blood above on His head from the crown of

thorns, corresponding to the blood on the lintel. Blood on His hands from the nails, pointing to the blood upon both the side posts. Blood on His nail pierced feet, alluding to the blood on the threshold!

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

The Passover was a sacrifice (Ex. 23:18; II Chron. 30:15-19; 35:11; Ezra 6:20). In Exodus 12:27 it is called **"the SACRIFICE of the LORD's passover"** (emphasis MRC). A sacrifice in Old Testament times was a propitiatory offering rendered to God. Jesus Christ was such a sacrifice. The Apostle writes in the New Testament: **"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God"** (Eph. 5:2). Hebrews 9:26 tells us Christ **"appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."** Again it is written: **"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God"** (Heb. 10:12).

The lamb in Israel was a substitutionary sacrifice. The innocent lamb died in the place of the firstborn son of the Israelite. Even so the Lamb of God died in the place of his sheep (John 10:15). God spared not His Son that He might spare the guilty sinner (Rom. 8:32). Christ died that believers might live forever in the glory world.

The Passover lamb was to be killed by the effusion of its blood; Christ's blood was shed by the crown of thorns, the nails in His hands and feet, and the spear in His side. There could be no remission of sins for the people of God without the shedding of His blood (Heb. 9:22). It was in His own blood He washed us from our sins (Rev. 1:5) and delivered us from the sentence of condemnation.

The lamb roasted with fire was a striking representation of its Antitype enduring the wrath of God, which is said to burn like fire (Ps. 89:46; Jer. 4:4). The prophet pictured the sufferings of Christ as a fiery ordeal: **"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger. From above hath he sent fire into my bones. . ."** (Lam. 1:12-13).

According to Justin Martyr in his conference with Trypho the Jew, the roasted lamb was so placed as to resemble the cross. With one split it was pierced longitudinally from the tail to the head. With a second it was transfixed through the shoulders so that the forelegs became extended. Thus the lamb entirely roasted was a symbol of the punishment of the cross which was inflicted on Christ.

No water was to be put upon the lamb (Ex. 12:9). This would hinder the roasting of it in the fire. The meaning of this is explained by the cry of Christ: **"I thirst."** His thirst was the effect of the agony of His soul in the heat of God's wrath.

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Christ Our Passover

(Continued from page 74) ◊

Not a bone of the lamb was broken (Ex. 12:46). This part was fulfilled in our blessed Jesus. Although the whole body of Christ was wounded and bruised, and all His bones out of joint, yet none of His bones were broken. The soldiers broke the bones of the two thieves to hasten their death, but Christ escaped the infliction being already dead (Ps. 34:20; John 19:33, 36). The type was literally fulfilled by the Antitype.

None of the lamb was to remain until the morning (Ex. 12:10). The sacrifice was to be completed within a single night. In like manner the atoning work of Christ is a completed thing. It is not being accomplished progressively; it has been accomplished definitely and eternally. The sacrifice was offered over 1900 years ago, but the memory of it lasts forever with God and the redeemed. Christ entered in **"once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us"** (Heb. 9:12). All who believe on Him **"are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"** (Heb. 10:10).

THE DAY CHRIST DIED

The Passover lamb was killed on the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan (Ex. 12:6). It is regrettable so many theologians deny that Christ died on this date. Many hold He was crucified on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the 15th of the month. I am certain that I cannot resolve all the difficulties surrounding this topic, but I firmly believe Christ died on the 14th of Nisan, the very day the Passover lamb was killed. This means that I believe Christ ate the Lord's Supper on the night part of the 14th of Nisan, shortly after the 13th day ended at sunset. I offer the following reasons for my view:

1. John in his Gospel expressly declares that this supper took place before the Passover: **"Now before the feast of the passover. . . And supper being ended. . ."** (John 13:1-2). At this supper Christ pointed out the traitor (John 13:21-30), and Judas left the supper and betrayed Him that same night (John 13:30). After the supper which was before the Passover Feast, Jesus spoke John chapters 14, 15, and 16. Then He was arrested that same night in the garden (John 18:1-2).

2. When Christ told Judas at the supper, **"That thou doest, do quickly,"** the disciples thought He was directing Judas to bring things for the Passover Feast (John 13:27-29). Hence the regular Passover lamb had not been eaten yet.

3. On the day after this supper the Jews would not go **"into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover"** (John 18:28), showing they had not eaten it yet.

4. The crucifixion of Christ is expressly called **"the preparation of the passover"** (John 19:14). This was the 14th of Nisan, the day the paschal lamb was killed.

5. The crucifixion of Christ could not have been on the night of the 15th of Nisan, for people were not allowed to leave their house (Ex. 12:22), much less travel around the city and conduct a trial. On the night after the supper Christ and the disciples went out to Mount Olivet and from there to Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36). This journey could not have been made on the night of the 15th of Nisan which commenced at sunset of the 14th day.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Matthew (26:17) and Mark (14:12) call the supper the first day of unleavened bread. Christ did eat the supper after the 14th day had commenced--after the sun-setting of the 13th day. The Jews counted time from evening to morning. The evening was Chametz Badal, i.e., the removing of all leaven, and on the same day the Passover lamb was killed in the evening. This whole day was frequently styled the first day of unleavened bread.

Some contend our Lord was obliged to eat the Passover according to law. They seem to forget the law of typology required the death of Christ on the 14th day of Nisan. The number of Passovers He ate was not important when compared with the time of His death as the Antitype of the Passover lamb. It was no more necessary for Him to delay His death that He might eat the Passover, than it was necessary to defer His ascension to keep another Feast of Weeks.

Is there clear proof Christ used a lamb at the last supper? John calls it a supper, and the others the Passover only. There is no mention made of a lamb being slain or roasted. But if a lamb were present it is possible the Jews may have employed two days for this work, for the blood of 256,500 lambs (Josephus) could not have been slain and sprinkled on one altar in about three hours. And some have a problem with 3,000 baptized on the day of Pentecost!

