

The Berea Baptist Banner

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matt. 21:22

What Is A Church?

By Tom Ross
of South Point, Ohio

"And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had **GATHERED THE CHURCH TOGETHER** (emphasis mine, TWR), they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of



faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples" (Acts 14:25-28). Paul and Barnabas were Gospel-preaching missionaries who were called to the work by the Holy Spirit and sent out by the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-3). At the end of their first missionary journey we find them returning to the church that had

◊ (Continued on page 2)

Election Is Not A Safety Net For Sin

By Matthew Stepp
of Wayne, West Virginia

"The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psa. 34:16-18).



Kids grow up in Sovereign Grace Baptist churches with a lot of head knowledge about Election, Predestination, a Sovereign God that saves who and when He wills. That is going to come out in their Sunday school lessons, as they learn the attributes of God, even if they do not quite have a

◊ (Continued on page 5)

From Fire And Thorns

By Joseph M. Sidders
of Guntown, Mississippi

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put



off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God (Ex. 3:2-6).

The word in our text for "bush" is defined in Strong's as "meaning to prick; a bramble: bush". It is translated elsewhere as a thorny
◊ (Continued on page 3)

Israel In Eschatology

By David Green
of Hortense, Georgia

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:4-5).

This text was chosen out of many passages because this one is one in which all camps of eschatology will agree that verse 4 was literally fulfilled in the



past. The trouble and disagreement come when there are some who do not take the Scriptures literally: they will spiritualize where there is no indication that they should.

We begin in this passage with something literal. Ever since the Babylonian captivity in 586 AD, Israel has been without a king or prince. Furthermore, they have been without a sacrifice since the destruction of the temple in AD 70 when Titus the Roman general destroyed Jerusalem. They have
◊ (Continued on page 3)



April 5, 2023

Volume XXXIII, Number 4

Whole Number 519

Editor: Eld. Joseph Sidders

Staff: Sheron Cockrell and Marsha Kiser

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

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

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

CHURCH PHONE: 1-662-282-7794.

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

The publication of an article does not necessarily mean the editor is in complete agreement with the writer, nor does it mean he endorses all this person may have written on other subjects.

COPYING PRIVILEGES: Unless otherwise stated any article published in this paper may be copied by other publications, provided they give proper credit line stating that such was copied from this publication, and the date of publication; provided that such materials are not published for profit. If we are not on an exchange list with the publication

copying, it is requested that a copy of the issue containing the article be sent to our address. All copyrighted materials may not be copied without written consent.

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - U.S.

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES - FOREIGN One Year \$45
PLANNING TO MOVE? Notify us three weeks in advance. The post office will only forward periodical mail for 90 days. They charge us \$.70 for each "change of address" they have to send us. Please save us this expense and the post office time.

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

A PAPER WITHOUT SUBSCRIPTION: Some times people write to us and say that they did not subscribe for the BBB. They are receiving our paper because someone else has paid for their subscription.

We trust the BBB will be received as an outstretched hand to you. Take what you find helpful and discard what you cannot use. If you do not want to receive such a gift subscription, please write to us. We are happy to cancel such a subscription. We do not want to go where we are not wanted.

DISCLAIMER: The Editor assumes that the articles submitted for publication in the BBB are written by the person whose name they bear, unless otherwise indicated by a quote from another writer. However, the Editor cannot personally guarantee that this is the case in all articles which appear in the BBB.

The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

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

Tune in to the Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS	
WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	95.9	3 , 0 0 0	F M
WCTT, Corbin, KY	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	680	5 , 0 0 0	A M
WFTA, Tupelo, MS	Sunday 9:30 - 10:00 a.m.	101.9	3 , 0 0 0	F M

Berea Baptist Banner
PO Box 39
Mantachie, Mississippi
38855

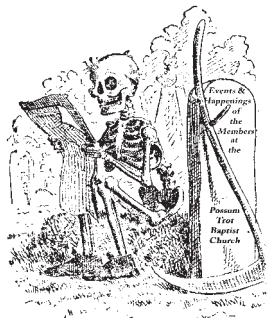
(662) 282 - 7794

www.bereabaptistchurch.org
request@bereabaptistchurch.org
office@bereabaptistchurch.org

Planning a move?

Please let us know your new address. The post office charges us \$.75 for each returned wrong address.

Perishing Subscription?



Can't remember if you renewed? Look at your mailing label on the front page of this month's paper. If you see above your name "Expires 4/2023" then this will be your last issue. So renew now, otherwise you will not be reading the next issue of the *Banner*.

What is A Church?

(Continued from page 1) ◊

authorized them to do the work (at Antioch) for the express purpose of rehearsing, or giving a report of the work that they had done. I think it is significant to note that they did not sail to a "universal, invisible church" to deliver their report. Paul and Barnabus did not summon the elect of all ages to deliver their report. Rather, they returned to Antioch and "**GATHERED THE CHURCH TOGETHER**") (emphasis TWR) to deliver the report. Biblically speaking a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, made up of baptized believers, must of necessity be a local, visible congregation that can gather together in a definite location. Paul and Barnabas were sent out by a real church, and thus they delivered their missionary report to a real church made up of real baptized disciples who had gathered for worship. There was nothing universal or invisible about the church at Antioch. Thus, a church in the New Testament is a local and visible congregation (assembly) of baptized believers who have covenanted together under the Headship of Jesus Christ to carry out the Great Commission.

It should be noted at the outset that the Biblical teaching of what a New Testament church is, is not at all what Catholics or Protestants have taught and believed through the centuries. Those who believe in the scriptural teaching of what a New Testament church is are in a decided minority.

A CHURCH DEFINED BIBLICALLY

It is important that we get our definition of what a church is from the Scriptures, rather than the opinions of Catholic

and Protestant theologians. The inspired writers of the New Testament text never once used the word Catholic (katholikos, the Greek word for universal) or invisible in conjunction with the word church (ekklisia in the Greek). The Christians of the first century knew absolutely nothing about a universal or an invisible church.

I love the quote by the late Elder Davis Huckabee who wrote:

"The Greek words ekklisia (assembly) and katholikos (general or universal) are mutually exclusive; the former is expressive of locality and a restricted assembly, while the latter is expressive of universality and all-inclusiveness. Not only so, but katholikos is not even a New Testament word, nor is it to be found in the Greek Old Testament. It made its appearance sometime after the first century when it first began to be applied to the so-called general (katholikos) epistles. It was never applied by inspiration to the church."

The Roman Catholic theologian, Augustine (353-430 A.D.) really set forth and solidified the unscriptural notion of a universal, visible church that consisted of every member of the Catholic church who submitted to the authority of its visible head, the Pope. Augustine's version of the church was stated in the Fourth Century and was an attempt to define a church as a single, world-wide entity that a person had to belong to in order to be saved.

Later, after Martin Luther took his decided stand against some of the errors of Catholicism, Protestants had to come up with a new meaning for the word church in order to justify their split from Rome. From that time

◊ (Continued on page 8)

Israel in Eschatology

(Continued from page 1) ◊

also been without idols. That was one of the purposes of the Babylonian captivity. God was curing Israel of her affinity for heathen idols.

History, reason, faith, and a straightforward reading of God's Word all come together to confirm what is said in verse 4 is true. That is why, whether you are a dispensational premillennialist or not, you would agree with the interpretation of verse 4.

The controversy arises in verse 5. There is no indication anywhere to say that we are to now switch gears and consider verse 5 in any other way but the literal. This verse is to be understood as having a literal fulfillment sometime in the future.

As Tom Ross wrote when commenting on this verse, "Sound Bible exegesis and honesty require the Bible student to interpret both verses in a literal manner." (*Elementary Eschatology*, p. 120)

When we speak of Israel and God's plan for her in the future, we mean national Israel, the ethnic descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We reject any form of replacement theology, whether it says that the church or the elect have replaced, superseded, or fulfilled Israel to such an extent that the nation of Israel has no significance in God's plan.

Charles Spurgeon said it this way in a sermon he preached in 1855:

"I think we do not attach sufficient importance to the restoration of the Jews. We do not think enough of it. But certainly, if there is anything promised in the Bible it is this. I imagine that you cannot read the Bible without seeing clearly that there is to be an actual restoration of the children

of Israel. "Thither they shall go up; they shall come with weeping unto Zion, and with supplications unto Jerusalem." May that happy day soon come! For when the Jews are restored, then the fulness of the Gentiles shall be gathered in; and as soon as they return, then Jesus will come upon Mount Zion to reign with his ancients gloriously, and the halcyon days of the Millennium shall then dawn; we shall then know every man to be a brother and a friend; Christ shall rule with universal sway." (C. H. Spurgeon, "The Church of Christ," in *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 1 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1855), 214.)

Some deny that God has any plan for Israel, and within that group, there are those who would say that people today have inherited all the blessings promised to Israel. Who those people are, depends on who you talk to. The universal church camps will say it is "the church" that has inherited all these

◊ (Continued on page 6)

From Fire and Thorns

(Continued from page 1) ◊

bush. He even suggests that we picture this "bush" as a thorny blackberry bush. It is really a bush, nothing mystical, nothing great in size or dimension. It is really thorny, it is really planted firmly in the ground, and it is really burning with fire. This fire would have been written permanently on Moses' memory that it would serve as a reminder of their deliverance, of God's intervention as well as His holiness! Beyond the imagery Moses heard a voice calling for him to recognize his place and condition. He was not permitted to walk up to this bush with sin in his heart nor earth on his shoes "for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." It would do us well to recognize this definition of holiness in our own worship. There are two elements of this bush I wish to look at more clearly as they are images of our dear Lord and Savior.

First let us consider the thorns. "Now the serpent was more

subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 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. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is

◊ (Continued on page 4)



From Fire and Thorns

(Continued from page 3) ♡

this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:1-19).

We should recognize here that thorns, as well as thistles, were called forth from the ground by God as part of the curse upon fallen man. “And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from

whence he was taken” (Gen. 3:22-23).

In Matthew 13 Jesus tells His disciples the parable of the sower. The seeds are a picture of those hearing the Gospel. He mentions seeds that fell by the way side and were devoured. He mentions seeds that fell upon stony places where they could not properly take root and were scorched by the trials of this life. He mentions seeds that fell among thorns, the curse of the earth, they were choked out; the thorns are described as “springing up” as though these seeds were caught in a snare or trap. In verse 22 He later translates this portion of the parable as those of this life who have heard the Gospel but never separate themselves from the deceitful cares of this world, thus they dry up and are unfruitful. He finally mentions the seeds that fell on good ground bringing forth fruit of great number.

“Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto



Exodus 1:13-14

“And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.”

them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend:

whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might

♡ (Continued on page 6)

Safety Net...

(Continued from page 1) ✧

handle on all the theological terms such as immutability, irresistible grace, reprobates and absolute predestination. They know that Jesus can pretty much do anything (except fail!) and that God is “always” in complete control. So when they come to the point of salvation, many of them are kind of timid to “do” anything, as they anticipate that God will invincibly and eventually save them somewhere down the line, as the young protégés will usually assume that they are indeed “one of the Elect”. Selah! Think about it!

Objectively, one might wonder how many of the people dying today in the obituaries were really saved? One thing is for sure: there is a multitude that finally found out that hoping to be one of God’s Elect, just was not enough. While election is always “unto” salvation, the real salvation, humanly speaking, is the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. But some folks that learn about election, will try to make a safety net out of it. This is more of a phenomenon in sovereign grace churches, where the children are more in tune with reading the Bible stories, looking for the glory of God, rather than so many Arminian churches, where the focus of nearly all the Sunday school stories is to elicit a confession of faith, that comes with the head knowledge of how God saves, but with the onus of “getting saved” being thrust directly upon the young children soaking up the teachings of the Bible. Typically, before the Arminian child gets out of elementary school, they will have been pressured to make a “Profession of Faith” and told that they are now safe, regardless of whether they have been truly

saved, or not. Emotionally, they do desire to go to Heaven and avoid Hell, so because the modern Evangelists have bypassed the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, many of these children grow up with their “Profession Papers,” but without ever really having “Possessed” spiritual salvation.

Typically, true Baptist parents and teachers, will be waiting on the Lord to do the saving, so that it will be genuine salvation, not a continual chain of professing, relapsing and recommitting, rebelling, and never really knowing whether God ever saved the (now) young adults, or not! “When God saves you, you will know it!” is a familiar refrain from godly sponsors of the Gospel. And that is true, and it does work just fine, because it truly is the Biblical Gospel. But it can get frustrating for so many of the young folk, as they watch their peers being saved (?) and baptized, and as they live godly lives being obedient to their parents and the Christian rules, they start to wonder and doubt if they will ever be saved, too. Eventually that frustration can lead to rebellion, and many a Baptist family’s children have given up on the sovereignty of God and either drifted, or impetuously ricocheted off into the world, angry at God and His sovereign timing.

As the children turn into adults, many will quit going to church, and turn any spiritual discussions with their parents and pastors into arguments. The head knowledge, particularly of unconditional election and limited atonement will in many cases turn into what I call, the “Safety net of Election.” They will try to turn the solicitous inquiries into church attendance and godly living into quarrels and say that “...if God really is sovereign and election is all up to Him, then

what is there left for me to do? I cannot do anything to save myself, so I might as well live however I desire, until the Lord saves me anyway.” Selah! What do we say?

Every case is different, but a couple of critical Bible truths are being ignored by these frustrated children. The first is human responsibility. **“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth (does not say invited!) all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness...”** (Acts 17:30-31). “God does not send anyone to Hell” in the strictest sense and the very real plight of mankind is that we “earn” our way into Hell. Human responsibility is true, in that it really is our selfish choices that turn into sin, and because we continue to reject God, He will eventually be that Judge of righteousness, at whose judgment throne we will find ourselves without any holy righteousness. And that will be our own fault... **“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away”** (Isa. 64:6). God ultimately judges each man righteously as depicted in **“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still...”** (Rev. 22:11). And thus will be our case for all of a terrible eternity.