Jesus Christ died on the very hour the paschal lamb was being killed. Our Lord died at the ninth hour, i.e., three o'clock our time. Mark tells us: **"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice. . ."** (Mark 15:34). Then he goes on to add: **"And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost"** (Mark 15:37). John says Christ died knowing all things were accomplished--even the type of the Passover lamb (John 19:28).

This remarkable coincidence that Christ should die on the month, on the day, and at the hour typified by the paschal lamb attest the greatness and detailness of God's purpose and providence. It also magnifies the omniscience of Christ. He knew precisely when He would die. In John 7:8 He said: **"Go ye up unto this**

feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come." He made similar statements at other times like this one (Matt. 26:53-54; Luke 13:31-34). The Jews often sought to kill Him but could not because His hour had not come (John 7:30; 8:20).

Jesus Christ died on time. He died at the time appointed by God the Father. He was born in the fullness of time and died in the fullness of time. Before His crucifixion He said: **"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified"** (John 12:23). In the garden He said: **"for this cause came I unto this hour"** (John 12:27). Standing there in the garden, knowing **"that his hour was come"** (John 13:1), He said to the three sleeping disciples: **"It is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners"** (Mark 14:41). When the soldiers and priests came to arrest Him that same night, He said: **"this is your hour, and the power of darkness"** (Luke 22:53).

The almost unbelievable thing about the time is further seen in that the Jews, who wanted Christ dead, preferred not to kill Him on a feast day as seen in Matthew 26:3-5. But the Scriptures cannot be broken! The purpose of God cannot be defeated! The Jews killed the Prince of Life on the 14th day of Nisan to fulfill the type, although they preferred another time. Truly the Sanhedrin did what God's hand had determined beforehand to be done! Jesus Christ died on time!

THE EFFECTS OF HIS DEATH

The happy fruits of the death of Christ our Passover are typified by the paschal lamb. As the blood sprinkled on the door posts secured the Israelites from the death angel, even so the blood of Jesus, called **"the blood of sprinkling"** (Heb. 10:22; 12:24; I Pet. 1:2), preserves and frees the true Israelites from the sword of Divine Justice. His blood quenches the fire of wrath and turns away His vengeance which would consume us. When God judges the world, He will pass over those sprinkled with the blood of Calvary's Lamb.

The blood of the paschal lamb secured from death and broke the chains of their slavery. The death of Christ is the foundation of the full deliverance of His people. The bondage of Israel ended when the sacrifice was finished, so our Passover delivers us from spiritual captivity into the liberty of the children of God, whereby we become a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a free and a peculiar people (I Pet. 2:9; John 8:36; Heb. 2:14-15).

As the Israelites started their journey to the land of promise the same night, so by the merit of the sacrifice of Christ, and the efficacy of His spirit and grace upon our hearts, the spiritual Israelites turn their faces from earth to Heaven, from a world that lies in wickedness to an inheritance of the saints in light, and

travel toward the heavenly Canaan. They cast their wishful eye to Canaan's fair land which they shall be sure to enter under the guidance and protection of the true Joshua. Ultimately they shall go to the heavenly Canaan to feed upon the milk and honey and to enjoy the glory and happiness of the eternal world on high!

Christ our Passover is slain

To set His people free---

*Free from sin's Egyptian chain,
And Pharaoh's tyranny.*

*Lord, that we may now depart,
And truly serve our pardoning God,
Sprinkle every house and heart
With thine atoning blood.*

Wilt thou not a difference make

Between thy friend and foe,

*Vengeance on the Egyptians take,
And grace to Israel show?*

Know'st thou not, most righteous God,

We on the paschal lamb rely?

See us covered with the blood,

And pass thy people by.



House On A Rock

By George A. Lofton
(1839 - 1914)

Ancient cities and houses were generally built upon high places, and especially in cities they sought some high eminence for the citadel, as at Rome, and as the Acropolis and the Acrocorinthus at Athens and Corinth. These places, however, were chosen rather for defense than for foundations; but in Matthew 7:24-27 we find a sort of parabolic illustration of the pictorial idea before us. It reads as follows, from the lips of Jesus: **"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."**

The reason for the fall, of course, is implied in the fact that it was built upon the sand. It could not stand against the floods, built down in the sandy valley, where foolishly some built their houses in ancient times, just as they do today. The house built upon the rocky summit or hillside could never be affected by the

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House On A Rock

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flood, however severely the winds might blow or the rains fall or the storm beat upon it, Hence the wise man builds his house upon a rock, far above the flood-tide; and it is only the foolish man who, when he could help it, would build in the sandy gorge or upon the overflowing valley.

A certain village located at the foot of Vesuvius has been destroyed fourteen times, and yet successive generations continue to repeat the folly and risk the destruction which will some time certainly follow, unless old Vesuvius has exhausted her fiery bowels of wrath---not of compassion. There is a village in the Alps located under a huge precipice of hanging rock, and this great rock has been leaning farther and farther toward the village for years; and yet these villagers live and eat and work and sleep as comfortably beneath their impending doom as if that terrible boulder would never fall. Just so fools build and fools live under the threatening doom of that Rock, every day, against which to stumble they shall be broken to pieces, and which to fall upon them shall grind them into powder.

The wise man builds his house upon some elevated place; digs deep and gets a good foundation, and if he cannot find a rock, he puts a rock beneath his edifice, for a basal support. This is the figure of the man who (1) *hears* the words of Jesus aright, and (2) *does* them according to his hearing. It is one thing to hear them, another thing to hear and heed them with a good understanding; and it is quite another and a better thing to do them. There are a multitude of "way-side" hearers, a large number of "stony-ground" and "thorny-ground" heeders, but there are but few "good-ground" believers and doers according to the Word and the will of God. These latter alone bring forth fruit to perfection---some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred fold, according to capacity and opportunity---and these alone are the wise and well-to-do hearers and doers of the Word of God. These alone will be saved by grace at last and rewarded for their words; for these alone have the wise, the "understanding," the "honest," and "good" heart of that wonderful parable of the sower. These not only sow in the common soil of the human heart, as the others do, but all the conditions of good sowing are added. The stones are piled out of the way, the thorns are plucked up, the fallow ground is broken by the Holy Spirit, and the soil is penetrated, without obstacle, by the seeds of eternal truth and divine life. These go down to bed-rock upon which to build, and their edifice is erected upon the solid foundation of Christ, the Rock of Ages---"the Rock that is higher than I"

and deeper than earth.