This point of accountability “must” be made! Even though the young upstarts will counter with the equally true premise of, “I know that, but I also know that total depravity is true, and I cannot stop sinning and will never stop sinning, until God sovereignly changes me and saves me.”

We can acknowledge the truth of their assertions, but we must

also firmly continue to press home the preeminent fact that God is the offended party here, not them. The next truth to challenge these highly intelligent children with is the fact that election is not the key to salvation. We have to essentially take away their safety net that they are living with. I remember before I was saved, that the preacher’s messages on sin and Hell had their impact. I would curl up in my bed and pull the covers up over my head because I was so scared of eternal damnation. But, I distinctly remember finding solace in the “fact” that I was “probably” one of God’s elect, so all I had to do was hunker down and wait Him out. The conviction was not yet unto salvation, so I was able to deceive myself once again to “wait” to confess my sin and seek the salvation of God through faith. Oh, Jeremiah knew the condition of my faithless heart! **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it”** (Jer. 17:9)?

So, our job is to take away that supposed safety net. As we continue to talk about how unworthy we are, because of our total depravity, we can truthfully declare to our children, that “No one is worthy of God’s Grace!” Follow that up with, “If God were only Just and Holy, He would not choose or elect anyone! If all we do is sit around sinning and fighting against God, what can we expect but Hell? Would God not be righteous if He sent our whole family to Hell? We certainly do not deserve His grace, do we?” Each child must be brought to see the dangerous path they take is a high wire act with eternal consequences if we fail to understand that sovereign grace is not just unmerited favor, but it is also unwarranted favor!

✧ (Continued on page 7)

From Fire and Thorns

(Continued from page 4) ◊

be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:1-30). It was from beneath this crown of thorns, this crown of our own curse that our Lord and Savior commanded deliverance for His people. What a picture as we look at our text and realize that this burning thorny bush was not merely promising the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt.

Jesus informed Paul (Recorded in Acts 9) that it was hard to kick against the pricks, and Paul referred later to the thorn in the flesh that kept him humble and prevented his conscience from being puffed up. This thorn remains with man as a reminder of his full rebellion against God and his need of repentance.

The second element for us to consider of this bush is the fire. Why was the thorny bush a

blaze and not consumed? **"For our God is a consuming fire"** (Heb. 12:29). **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"** (II Cor. 5:21). As this bush represented our Lord and Savior wearing the crown of our curse, the thorny sin punishment "our" righteousness deserves, Jesus was also made to suffer God's wrath for us. God is an all-consuming fire and Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30).

Remember Paul's words as he counselled the Hebrews to lay aside the weight of sin and run with patience in Hebrews 12:2 **"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."** We see fire used as part of God's wrath against Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. Again when Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22. Fire was intermingled with the hail plague against Egypt in Exodus 9. Used again in I Kings 18 and 19 as God is proven to the nation before the false prophets and again unto Elijah who had been shaken by Jezebel's threat.

God directs us by this consuming fire as well! Jesus was used from the bush ('Angel of the Lord') to direct Moses in how to approach God's holiness. The nation of Israel was led by a pillar of smoke and fire as they left Egypt. The offering of the Passover was to be **"roast with fire"** (Exodus 12:8) as a picture of holiness and of the true unblemished lamb... Jesus!

Though there are many I finish with one last example. Consider Exodus 29:31-46 which reads

◊ (Continued on page 11)

Israel in Eschatology

(Continued from page 3) ◊

blessings, but the local church groups will say it is the elect. Neither is correct because as you read through the Scriptures, you will see that God indeed has a chosen nation of Israel: not the whole entire nation, not everyone who is born a Jew is automatically saved, but by the authority of the Scriptures, I can safely speak of the elect nation of Israel.

What we read here in our text became more apparent in 1948 when the nation of Israel was formally recognized as a Jewish state. Since then, multitudes of Jews have returned to the homeland promised to them when God made a covenant with Abraham thousands of years ago. (More on that another time, but if you would like a sneak peak, go to Sermon Audio and look for my sermon from 2007 when I preached at King's Addition Baptist Church Bible Conference on my assigned subject of "Israel's Future." I have not changed my position on this in those 15 years of Bible study except I have grown in my preaching and maturity.)

Some will say this is a new position, but the Baptist preacher John Gill (who lived in the 1700s) would differ with them. In commenting on Hosea 9: "The ten tribes of Israel, and also the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which are included in the name of Israel, as Aben Ezra interprets it; and these are joined together in parallel places; see Jer. 30:3, 9 and 50:4, 5. for though they did not go into captivity together, yet their return and conversion will be at the same time; and they are all spoken of under the name of Israel by the Apostle Paul, when he foretells their conversion and salvation, Rom. 11:26. The return

of them, here prophesied of, does not barely mean their return to their own land, which will be at this time; see Jer. 30:3; Ezek. 37:21, 22; Amos 9:15, but their return to the Lord by repentance; when they shall repent of, and turn from, their sinful course of life, and particularly of their unbelief and rejection of the true Messiah, and embrace him; and of their traditions and false ways of worship, which they shall discard; and of their own righteousness they shall now renounce; and shall turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe in him for righteousness, life, and salvation..." (John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament*, vol. 6, The Baptist Commentary Series (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1810), 392.)

There are many different terms people use for their version of replacement theology in Biblical prophecy I am not going to take time to name them now. My interest is what does the Word of God say and how do we answer those who say we are wrong?

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Rom. 11:1). Paul had written some tough things about Israel in chapter 10 and now as inspired by the Holy Spirit he asks the question, **"Hath God cast away His people?"** "Has God cast away Israel?" "Has God reprobated the nation of Israel?" That is the question. The replacement theology (the idea that the church has replaced Israel) crowd - those who subscribe to the amill (no millennium) idea - they answer the question in a way that God does not.

Milburn Cockrell, commenting on this passage says this:

◊ (Continued on page 8)

Safety Net...

(Continued from page 5) ◊

God is “not” obligated to put up a safety net. If any are trusting in that fabulous grace of there being a worth or value in ourselves that merits a safety net, it is time to open our eyes to the indictment of total depravity as an unholy savour in the nostrils of God Almighty! There is “no reason at all” for me to be one of God’s elect! **“Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness”** (Ezek. 14:20). There is no safety net in election! None deserve or warrant salvation! Somehow, we have to bring our callous youth crashing down intellectually into that chasm of hopelessness in a freefall to Hell... But how do we do that? How do we strip away that safety net of election that they are falsely trusting in?

Eld. Sam Wilson preached a convicting message many years ago, where he stated that the Gospel in a nutshell is “Sin and Jesus.” I have marveled at the simplicity of that wise nugget and never forgotten it. My Gospel preaching has since then been focused on those two standards of truth. We are sinners and we need a Saviour! As we pray for our kids and gently try to lead them to the gospel truth, we need to make sure they know those two things. The bad news is that sin is really bad, and the good news is that Jesus is super wonderful! The sovereign way of God in salvation will “always” end up on this Johannine road to salvation: The Holy Spirit will convict the poor sinner, and then regenerate them with the new life to be able to repent of that sin and believe in the power of Jesus to wash away our sin with His precious blood!