It is not a surface and sandy foundation, and the work erected thereupon is not an unsubstantial air-castle, so often built in delusion upon the illusive and false foundation of mere religious fancy. The true hearer and doer of God's word is a solid builder upon a solid foundation, recognizing that there is no other name but Christ under Heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved---no other foundation which we can lay than that already laid, which is Christ. Mohammed, Confucius, Buddha, will not do for foundations; the law of Moses and the philosophy of Socrates will not do for saving creeds; the systems of Joseph Smith, Swedenborg, Sandeman, and others will not do for guides to eternal life.

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,

Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!

I always love to sing that splendid hymn, written by Edward Mote:

*My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness.*

On the other hand, the foolish builder erects his house upon the sand. He is a hearer of God's Word, but he is a *doer not*. If he believes Christ, he takes Him as a formal and theoretical Saviour; and in his so-called belief of the truth he puts the sacraments before the blood of Christ and in order to the grace of God. The minister, the ordinance, the Church, are his saviors at last; and Jesus Christ is only a Mediator through the intermediators of human tradition and superstition thrust between God and the faith of the immortal soul. This is putting the signs of salvation before the salvation itself, and stopping, necessarily, at the sign---just as a man gets to a sign-board five miles from town, imagining that the sign-board is the town; and this is building on the sand, and not on the Rock, even in Christianity. These hear the Word and do it *not* in God's way, nor according to God's will; and salvation by Christ must be immediately through faith in Christ, the building afterward and upon Christ. The blinded ritualist or formalist proposes to build before he gets to Christ, and this is building on the sandiest foundation of the most illusive delusion.

The rationalist builds upon an airy Christ and pays no attention to forms and ceremonies. The ritualist believes too much, the rationalist too little; and either might as well not believe at all; for proving too much is the same as proving too little, and going too far is the same as coming short. The poor rationalist hears God's Word, knows of Christ, but he transforms him into a good man, a model and perfect character, an infallible teacher appointed of God, and salvation is without the atonement of blood and without the direct aid of the Holy Spirit.

A man saves himself, under this system and model of a perfect pattern, by ethical culture; and this is but another sandy foundation upon which thousands build their hopes of eternal life. They are hearers, but do and will people Heaven in company with the angels! The Bible is an old curiosity-shop to them, prayer and preaching and Churches are good moral institutions, but they need no Jesus as a Saviour and Redeemer. All this is building on the sinking sand; and of all the men who will go down darkest and deepest beneath the overwhelming flood of the last great day, it will be this self-deceived class of people. They build to themselves pretty houses, but they have no foundation; and in the day of judgment we shall want a foundation rather than the building erected upon it.

The wise man's house may not be so beautiful and unique, but its foundation will stand. He will be upon a Rock. He may have put some "wood, hay, stubble" into his building, the loss of which he will suffer by the fire---yea, he himself may be "saved so as by fire;" but he shall be saved, nevertheless, because his foundation shall stand. The foolish man may put some "gold, silver, precious stones," into his building---most excellent works within themselves; but even these he shall lose, because his building shall go with his false and unsubstantial foundation. Give me the good foundation and let my building be ever so humble and crude and worthless.

*On what foundation do you build,
neighbor,*

Your hopes for the future fair?

*Do your walls reach down to the rock
below,*

And rest securely there?

Alas! what folly 'tis to build, neighbor,

A mansion so fair, so grand,

With its costly walls and its lofty towers,

On sin's delusive sand!



How To Bring Your Child To Christ

By A. C. Dayton
(1813 - 1865)

"But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).



I. We are to bring them by earnest prayer for God's converting grace.

These parents brought their children desiring His blessing. The Savior saw the desire in their hearts. He did not need to be told of it in words. He knew they came to ask His blessing on the children, and gladly gave them all they sought for. It does not plainly appear just what they wished, and looked for, as the result of the touch of Jesus, but whatever it was, they were doubtless fully gratified.

So, Christian parent, you may bring your child by the prayer of the heart. But, O! be careful, lest you mock Him by words, in which there is no desire. Take care that the desire of your heart is not for wealth or honor, or long life or comfort; or something else besides that blessing of His which makes rich, and adds no sorrow.

Look at your children now, and say if you do really desire the conversion of their souls above all other objects. Can you say before the Lord, who searches the secrets of the souls of men, "O God, it is my heart's deepest desire for my little ones; not that they may live long upon the earth; not that they may grow up to manhood or womanhood, and be loved, and honored, and happy, but that they may be made the children of God."

Remember, my dear friends, that the conduct of a man shows what is in his heart. Actions speak louder and more truly than words; and therefore, if this *truly* is the chief desire of your hearts, you are daily taking more pains to secure to your child a new heart, than to lay up for him the wealth of this world. You take more trouble to teach him the way to Heaven, than the road to wealth or worldly success. How is it with you? If I could ask the child, what would it answer? Which would it tell me, seemed most to occupy your thoughts? About which do you most frequently converse with it. About which has it heard you more often and most earnestly express your anxiety?

Let us pray for our children. Thus let us bear them to Christ upon our hearts in earnest desire for His blessing.

II. We are to bring them by a sincere and entire consecration of them to Christ.

We are to give them up to Him to be disposed of by Him for His own glory.

I once heard a minister of Jesus Christ express very great anxiety lest some should ask his daughter to go away upon a mission to the heathen. He believed that if an opportunity were offered she would go. The child had given herself to Jesus, to be or do whatever He should will, but the father had not given up the child.

Brethren, look at this. You should have no child which the Lord did not create for His own glory, and give to you to train for Him; none which, if you will bring it to Him by prayer, and give it to Him to be saved in His own time and way, and

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How To Bring

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for His own purposes, He will not gladly bless. But when you are unwilling that your children should labor for Christ on the earth, with what face can you ask Him to save them in Heaven; while you are unwilling that they should *suffer* with Him, how can you expect they will be *glorified* with Him.