If we continue to point our kids back toward the accountability of our sins, then the thought will not cross their minds anymore that they can be saved by election (although it undeniably does take God’s choosing!). What they need is: Jesus! **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”** (John 3:16). Jesus! I am a sinner! I need You!

Salvation comes down to, not “will” you believe, but “can” you believe. And God really “can” make you “able” to believe! **“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner”** (Luke 18:13). **“Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house”** (Acts 16:29-31). They both, and all of us convicted felons know only one thing - we are sinners and we need Jesus!

Isaiah paints such a poignant picture of these frustrated young folk in his entire 59th chapter, but the keynote verses are verses 12-14: **“For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God... for truth is fallen in the street...”** They know the truth. We brought them up right! And our only hope is that by the grace of God, they will be honest enough to see themselves in this **“lying against**

the LORD, and departing away from our God” and that their conscience might be pricked for the **“truth...fallen in the street”** and **“as for our iniquities, we know them...”!** Selah! Please Lord bless them!

The next step is again to be straightforward and honest with them. I remember asking my son if he was saved. As he hesitated to answer, I asked him if he knew God was real. He did not really hesitate to answer that, but he was wary of committing himself fully. “Yes...” was his answer. Well, if you truly believe God is real then what is the problem? (Head knowledge is insufficient, is it not?) If you believe God is real and you believe election is real (using it for a safety net, after all) then why is it your “illogical” reaction to avoid church and rebel into a life of unholy living? If God is real, and the judgment is real, then do what He tells you to do! If God is real and you spend your life ignoring Him and being disobedient, then “why” would your prophesied end (Jer. 29:11) be any different from the wicked and reprobates? Do you think an esoteric safety net is going to save you? Or is it more likely that repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is still going to be the way that God will save you? Selah! Think about it!

Honestly, church going is not going to save you. But...where do you think is the most likely place that “This Very Real God” is going to make His Gospel effectual in your life? On the lake with your beer buddies, or in the Lord’s house hearing the earnest sermons along with the Lord’s elect children? If one is intelligent enough to figure out election and irresistible grace, then we need to be intellectually honest also, in that trusting an invalidated safety net, instead of obedience to Jesus, we are doomed

to failure. If our intent is to be saved tomorrow, then be aware that tomorrow never comes...We will never be saved, except on the day called today.

Make your choice today to **“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near...”** (Isa. 55:6). Maybe we have not read this verse enough in our sovereign grace churches? I do not know, but please do not ignore these powerful exhortations to recognize that we have offended God’s holiness! Seek reparations on an honest plane with this most logical God. **“Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph”** (Amos 5:14-15).

Let us reread our text that we started with, and see if we fall in the category of a “broken heart and a contrite spirit”? **“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”** If our heart is not broken and there is no contrition in our lives, do not blame that on God, beloved reader! The Bible is full of gracious invitations that will be ignored and despised by the totally depraved populace of this earth, but if you desire mercy, the Bible says that you will find it in Christ! The Doctrine of Election is mixed with the instruction to humble ourselves and seek the Lord with every fiber of our being in **“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end (election and foreknowledge!). Then shall ye call upon me, and**

◊ (Continued on page 16)

Israel in Eschatology

(Continued from page 6) ◊

“The scripture nowhere teaches that God has reprobated national Israel forever. We must not teach the promises made to the patriarchs and to Israel must now be altered. We must not spiritualize away the plain meaning of the prophetic word to suit those who are **“slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken”** (Luke 24:25). If God’s promises in the Old Testament to Israel were not literally fulfilled are we to assume His promises in the New Testament are going to be fulfilled in the same way? Are we to take those promises in the New Testament addressed to the gospel church and spiritualize them away and apply them to the Jews? **God forbid.** The mighty God of Jacob has not forgotten His unfilled promises made to Israel through His holy prophets.” (The Second Coming of Christ, page 195)

Notice there in Romans 11:1 Paul is careful to make sure we know he is talking about the physical, not the spiritual. He gives his own lineage (physical) as proof that the Jewish people are not cast away. Mark it down, had he been talking about his identity spiritually here, he would have mentioned none of this, but rather his relationship with Christ!

“God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee

to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest

◊ (Continued on page 11)

What is A Church?

(Continued from page 2) ◊

until now Protestants in the main have believed in the unscriptural notion of a universal, invisible church. There are several different variations of the universal, invisible church doctrine, none of which match with the usage of the word church in the Holy Scriptures. Protestants who bear the birthmarks of their unholy mother, the Roman Catholic Church, also equate salvation with church membership in some degree. Catholics and Protestants alike insist that the everyone who is saved is of necessity in the universal church. The proponents of the universal, visible and invisible church theories fail to see the distinction made in the Word of God between the Family of God which constitutes all born again believers, and the churches of God which are made up of saved people who have been scripturally baptized by a New Testament church in Gospel order. The Scriptures make it clear that the elect are born again into the family of God and the kingdom of God (John 3:3-8). However, the Scriptures make it crystal clear that believers are added to the Lord’s church by way of baptism scripturally administered (Acts 2:41; I Cor. 12:13, 18). There is only one Family of God and one Kingdom of God, both entered by way of the new birth. However, there are literally thousands of churches of the Lord Jesus Christ made up of believers baptized in Gospel order. Historically Baptists in the main have stood alone on the principle that sinners are saved through Christ alone, separate and apart from any denominational or church affiliation.

Sadly, due to the influence of

C. I. Scofield’s study Bible and the advent of Fundamentalism in the early 1900’s many Baptists embraced the heresies of the universal, invisible church theory. Many Baptists hold to the version of the church branch theory and/or the idea of a local body within a universal body. When they want to appear to be ecumenical and acceptable to Protestants they talk of the big universal, invisible church, but when it comes to the collection of tithes, offerings, and a weekly salary they appeal to the local church. I think a lot of Baptist preachers would be cured of the universal, invisible church theory if they had to depend on the big, mythical, spooky church for a paycheck!

For the sake of time and space we will not examine every time the word ekklesia is translated church or assembly in our English Bible (KJV). For a detailed study I would refer the reader to a book I wrote entitled *Teachings on the Local Church* where I examine all 114 times the word ekklesia is translated church, churches, or assembly in the New Testament, including the 18 times it is used in a generic, institutional, or abstract sense. One time it is inserted as an idiomatic word in italics (I Peter 5:13). Three additional times it is found in the subscription at the end of Romans, I Timothy, and Titus. One thing is for certain, each and every usage of the word ekklesia translated church or assembly in the New Testament either refers directly or may be applied to the teaching of a local, visible, assembly or congregation of baptized believers. The only exceptions would be the non Christian usage of ekklesia where the word is translated **“assembly”** three times

◊ (Continued on page 9)

What is A Church?

(Continued from page 8) ◊

in Acts 19:32, 39, 41.

A CHURCH HAS A DEFINITE LOCATION

The unscriptural theory of the universal, invisible church has many flaws and glaring errors. Perhaps the greatest error of all is that the universal invisible church has never once gathered for worship as it has no definite location. What is the stated address of the universal, invisible church? Does it congregate on the Lord's Day? Who are the elders/pastors who preach and teach at the universal, invisible church? None of these questions can be answered intelligently because the universal, invisible church has never congregated and has no real location.

Elder Milburn Cockrell wrote:

"The word ekklesia does not mean "the called out." It means 'assembly,' 'congregation,' 'gathering,' or 'meeting.' The literal and primary meaning precludes the so-called universal, invisible church. There is no such thing as an assembly which cannot assemble, or a congregation which never congregates. The meaning for the word prohibits such a meaning. The universal, invisible church has never assembled and never will on this earth in this Gospel age. Hence such a thing is a mere concept of the mind, having no real existence in time or place."

How stark is the difference between the mythical, spooky, universal, and invisible church from the churches that are recorded in various locations in the New Testament Scriptures!

Ekklesia is translated 37 times in the plural form "churches" in the New Testament. This of course

◊ (Continued on page 10)

Heavenly Hymns

"...Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:18-20). [This hymn was printed with permission from the Olmstead Baptist Church and written by Haldor Lillenas in 1917. You may access their free-domain hymnal by going to www.olmsteadbaptistchurch.org/hymnal.pdf]

THE BIBLE STANDS

15

1. The Bi-ble stands like a rock undaunted 'Mid the rag-ing storms of time;
2. The Bi-ble stands like a mountain tow'ring Far a-bove the works of men;
3. The Bi-ble stands and it will for ev-er, When the world has passed away;
4. The Bi-ble stands ev-'ry test we give it, For its Au-thor is di-vine;

Its pag-es burn with the truth e-ter-nal, And they glow with a light sublime.
Its truth by none ev-er was re-fut-ed, And de-stroy it they nev-er can.
By in-spir-a-tion it has been giv-en, All its pre-cepts I will o-bey.
By grace a-lone I ex-pect to live it, And to prove it and make it mine.

CHORUS.

The Bi-ble stands tho' the hills may tumble, It will firmly stand when the earth shall

crumble; I will plant my feet on its firm foun-dation, For the Bi-ble stands.

What is A Church?

(Continued from page 9) ◊

means that in the New Testament there were a plurality of churches, each one located in a definite place, each one recognized as the body of Christ in that specific place. It is interesting to note that when Paul wrote to the church at Corinth he said that **"The CHURCHES** (emphasis mine, TWR) **of Asia salute you. Aquilla and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house..."** (I Cor. 16:19). If Paul believed in a universal, invisible church or even in a provincial church he would have said "the church of Christ" or "the Church of Asia" salutes you. Yet Paul recognized each congregation of baptized believers existing in a specific place as a body of Christ. Even the ones that assembled in a house as in the case of Aquilla and Priscilla! When Jesus wanted to communicate to the seven churches of Asia the Holy Spirit did not inspire John to write to the universal, invisible church of Asia. Rather, the Scripture reads: **"John to the SEVEN CHURCHES** (emphasis TWR) **which are in Asia"** (Rev. 1:4). In Revelation chapters two and three the location of each church is clearly identified by where it was located (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea).

Consider the following Scriptures where the definite location of a specific church is given:

"...the church which was at Jerusalem..." (Acts 8:1).

"...the church that was at Antioch..." (Acts 13:1).

"...Unto the church of God which is at Corinth..." (I Cor. 1:2).

"...unto the church of the

Thessalonians..." (I Thess. 1:1).

"...The church that is at Babylon..." (I Pet. 5:13).

I find it instructive that three times the writers of Scripture refer to a local church as **"the whole church"** in that specific location. Each local church in the New Testament may be regarded as a genuine, whole body of Christ, not just part of something bigger. Consider the following:

"Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church (at Jerusalem, TWR) **to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas"** (Acts 15:22). **"Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you"** (Rom. 16:23). **"If therefore the whole church** (at Corinth, TWR) **be come together into one place"** (I Cor. 14:23). All the redeemed are not referenced in these passages. Each passage refers to a specific church that congregated in a definite location. Each congregation was identified as the whole church in that location.

An entire series of studies could be written illustrating that all the metaphors of what a church is like in Scripture suggest a local, visible entity: as opposed to a universal visible or universal, invisible one. Who every heard of embracing an invisible **bride**? When was the last time you walked into an invisible **building**? How would you get light from an invisible **candlestick**? How would you shear sheep from an invisible **flock**? Every metaphor of the church suggests a visible entity occupying space and time. The teaching of a local, visible assembly of baptized believers can be applied in each metaphor. Yet, the teaching of a universal, invisible church can

never be logically or intelligently applied. From the usage and etymology of the word church as well as the metaphors of Scripture used to describe a church, it is decidedly clear that the church is local in nature, to the exclusion of the teaching of a mythical, universal, invisible church, which is a falsehood.

Many other examples illustrating the fact that the churches of the New Testament were congregations of baptized believers that gathered in a definite location could be cited. Suffice it to say that the New Testament makes it crystal clear that a church is a local, visible body of baptized believers that congregates for worship under the Headship of Jesus Christ, for the express purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission. The churches identified throughout inspired Scripture were in no way universal or invisible.

A CHURCH MAY BE DEFINED BY WHAT IT DOES

The universal visible or invisible church has never and will never congregate for worship on this earth. The universal church has never called a pastor. The universal church has never baptized a convert. The universal church has never observed the Lord's Supper. The universal church has never sent out a missionary. The universal church has never disciplined a wayward or erring member. The universal church has never been united in doctrine and practice. The universal church has never taken up an offering or collected tithes. The universal church has never supported a pastor or a missionary. This should be quite a conundrum for all the Catholics who believe in a universal visible church and all the Protestants

who believe in a universal, invisible church. Their theories of what a church is do not square with what the New Testament teaches about the functions of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ started the first New Testament church during His earthly ministry. His twelve apostles were the first members of the first church (I Cor. 12:28). The original members of the church Christ organized were eyewitnesses of His glory, miracles, teachings, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to Heaven. Just prior to His ascension to Heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ gave the church what is commonly referred to as the Great Commission. Christ authorized and commanded His kind of church to get to work preaching the Gospel worldwide, baptizing the converts, and teaching them to observe and practice the truth until the end of the age. **"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen"** (Matt. 28:18-20). Baptists have been executing the commands laid out by the Head of the church for over 2000 years. When Jesus issued the Great Commission He was speaking to the members of the church He had organized and promised perpetuity unto. Interestingly enough they were assembled and worshipping in the place He had appointed them (Matt. 28:16-17). There were no baby-sprinkling

◊ *(Continued on page 17)*

From Fire and Thorns

(Continued from page 6) ◊

“And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place. And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy. And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy. Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering

thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.”