Christian people, pray God to raise up laborers for His vineyard, to send forth more reapers into His harvest of souls. We pray that He would open the world for the reception of the Gospel, and send His ministers into all nations to preach the Gospel. You, my hearers, have said such words as these to God. But have you ever said, "Lord, raise up *my* child for this work. Lord, here is *my* dear little boy, here is *my* precious little girl. I love them as I love my life. They are by far the dearest treasures that I have on earth, yet, Lord, I give them to Thee. Lord, take them to Heaven, if this will best promote Thy glory. Send them to China, to Africa, to Japan, to South America, to the Indian nations west of Arkansas---anywhere that they may best promote Thy cause. Let my daughter suffer, if need be, as did Anne Hasletine Judson. Let my son die a stranger in Tocat, Persia, with no one to put a cup of water to his fevered lips, like Henry Martyn, if this will best promote Thy glory. I am willing to trust them with Thee, soul and body. Do with both, what in Thine infinite wisdom and boundless love, Thou seest to be best. Only let them be Thine, all Thine, and Thine forever. Let me never feel that they are mine, except as I am to train them up for Thee?"

He who thus brings his child to Jesus will never have the gift rejected. He may not make it a missionary or minister, but He will accept the offering. He will bless the child and make it an heir of glory. Who of us have thus brought our children to Jesus by a heartfelt and sincere and unreserved *consecration*?

III. *We must bring our children to Jesus by a trusting faith.*

I do not mean by this that we can in any sense so trust in Christ for our children that *our* faith may be a substitute for theirs. Our faith can not be counted for righteousness to any but ourselves. They must repent and believe for themselves, or they will never be saved. But yet the Christian parent may trust, and must trust in God for the fulfillment of His promises, and doing so, we may have the fullest assurance that His promises will be fulfilled. He who has brought his child by earnest prayer and sincere consecration to God, and then employs the means which God has appointed to train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, may *trust* the result with God in full assurance that God will *give* the repentance and give the faith which the

WERE IS CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK?

Bro. David has been moved to a different prison and is to have heart surgery. We ask that you pray for him.

Lord willing his column will return in the next few months.

child must have. Without such *trust* as this we do not really bring them at all, for **"he who cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him."**

IV. But now, in the last place, I remark, that *we must bring our children to Christ by careful instruction in the truths of the Gospel.*

He who really desires above all other blessings for his child, that it shall be a child of God, and who has with a trusting confidence consecrated that child to God, will not fail to use all the means in his power to make it familiar with the Gospel, by which it is, after all, to come itself to the Savior.

This is the natural out-working of the desire that was hidden in the parent's heart. He who does not *train* up his child in the way that he should go, or at least *try* to do so, has little reason to believe that he has ever brought the child to Jesus by prayer and consecration or in any other way.

Let us consider what it is to come to Jesus. **"All that the Father giveth unto me shall come unto me."** **"Ye will not come unto me that ye may have everlasting life."** **"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."** **"Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise case out."** Now what is it to come unto Him? Is it not simply to believe upon Him? But the Apostle says, **"How can they believe on him of whom they have not heard?"** And again, **"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."** Then they must be *taught* before they can actually come; and hence, the parent or the teacher who is giving the knowledge of the Gospel to any child, is to that extent leading that child to Jesus.

He must be taught how sinful, how helpless, how utterly lost he is without a Savior. He must be made to feel not merely that mankind is sinful, but that *he* is himself a lost and ruined sinner; that he, for himself, needs a Savior, and must perish if he does not find one. Hence, the value of personal conversation in the Sabbath school and in the family circle with *each* one by himself, to urge these things home upon the heart. He must be taught that Jesus is the God-appointed Savior, and hence, the *only* Savior. He must be taught that He was God manifest in the flesh, and hence, an Almighty Savior. That He did not spare His own life, but gave it up for us all, and hence, He has shown His willingness to save even to the

uttermost. The love, the wonderful love of Him who died for us when we were sinners, must be set before him, that he may be drawn to this Savior.

The duty of self-consecration and obedience to *all* His commandments must be made known, that he may understand what it will cost to secure his salvation---and these things must be so taught that they will be comprehended; for it is that truth only which gets into the mind that can act upon the mind. It is not the words we hear, but the ideas that the hearing of them excites in the mind that act upon the heart and move the affections. Hence, if we will have them come to Jesus, we must not only bring them *by prayer, by consecration, by trusting* them in His hands, but by such training and instruction as will make them to understand His plan of salvation and feel their need of it.



Why Use Wine Instead of Grape Juice In the Lord's Supper

By T. P. Simmons
(1898 - 1969)

Nearly a year ago we, in some way, made reference to the use of wine instead of grape juice in the Lord's Supper, and one of our readers asked us for proof of our position. Since that time, we have been giving the matter some further study preparatory to the writing of an article on it. Not long ago, we were written to concerning this question, and we find that this is a very live question in a certain section of the country. We find a good deal of difference of opinion among Baptists on this question; some contending for the use of grape juice, others contending for the use of wine, and still others contending that it is immaterial as to which is used. Only one of these three groups can be right. And the one that is right ought to be joined by all. And, even though the question of itself were a trivial one, it would be worthwhile to discuss it for the sake of harmony and uniformity among Baptists; for differences that involve conscientious scruples always have a decisive and paralyzing effect, however small they may be. This question is not of the greatest importance: neither is it trivial. It is not a trivial thing to seek to know how to best **"show forth the Lord's death till he come,"** and how to do it in complete harmony with Scriptural practice. **"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much"**

(Luke 16:10).

We hold that wine should be used. We believe we came to this position through unprejudiced study. There was a time when we had never studied the question and paid no attention to the matter. Then we came to study it and were inclined in favor of grape juice mostly, perhaps, through aversion to alcoholic drinks. Then later we were drawn over in favor of wine. But even after that, we came to wonder if grape juice did not match the unleavened bread better than wine. And it was not until this question was thoroughly settled in our mind that we became firmly established in our present position.