God gives the nation of Israel, and us today, a picture of the fire we should have in our devotion to Him. The Lord began to describe the ministerial duties of the priests, beginning with the burnt offerings that were to be offered morning and evening each day. Note leftovers were not to be consumed but burnt because they were holy. Strangers who were not atoned for were not welcome to eat, for they were not made holy. The first responsibility of the priests each morning was to remove the old ashes from the altar, get the fire burning, and then offer a lamb to the Lord, a symbol of total devotion to God. This is a beautiful picture of what our morning “devotional time” ought to be like. “**Stir up the gift of God**” (II Tim. 1:6) which literally means for us to “fan into full flame.” How easy it is for the fire to get low on the altar of our hearts (Rev. 2:4) so that we become lukewarm (Rev. 3:16) and even cold (Matt. 24:12).

The tabernacle was sanctified (set apart) by God's glory when the glory of God moved into the holy of holies (Ex. 40:34). Israel was the only nation to have this glory (Rom. 9:4). God's Spirit lives within us and therefore we should be a separated people who bring glory to God (II Cor. 6:14-7:1). Let us recognize the firm Word of the Lord!

What a picture of holiness Moses found on the backside of the desert that day! What a plan the Lord had before the foundation of the world! What a wonder it is to picture the humiliation our crown of thorns caused for Jesus Christ, and what a blessing it is to see the Holiest of Holies, though He despised the shame, wearing that crown and calling us beloved! May God add the blessing to His Word!



Israel in Eschatology

(Continued from page 8) ◊

of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature

into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all” (Rom. 11:2–32).

No! God is “not” finished with the nation of Israel and I would say be careful to you who would boast because we live in the time we do. The Holy Spirit here in this text warns us about that. It ought to encourage us that God would have such care to remember the promises He gave to Abraham and David...to Israel and not break them. “Your” God may be a promise-breaker, but “not” my God, for I serve the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob... the God of the Bible!

SOME OF THE
REPLACEMENT PROOF
TEXTS USED

“Know ye therefore that they

◊ (Continued on page 19)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1) What great mystery from Scriptures are you most interested in learning in full when you arrive in the Kingdom?

Roger Reed
20 Ledgewood Dr.
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

Pastor
West Jefferson
Missionary Baptist
Church
47 S. Heath Lane,
West Jefferson, Ohio
43162



For me two Scriptures come to mind, they are both in Genesis. The first one is Genesis 1:1, **"In the beginning God..."** and the second one is Genesis 6:1-6, **"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."**

There really is not any need to explain why these are the two I picked; they speak for themselves. I believe God always was and there was never a time He did not

exist, but the depraved mind will always have doubt.

I believe that Genesis 6 is talking about fallen angels, which is not real popular today, so it will be nice to finally know the truth. I am sure there are others that I will be able to finally know the truth about, but I can say that about the whole Bible. God Bless!

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH
45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH
45619



Colossians 1:12-14 states: **"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."** According to this passage of Scripture the greatest mystery of all time is revealed, at least in part. How God Almighty can so radically change a lover of darkness dwelling in the filth and degradation of his own depravity, into a child of the King, fully forgiven and accepted in the Beloved! As I ponder the miry pit of sin and godless rebellion I once delighted in, I marvel at the great mystery of sovereign grace. I was helpless, hopeless, wandering in the darkness of ungodliness with no way of saving myself or making myself

acceptable to God. Satan, the god of this world, had so blinded my eyes and captivated my mind I had no understanding of the way to God. To make matters even worse, due to my own wretched willfulness and love of sin I had no desire to know the way to God. I was rushing headlong on the broad road of destruction toward eternal damnation. How is it that someone so sinful, so wretched, so willfully ignorant of God can be made an heir of an eternal inheritance in Christ?! A mystery to the natural man indeed!

The power of God intervened in my heart, mind, and will as the Holy Spirit gave me spiritual life and revealed the glory of the Gospel of Christ unto me. What had been previously hidden was now opened up in such a powerful way that I wanted to know Christ and the full pardon of sin more than anything else in the whole world. God opened the eyes of my understanding to see what I was and what I needed, and then miraculously drew me to a saving knowledge of Christ. II Corinthians 4:3-6 describes this glorious, mysterious transformation process: **"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."** How could it be that one who once loved sin and self, now loves the Lord Jesus

Christ? How could it be that one who was in the kingdom of darkness be suddenly translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son? How could it be that one who should have been justly condemned to spend an eternity in the Lake of Fire be forgiven and reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus, fully justified and complete in Him? Then I think of the multitudes in every age who have experienced this same grace and glory! How gracious and wonderful our Sovereign Lord is to show such transformative mercy to so many undeserving wretches! These are mysteries I have meditated upon during my earthly pilgrimage that fill my heart with awe and wonder. I look forward to God opening up to my glorified mind and heart the fulness of the mysteries of sovereign grace as the eternal ages roll on. Oh, how I long to know more of the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ and experience the fullness of His presence. These are the things that I look forward to most as I look forward to the Millennial Kingdom and the Everlasting Kingdom to follow.

Matthew Stepp
286 Big Creek Road
Wayne, WV 25570

Pastor
Big Creek
Baptist Church
286 Big Creek Road
Wayne, WV 25570



"Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever" (Psa. 45:16-17).

There are many "mysteries" revealed in Scripture, if we take the time to study them. Supposed

◊ (Continued on page 14)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2) What is the responsibility of a church member in regard to serving their church?

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH
45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH
45619



The third aspect of the Great Commission clearly states: **“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen”** (Matt. 28:20). Members of the Lord’s kind of church are responsible to observe all things commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word for observe is tereo which means the idea to hold fast, keep, serve, and watch. Every precept, principle, and command of Jesus Christ is to be believed, embraced, and cheerfully obeyed. In order to do this church members must obey the apostolic admonitions set forth by the inspired writers of Scripture. Peter wrote: **“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth”** (I Peter 2:21-22). John the beloved wrote: **“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in**

him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (I John 2:3-6). The responsibility of church members as it relates to serving the Lord’s church is relatively simple. Obey the commands of Christ, be more like Christ, tell others about Christ, and provide a Christlike example to the other members. Be a faithful learner in the school of Christ as a disciple and then be an example and mentor to other disciples in the body. In order to obey the commands of Christ you must be devoted to a life long study of the New Testament Scriptures to find all the truth and commandments you are responsible to observe.

Years ago I preached a sermon titled “What Makes a Good Church Member”. Later I decided to write a series of articles based on that sermon that were printed in booklet form by the Bryan Station Baptist Church entitled “Are you an Exceptional Church Member?”, where I set forth what I believe the Bible teaches about being a responsible member of the Lord’s church. The booklet is still in print and available from the Bryan Station Baptist Church of Lexington, KY. Here are some of the major points I emphasized:

I ask the reader to solemnly reflect and examine their spiritual life and service to the Lord. Are you an exceptional member of the Lord’s church? Are you a pillar in the house of God? Or are you merely fulfilling a social obligation to ease your conscience or keep the preacher off your

back? Do you do what you do to please the Lord, or to please men and gain their applause? Are you the best you can be for the glory of God? If not, why not? What follows are some components that I believe form the character and make up of a truly exceptional church member.

To be an exceptional church member you must be:

1. **Saved by sovereign grace.** The first ingredient necessary for a person to be a good church member is to experience and partake of the reality of genuine salvation by the sovereign grace of God. I am convinced that one of the major reasons why some people never really have a desire to serve the Lord or have a taste for the things of God is because they have never truly been saved. I would venture to say that if you have never received a spiritual nature from God in the new birth, being a Baptist church member would be a miserable existence indeed!

2. **You must have scriptural, Baptist baptism.** Baptism is a public declaration that you have been saved by grace through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. It is a symbolic picture that tells the story that you are dead to your old way of life. You are declaring symbolically that you are buried with Christ in the watery grave and risen with Christ to walk in newness of life. I consider scriptural baptism to be a solemn vow before God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the angels, the local church, and the world at large. In this holy vow and solemn act the believer is declaring his loyalty to the Lord and His church.

3. **You must be submissive to God’s Word and the authority of the Lord’s church.** To be

an exceptional church member there must be an earnest desire to receive, submit to, and obey the infallible Word of God. The members of the church at Thessalonica were exceptional in this regard. I Thessalonians 2:13 and 5:20-21 reveal: **“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe...Despise not prophesyings, Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”** God’s Word provides us with all that is necessary to be a successful church member. We should make it our daily duty to read, study, meditate upon, memorize, and apply the blessed commands of Holy Scripture. The Word is used for instruction and correction according to II Timothy 3:16-17: **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”** When the Scriptures instruct us we must cheerfully submit to their teaching. When the Scriptures correct our errors and expose our sins we must humbly submit and repent.

4. **You must be separate from that which is evil and have a desire to walk in holiness.** It is absolutely essential for members of the Lord’s church to live a life that manifests the light of Christ and the holiness of His character. As God’s elect we are responsible to live and behave in such a way that manifests a marked difference between our

Forum Question #1

(Continued from page 12) ◊

contradictions of parallel accounts, dispensational progressions, and infinite paradoxes compared to our finite physics will all have their answers found in Scripture, if we will only believe them. I have often quoted the unknown saint that stated, "The Bible is not hard to understand, men just find it difficult to believe." The revelation of total depravity and the consequential damnation of all unrighteousness to Hell is plainly stated- but yet not universally embraced. Not for lack of understanding this mystery revealed, but for lack of faith- they just outright reject it, despite the evidence. Selah! Think about it!

But there are some subjects that we have a more limited amount of information concerning. We understand the tri-une nature of God, and believe in the Godhead of three natures, in One Person, but we have no ability to really fathom how that works, because of our mind's entrapment in a universe of physics, where such a Being is impossible. We know that God is not of our universe, since He existed before He created it, so we "know" the answer, but we have not the full measure of comprehension: i.e.- "Ah, so that is how He does that!" Another mystery that is answered in Scripture is the eternal love of God for us, His elect. "Why should He love a wretch like me?" is a valid question that I wonder if we will ever be able to understand fully in eternity future? As I said, it is answered in Deuteronomy 7:7-8, **"The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because**

the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you..." The answer to that question is unconditional election, yeah, but "why me?...?" is the everlasting question of His saints!

We have glimpses of answers to other questions, that I am looking forward to a more complete answer and understanding in the coming eternal kingdom, like "What did Christ do in the three days buried in the tomb?"; "What is the real background story of the Magi, and how did they end up in Bethlehem?"; and "Who wrote the Book of Hebrews, since Paul says that he did not?" These are mysteries that we will know when we get there, **"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known"** (I Cor. 13:12).

Another specter of mysteries that are not found in Scripture, but will be revealed in the glory to come, will fall in the realm of our rewards and the judgment at the BEMA seat of Christ. "How many gospel seeds did we plant?" "How many times were our prayers answered, that we never knew in this age?" "How many folk were saved because we watered the Gospel seeds planted by others?" These and other mysteries will be revealed in time by our Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient Sovereign. The glory and the justice of God will be seen by all the world in these coming revelations of great mysteries. And no doubt, these personal questions will be the greatest and most pertinent of all mysteries to me, but they cannot be found in the Book already written, called the Holy Bible, but rather are

written in the books of the living and the book of life.

So, if I had to narrow it down to a great mystery from Scripture that I am most interested in learning in full when I get there, the question is: "What now?" What will be our eternal purpose(s)...? I know the "doctrinal answer" is to praise, glorify and worship our Lord and Saviour for all eternity, but "how"...? How will that be effected? We know also from Scriptural data, the answer to the famous song "I Can Only Imagine": We will both dance for Jesus and also fall on our knees/faces. We will sing, shout, and also silently meditate upon His love and faithfulness. (Ecc. 3:4; Ps. 150:4; Isa. 66:23-24)

But as I have studied the angelic origins and destinies of the previous civilization (Rev. 12; Isa. 14; Ezek. 28; Jude; Heb. 1), and seen that they are allowed to participate in our current universe, I wonder if the Lord may yet allow us to be His servants in a future revelation (universe) of His glorious will and purposes. Psalm 45 seems to hint at such a future, and perhaps when we get to Glory, the "What now?" question will be answered in service and eternal duties! Selah! Think about it!

Mike DeWitt Sr.
PO Box 950
Springfield, OR 97477

Pastor
Parkway Landmark
Baptist Church
PO Box 950
Springfield, OR 97477



That is an easy one, the greatest mystery of all. **"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up**

into glory" (I Tim 3:16). What glorious things await us in the hereafter, brethren: I have great expectations.

Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 13) ◊

way of life and the world's way of life. We are called upon to manifest the fruit of the Spirit as outlined in Galatians 5:22-25: **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."**

5. **You must be steadfast and faithful to Christ and His church.** I often ask myself a soul-searching question: "What if every member of Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church followed my example of service?" Have you every personally applied that question to yourself? If every member followed your lead would they be faithful in attendance, have a good attitude, be a good example to the young people, pay their tithes, have a gracious spirit, and promote unity in the body? Dear brothers and sisters, members of Christ's church, please understand that we are all members one of another in the body! We all are responsible to promote the well being and unity of the body! Hebrews 10:23-25 declares: **"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith with wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye**

◊ (Continued on page 15)

Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

see the day approaching.” One of the best ways of obeying these verses is to simply determine to be faithful to God’s house unless you are providentially hindered.

6. **You must have a sincere love for the brethren.** Jesus told the members of the First Baptist Church that He had personally started during His earthly ministry: **“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”** (John 13:34-35). If you are going to excel as a member of the Lord’s church you must love the brethren. You must love those that God loves, those that Christ died for, those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. It is a command that has been issued from the Head of the church. Love for the brethren is the one thing that Jesus said would attract the attention of the world at large. Love for the brethren is a badge, a mark, a characteristic that confirms you as a genuine follower of Christ and a sincere learner in His school of grace.