We have three reasons for holding that wine instead of grape juice should be used in the Lord's Supper. They are as follows:

1. Christ used wine in the institution of the Supper. In order to ascertain this point we talked with one well informed converted Jew and with one Jewish Rabbi. The former, Elder Henry Singer, erstwhile superintendent of the Hebrew Christian Mission of Detroit, Michigan. When asked on this point, Mr. Singer replied that the Jews of Christ's day used fermented wine in the Passover. Mr. Singer has a tract on "The Jewish Passover and the Lord's Supper," and in this tract he says: "Every Jew in the night of Passover must have four cups of red wine." Reference to Proverbs 23:31 will show what kind of wine "red" wine is. The other one consulted is "Rabbi" Abraham Feinstein of Huntington, W. Va. Mr. Feinstein, without hesitancy, said that the Jews of Jesus' day used fermented wine in the Passover. And when asked if there could be any doubt on this he replied in the negative. We also wrote the American Board of Missions of the Jews in Brooklyn, N.Y., about this matter. Our letter was answered by J. Hoffman Cohn, general secretary. He said: "Every Jew knows that the Passover Supper must be celebrated by the drinking of real wine, and not unfermented grape juice. . . You will find all this fully corroborated if you will consult the Jews' Encyclopedia, which is the most dependable and authoritative on all matters Jewish."

Now there is absolutely no satisfactory reason for assuming that Christ broke with Jewish usage on this point and used grape juice in the farewell Passover. Some arrive at this conclusion by reasoning in a circle. This deprives the conclusion of any force. Also the conclusion is false because the premise that all drinking of wine is essentially wrong is false. This is assumed in the face of the fact that Christ turned the water into wine at the wedding in Cana. The remark of the ruler of the feast proves that this was real wine and not just grape juice. This is assumed also in the face of the fact that just before his death, Christ drank

◊ (Continued on page 78)

Why Use Wine

(Continued from page 77) ◊

"vinegar" (Mark 15:36; Matt. 27:48; John 19:28-30), which, according to Thayer, Broadus, Hovey and W. N. Clarke (the latter being writers in *An American Commentary on The New Testament* was the sour wine that soldiers drank. Also we find Paul exhorting Timothy to take wine as a medicine (I Tim. 5:23). And it was only the excessive use of wine that was forbidden to bishops and deacons (I Tim. 3:3,8; Titus 1:7). A. T. Robertson of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, of world-wide reputation as a scholar, said in a letter under the date of Sept. 14, 1927: I know of no reason in the world why wine mentioned in the New Testament was not real wine. The Jews used it diluted with water (one-third wine, two-thirds water)."

J. W. Porter, editor of the *American Baptist* and also of quite a reputation as a scholar, being mentioned in "Who's Who of America," takes the position that the wine at the marriage of Cana was fermented wine. He said in a letter under the date of Sept. 17, 1927: "In John 2:9, 10, the governor of the feast said: 'Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then what which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.' Here the reference is clearly to the fact that after men had drunk freely of the good wine, they would not so easily detect the difference, owing to the effect of the wine. Grape juice does not stimulate, and would make no sense used in this connection."

Editor Porter said further: "Mr. John A. Broadus, who is generally regarded as one of the world's greatest Greek scholars, takes the position that it was wine, and not grape juice. In fact, no one, so far as my information extends, ever questioned the fact that it was wine until in recent years."

Peloubet's Bible Dictionary says: "It has been disputed whether Hebrew wine was fermented; but the impression produced on the mind by a general review of the above notices is that the Hebrew words indicating wine refer to fermented, intoxicating wine." Again: "A great attempt has been made to prove the wine drunk at the Lord's Supper unfermented, by and for the sake of temperance workers of our day and nation. Such attempts are apt to do more harm than good, among those familiar with eastern customs today, or the history of those nations. But the apostle Paul has stated the case for total abstinence in Romans 14 in such a way that does not heed the treacherous aid of doubtful exegesis for its support."

The writer is a prohibitionist; always has been, and always will be. But he will not let the fact so prejudice him as to

blind him to Scriptural facts and cause him to evade those facts. Prohibition does not need this in its defense. It is today a social necessity because of the abuse that has been made of alcoholic drinks. And had alcoholic drinks always been confined to wine, prohibition would probably never have been necessary. However, the writer is a total abstainer from all alcoholic drinks except for sacred or medical purposes.

2. The church at Corinth used wine and received no correction from the Apostle Paul in this matter. We know that the church at Corinth used wine because through abuse of the Supper some became drunk (I Cor. 11:21). A Greek lexicon will show that the Greek word here means exactly what we commonly understand from the English term "druunken." Other cases of the use of the same Greek word (*mehuo*) will be found in Matt. 24:49; Acts 2:15; I Thess. 5:7. Concerning the word in I Cor. 11:21 we read from *An American (Baptist) Commentary on The New Testament*: "The word itself means drunk, and nothing softer. The passage is conclusive as to the wine used at the Lord's Supper." Now the fact that, under such circumstances, the Apostle Paul did not prohibit the use of wine is a very strong argument indeed for the use of wine. Argument from silence is not always strong or even valid; but in this case it is strikingly both. Surely, if it had been improper to use wine in the Lord's Supper, the apostle would have said so, since some had done such an unseemly and vicious thing as to get drunk on the wine.

It is said today by some that it ought not to be used because it puts a temptation before the weak. Was not Paul so much concerned for the weak as those are? We know from his writings that he was supremely concerned for the weak. Thus he must have had prevented his forbidding the use of wine! Marcus Dods says: "Although the wine of Holy Communion has been so badly abused, Paul does not prohibit its use in the ordinance. His moderation and wisdom have not, in this respect, been universally followed. On infinitely less occasions alterations have been introduced into the administration of the ordinance with a view to preventing its abuse by reclaimed drunkards and, on still slighter pretext, a more sweeping alteration was introduced many centuries ago by the Church of Rome."

Now, in the face of Paul's failure to forbid the use of wine in the Lord's Supper in the light of the fact that some of the members of the church had actually gotten drunk at the time when the Supper was supposed to be celebrated, what shall we say of those today who oppose the use of wine in the Lord's Supper through fear of injuring the weak? Their argument sounds very much like the argument against

immersion for baptism on the ground that it is indecent.

3. The symbolism of the Supper demands wine. On this point we find some very curious reasoning on the part of some in insisting on the part of some in insisting on grape juice for this same reason. We find a Seventh Day Adventist paper thus contending. Also a Sunday School paper for young people published somewhere in the north, and this in the contention of one converted Jewish rabbi to whom we write. But that this contention is false and that grape juice does naturally contain leaven (a type of sin and evil) ought to be apparent to any one upon a moment's reflection. If grape juice did not contain leaven, it would not ferment. In answer to our query concerning this matter, Fredric J. Haskin, director of Information Bureau at Washington, D.C., gave the following significant reply: "The Bureau of Plant Industry of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture says that grapes naturally contain a leavening agent and that this is present in the juice." Does the Bureau of Plant Industry know what it is talking about? We invite proof to the contrary. Then comes the question as to what becomes of the leaven in the process of fermentation. In answer to this Mr. Haskin continues: "The leaven is used up in the process of fermentation so that the finished product, or wine, does not contain any."

Therefore, we contend that it takes fermented wine to match unleavened bread, and the former is as essential as the latter. The fruit of the vine that properly represents the sinless blood of Christ must not have any leaven in it. Therefore, wine should be used.

But someone asks if the use of wine in the Lord's Supper is not a violation of the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Law. We answer that it is not; but if it were, we would be under obligation to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). But happily the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Law prohibit intoxicants only for "beverage purposes" and exempt wine used for "sacramental" purposes. But someone asks what is to be done about the pledge that many have made when young never to touch any intoxicants. We reply that Scriptural consistency and the proper commemoration of the Lord's death should come before a pledge or anything else. It is better to break a pledge than to fail to properly keep this memorial. God does not hold anyone responsible for the keeping of a pledge that hinders him in properly honoring Christ. Stick to your pledge in general, for it is a good one, but do not let it come between you and the proper observance of the memorial of Christ's death. To do so would be a sin.



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

2-1-2007 to 2-28-2007

Beginning Balance	\$6,109.41
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	200.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea M. B. C., Mansfield, OH	50.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	125.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL	50.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL	100.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Indoe B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC	100.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	100.00
Leston Farrell, Des Allemands, LA	100.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	500.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
New Testament M. B. C., Leivasy, WV	100.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
South Park B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Walnut Creek M. B. C., Centerburg, OH	50.00
Wayne Huffman, McNeil, AR	80.00
Subscriptions	296.50
Anon	230.00
Dividing Checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,771.50
TOTAL	\$9,880.91
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	609.96
Postage	868.37
Wages	2,000.00
FICA	171.37
Dividing Checks	150.00
Supplies	359.43
Total Expenditures	4,159.13
ENDING BALANCE	\$5,721.78

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

2-1-2007 to 2-28-2007

Beginning Balance	\$9,530.50
RECEIPTS:	
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	75.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	450.00
Calvary Ind. B. C., Everson, WA	200.00
.....	875.00
TOTAL	10,405.50
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	400.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	400.00
.....	\$10,005.50
Interest	+2.68
.....	\$10,008.18
Less Corbin, KY des.	-1,331.52
ENDING BALANCE	\$8,676.66

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$1,531.52
RECEIPTS:	
TOTAL	1,531.52
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	200.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,331.52

Mini-Edition
by Joseph Harris

Chairman of Biblical Studies
Southeastern Baptist
College, Laurel, Mississippi
www.miniedition.net



Kissing Rattlesnakes

Who in their right mind would try to kiss a rattlesnake? A man in Oregon tried it once and the snake bit him on the lip. Surprise, surprise, Sergeant Carter! The snake was just doing what it did best. The man almost died. Why did he do such a stupid thing? He was showing off for a friend. A local authority was later quoted as to who was responsible. Answer? The one with the bigger brain. The snake would never have bitten the man if he had not picked up the snake and placed it close to his lips. The best protection is prevention: don't pick up rattlesnakes! Notice some of the following rattlesnakes.

Our government and politicians are hugging the rattlesnake of Islam and believe me, there are more bites pending. Just check out all terrorist attacks since 1990 and see what the common denominator is. Voila! It is Islam. Let's stop pretending and face reality. To state the truth is not to say that all Muslims are terrorists, but the truth will reveal that just about all terrorists are Muslim. I'm tired of liberals acting as apologists for Islam. They are out of touch with the majority of common sense thinking conservatives when they try to separate Islam from 9-11 and acts of terrorism worldwide. *Solution: keep snakes away and you won't get bitten.*

Israel is trying to kiss a rattlesnake in so called peace talks about peaceful coexistence with an enemy bent on the destruction of Israel and Jews. The PA, Hamas and other anti Israel groups do not want a division of the land. They want *all* of the land, with no Jews in it. Palestinians hate Jews more than Jews hate Palestinians. To hug the PA is to invite a bite. *Solution: stay away from snakes and you won't get bitten.*

Christians are kissing a rattlesnake named "tolerance" when swallowing the lie that everyone's preference must be accepted or they are being discriminated against. After all, pornography is legal. It's for sale in the store, on the internet and on pay TV. Pornography, as "free speech," should never have been allowed. The snake has already bitten and the venom is paralyzing. Free expression of deviancy and the abnormal though homosexuality, has escalated from mere acceptance to mandated approval and endorsement. The problem is not really that we have kissed the snake. We never should have held it. *Solution: stay away from snakes and*

you won't get bitten.

Christian parents are going to get bitten by not distancing themselves and their children from everything ungodly and anti-God. The rattlesnake of the media and entertainment industry is coiled and ready to strike, yet parents are holding the snake close for themselves and their kids to kiss. As surely as the man in Oregon was bitten, this snake will bite. Kids from Christian homes are bitten by the filth, rebellion, and other garbage spewed out through ungodly programming on television and in the movies. As kids are taught to dress, act, and sing like heathen, parents are passive because the venom of the snake has already paralyzed them. After all, they go to church every Sunday. But the anti-venom of church is not enough because most preachers are not preaching the Bible plainly enough to effect a reversal of the venom. Kids need to hear their parents pray and see them put the Bible into practice daily. Parents need to not only stop kissing the rattlesnake, but cut its head off by taking control (radical concept) of the kids and being the final authority for what is and is not allowed in the house as well as determining the social circle of their children. *Solution: stay away from snakes and you won't get bitten.*



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will hold the area Fellowship meeting on Saturday April 7th at 10:00 a.m.

Scheduled speakers are Elder Steve Cornett, pastor of the Westbrook New Testament Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN, and Elder Elton Joslin, pastor of the Philadelphia Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL.

A noon meal will be provided by the church. All are invited to attend.

The Indore Baptist Church of Indore, WV and Pastor Paul Stepp will be holding their Spring 2007 Bible Conference, April 26th thru 29th.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Jim Rader, John Pruitt, Medford Caudill, Mark Minney, Pete Horn, Tom Ross, Steve Lecrone, Dan Stepp, Tom Hysell, and Carl Barnette.

Service times are Thursday and Friday at 6:30 p.m., Saturday 9:45 a.m., and Sunday 10:00 a.m.

All are invited to attend. For more information contact Pastor Stepp at (304) 587-4660 or email at prstepp@indorebaptistchurch.org.

ANNOUNCEMENT

PUBLICATIONS



Gardens of the Bible

There are three predominate gardens in the Bible. The Garden of Eden, The Garden of Gethsemane and the Garden of New Jerusalem.

In this book Elder Cockrell takes a look at each one and offers us many spiritual gleanings, including how the plan of salvation can be seen through each. (30 pgs.)

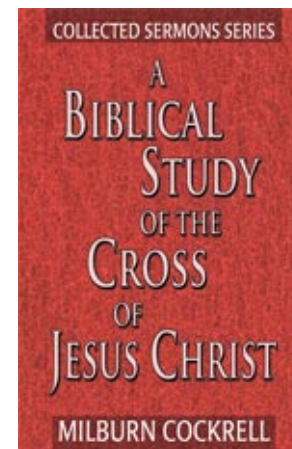
A Biblical Study of the Cross of Jesus Christ

A study of the cross on which our Saviour was crucified reveals more than just a piece of wood on which He was nailed. He was made to suffer and to bear many crosses before He came to the cross of Calvary.

In the first part of this short study we see that there were seven distinct crosses which Christ was called upon to bear before He came to the cross of Golgotha.

Next we see the seven amazing sayings of our Saviour during the six hours on the old rugged cross.

Then lastly, we see seven supernatural phenomenons which attended the death of Christ. These seven wonders formed a chain of signs which wrapped around the death of Jesus Christ and held it fast to the meaning of eternal redemption. (22 pgs.)

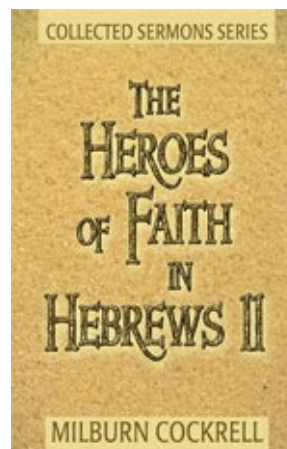


The Heroes of Faith in Hebrews 11

The 11th chapter of Hebrews is an exhaustive treatment of the accomplishments of faith.

The author takes us on a pursuit of the doctrine of faith. This study is extremely profitable to our spiritual health. In this study we see how faith as a working principle in life makes all circumstances work out to God's glory. Illustrations from Old Testament history are used to demonstrate the power of faith.

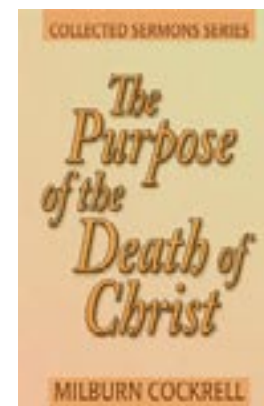
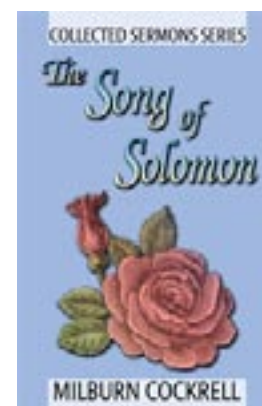
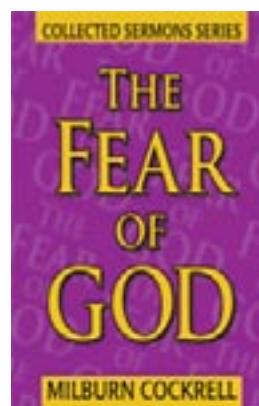
Faith in Hebrews 11 is the principle within the believer by which he walks, "**For we walk by faith, not by sight**" (2 Cor. 5:7). (25 pgs.)



We are pleased to announce that we have three new titles available. Each book is retail priced at \$3.95. Also, recently made available were *The Fear of God* (22 pgs.), *The Purpose of the Death of Christ* (26 pgs.), and a new reprinting of *The Song of Solomon* (94 pgs.).

Once again this month you can purchase all six new titles for \$12.50 (plus \$2.50 for S/H). Now would be a good time to get these new titles.

Order from the
Berea Baptist Church Bookstore
PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855





WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans USCG (Ret.) - Norfolk, Virginia

What Outrageous Claims Will ACLU Lawyers Think of Next?



The American Civil Liberties Union, flush today with a \$65 million annual budget, much of it provided by the radical left of Hollywood, New York, and Washington, has long agitated for a socialist agenda for America. Thanks to liberal courts and a compliant public, they have won lawsuit after lawsuit to remove every vestige of religion from the public domain and to change the constitutional right of freedom of religion to freedom from religion. ACLU lawyers want to change America.

BUBBLING WITH POWER

Today the ACLU handles nearly six thousand cases per year with sixty paid lawyers and two thousand dues-paying supporters. They are bubbling with aggressive power.

Calling themselves "our national guardians of liberty" and "defenders of the American way of life," they use patriotic language to conceal their real goals. They are hypocritical, clever and deceptive.

ACLU founder Roger Baldwin set the stage for his clever lawyers to subvert the American way of life and substitute socialism.

This was easy to do. With both parents working full-time in two-thirds of American families, the "latch-key kids" are alone at home with full freedom on the internet. Programmers know that, and they take full advantage of this weakness in our culture.

Even Jack Valenti, Hollywood czar of entertainment and bosom buddy of the high and mighty, sounds like a meek man in trying to defend the anything-goes entertainment fortunes of his clients. He, too, makes sounds about our First Amendment rights of free expression. In truth, they all want block-buster movies to satisfy their greedy souls, and Jack Valenti is their high-priced defender. Our precious children are the least of their worries.

Mr. Valenti and his high-living stars should be ashamed, but they are not. Neither is the ACLU.

"PUT BACK THE CROSS"

The president of William and Mary College is a former attorney for the ACLU. The President Gene R. Nichol demanded the two foot high Christian cross in the college's chapel to be removed. Nichol reasoned that members of the increasing diverse school felt "put off by the cross."

He insisted the school put the cross in storage, only to be used in rare instances.

Later, he offered a compromise "to allow" the cross to come out on Sundays only. Instead, Nichol's actions tossed the school into a bitter cultural battle.

AMERICA'S UNDERPINNING

Before 1947, Americans, almost universally, understood that religion, namely,

Christianity, was the underpinning of our nation. Religious principles and morality are implicit parts of our common law. In 1676 Sir Matthew Hale of the King's Bench called Christianity a part of the common law of the land--later incorporated into U.S. laws.

In 1983, Congress rejected the proposed constitutional amendment for voluntary school prayer that said in part, "nothing in this constitution shall be construed to prohibit individual or group prayer in public schools or other public institutions."

Approval of such an amendment could have removed the hypocrisy of opening the congressional sessions with prayer while a school-teacher in Junction City, Tennessee would be violating the constitution to allow prayer.

Our founding fathers revered prayer and religion as the foundations of our country and called on God, our Creator and Supreme Judge, by name in our Declaration of Independence. Benjamin Franklin advised the constitutional of the "need for daily prayer. . . for Divine protection."

ACLU SUCCESS STORY

The ACLU is a huge success story with many landmark court wins for their sly socialist agenda which they have pursued relentlessly since their founding in 1920 by the late Roger N. Baldwin.

Baldwin had a radical career of association with communists and socialists for over fifty years. He was a member of the Subversive Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and a convicted draft-dodger of World War I.

However, his major contribution to un-Americanism was his forty-seven year career with the ACLU, which today, along with Barry Lynn's Americans United, want every symbol

of God forever banned from American public life.

Prominent liberals have been members or supporters of the ACLU agenda--educators, diplomats, cabinet members, U.S. senators and representatives, governors, actors, editors, judges, and clergymen--in fact, prominent leaders in all fields of human endeavor.

Even so, the ACLU has been exposed by government investigations to be a supporter of subversive movements against America and "attacks against our institutions," including longtime defense of the pornographic writings and films. These are facts.

ACLU GUILF

From the beginning Baldwin offered his colleagues a scheme of guile and propaganda to fool the Americans, saying essentially to steer away from anything that makes the program look socialist. They want to look patriotic in everything

they do. They get a bunch of flags and talk about the constitution.

Today, after more than eighty years of guile, the ACLU lawyers are cloaking themselves in patriotism as defenders of our nation. In truth, they are a Trojan horse in our midst, and it's time to expose them and counter their hypocrisy in the nation's courts and in the court of public opinion.

The ACLU is into most anything that would undermine the freedoms and sovereignty that most of us believe the constitution guaranties with Ivy League trained lawyers, the ACLU is out to "get America."

"Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do." ---John Wooden

(Excerpts are from previous writings of Capt. Evans).



A Special Letter

On March 4th, 2007 our beloved pastor Billy A. Langford passed from this life to life everlasting. After being cared for at the Pine Tree Lodge Alzheimer's facility for over two years, and after being treated for pneumonia in area hospitals for over a month, his soul was released from pain and sorrow, to experience joy unspeakable in the fellowship of the saints, and in the perfect fellowship of Christ Jesus, our Saviour.



Brother Langford leaves his wife, Letha after fifty-nine years of marriage and two sons, Scott and Rick. His oldest son, Billy Gene, a great saint of God, preceded his dad in death many years ago. Three fine grandchildren live to cherish his memory, Ricci Lee, Joshua Lee, and Leigh Ann Langford.

Born April 7, 1927, in Bolton, Ms. He served in the United States Navy in WWII; shooting down many kamikaze airplanes, while repelling suicide attacks in the Pacific Theatre. We now call those of

his genre "The greatest Generation."

Brother Langford preached for over fifty years from Horatio, Arkansas, to California, from New Mexico, to Mississippi. He was my pastor at Bethel Missionary Baptist Church of Pasadena, Texas for over 31 years. He pastored churches in Spring Branch, Texas; Horatio, Arkansas; and Russelville, Arkansas previous to being only the second pastor Bethel has ever had. The first pastor of Bethel was Brother Virgil Mays, who greatly facilitated Brother Langford in learning the more perfect way of God's pure and sovereign grace. Brother G. E. Jones was another strong influence in Brother Langford's early, Christian life.

Brother Kelly Hinson, pastor of Fort Worth Landmark Sovereign Baptist Church, officiated at Brother Bill's services. Brother Hinson received the call to preach while under Brother Bill's pastorship, and was sent to the Fort Worth brethren as a missionary, later becoming their pastor. These two men of God had a strong and abiding love for each other, centering around God's work.

Brother Bill will be greatly missed. He leaves a void that cannot be filled. We thank God for giving us such a good friend and loving pastor.

We ask your prayers for his family and friends, and us, his "little flock," that God set him over as undershepherd.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (Ps. 37:37).

Marshall R. Risinger, deacon,
Bethel Missionary Baptist Church,
Pasadena, Texas

Editor's Note: Bro Langford was a friend to me and my father. Both of these men first met at an associational meeting and became great friends. Bro. Langford will be missed like so many other brethren who have departed this life to be with our Lord.

"..and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty" (I Sam. 20:18).

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