7. **You must be committed to sharing Christ and His Gospel with others.** One of the most important aspects of the Great Commission given by Christ to His New Testament Baptist church as an institution is stated plainly in Mark 16:15: **“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature...”** The early churches took this command so seriously that they filled Jerusalem with the doctrine of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection as the only means of salvation (Acts 5:28). In spite of persecution

and threats of imprisonment the members of the church at Jerusalem vigorously continued in their quest to share Christ as Acts 5:41-42 reveals: **“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”** Later in the Book of Acts we find that the spread of the Gospel was so rapid and the influence of the early churches was growing so much, believers were identified as **“...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also”** (Acts 17:6). This tells me that the members of the early churches took the command to preach the Gospel to every creature literally. I believe every member of the Lord’s church should be actively engaged in sharing Christ with others, not just the preachers and elders. We have an example of this recorded in Acts 8:4: **“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”** The apostles remained in Jerusalem while the members of the church at Jerusalem were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1), sharing Christ as they went. The command to preach the Gospel was in no way limited to the apostles or to ordained preachers! Every member of the Lord’s churches should be a witness of the saving power of Christ and His Gospel! Every church member should be concerned about those who are lost and undone in their sins.

8. **You must sacrificially give of yourself and your resources.** Romans 12:1-2 declares: **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the**

mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”... If we can consistently obey the command to present our body as a living sacrifice, it logically follows that we will gladly give of ourselves, our time, our financial support to the work of the Lord. Paul commended the liberality and sacrificial giving of the church at Macedonia in II Corinthians 8:1-7. Even though they lived in deep poverty they were able to give to the Lord’s work and help others. I think verse four reveals the key to their liberal giving: **“And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.”** When we give ourselves to the Lord we will gladly pay our tithes and give our offerings to the work of the Lord and His New Testament church.

9. **You must have a sincere love and respect for the pastor God has appointed over the flock.** If the Holy Spirit has been pleased to provide your church with a pastor that loves the Lord, honors God, and feeds the flock the truth from the Word of God you ought to be thankful. Demonstrate your gratitude to God by obeying the command to esteem and love your pastor: **“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves”** (I Thess. 5:12-13)... I do believe that a faithful man of God who has committed his life to preaching the Gospel and

ministering to the flock of God is worthy of sincere love and respect.

10. **You must be determined to stand for the truth.** Paul exhorted the church at Thessalonica to: **“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good...Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle”** (I Thess. 5:21; II Thess. 2:15). It is absolutely necessary that church members know what they believe and why. Baptist churches should be bastions of truth and godliness. There must be a genuine desire to believe and practice the truths of the Word of God. Every church member has an obligation to the body as a whole to unite with and earnestly contend for the faith once delivered. **“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen”** (Eph. 3:21).

Roger Reed
20 Ledgewood Dr.
Mansfield, Ohio 44905

Pastor
West Jefferson
Missionary Baptist
Church
47 S. Heath Lane,
West Jefferson, Ohio
43162



Well, I am sure we all have different views on this, but I will just comment on three that I think are important to me. First and foremost, I believe a church member is responsible and obligated to be in church every time the doors are open, unless there is sickness or they are providentially hindered, **“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”** (Heb. 10:25). There are way too many attractions on Sunday these days. I will just say it straight out,

♦ (Continued on page 18)

Baptist History



Taken from *This Day in Baptist History*
Written by E. Wayne Thompson and David L Cummins

JOAN BOUCHER LOVED, LIVED, AND DIED IN TRUTH

III John

Joan Boucher, known also as Joan of Kent in England, was a lady of note, possessing much wealth. She was also well known at the palace in the days of King Henry VIII and King Edward VI. Joan belonged to the Anabaptist Assembly in Kent and with her friend Anne Askew was devoted to the study and circulation of Tyndale's translation which had been printed at Cologne in 1534. It is reported that she carried copies of this prohibited book under her clothing on her visits to the court and very likely to the prisons also, which she visited often and where she used her wealth to relieve those who suffered for Jesus' sake.¹

Joan was arrested in May of 1549 and was exposed to cruel interrogations. She was examined and cross-examined, entreated and threatened, but she would not move from her faith. The whole futile operation was a travesty of properly exercised authority. If she were an empty-headed woman, as they pretended, they brought no honor to themselves in spending eighteen months of their time, before and during her

imprisonment, trying to prove her a heretic. Lord Richie kept her at his house for two weeks as Bishops Cranmer and Ridley of the Church of England attempted to dissuade her from her Baptist convictions. Her judges called her demeaning titles but not "lady," which her parentage, position, and character demanded.

Foxe, also of the Church of England but of a tender heart, tried to save her and to induce the Vicar, John Rogers of St. Sepulcher, to help him. Rogers refused, however, believing that Joan ought to be executed, and reportedly, he spoke lightly of death by burning. Only five years later, Rogers's poor wife and eight children saw him consumed by flames at Smithfield, London, as he became the first martyr under Bloody Mary's reign.

Joan Boucher suffered amongst the flames May 2, 1550, to the eternal disgrace of all concerned. Common decency might have spared her the mockery of having Bishop Scorey preach to her while at the stake and vilify her there under pretense of pious exhortation. Yet possibly her last act did him a service which he needed very much and which had never been done for him previously. Her sermon to him is immortal, while his to her has long since been forgotten. Listening to him just before her soul ascended to heaven in the flame, she said in reply, "You lie like a rogue. Go

read the Scriptures!"²

She believed in Christ's miraculous incarnation but rejected the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary and her subsequent sinlessness, insisting that Mary, like other women, needed to rejoice in God her Savior. Joan was a woman dedicated to God and His Word. While men of rank and station in this life capitulated, she stood firm as a lady of strong conviction and Christian character. We thank God for courageous women who, through sufferings, remained faithful to God's truth. Many women are included in God's roll of the faithful.

2 Ibid., p. 450.

(*This Day in Baptist History* by E. Wayne Thompson & David L. Cummins, pp. 178-180)



Safety Net...

(Continued from page 7) ♦

ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD... (Jer. 29:11-14).

These verses that command and exhort a seeking of that all-too-real God are the ones that I usually inscribe in the Bible that the Big Creek Baptist Church purchases for senior graduates. If you have opened your Bible and are looking for peace, hope and "**an expected end**", this is the right place! Perhaps this is the time that God will make His Word "**..in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones...**" (Jer. 20:9). Where is the right place? Perhaps it might

be up in a sycamore tree where the curious Zacchaeus found his "right place"? Perhaps it may be back at that old country church? Please "go," and find out! But, beloved, if you use your scriptural knowledge to continue to offend our Holy God, you will never have any peace on that road! The Lord may strike you down on the Damascus road, while you are breathing fire and destruction, but that is truly presuming upon the grace of God. If you know where the strait gate is to be found, then seek the grace today to "**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). "**But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul**"

(Deut. 4:29). If you go back to church for 2-3 weeks and then give up and say, "Well, I told you! It is not going to happen!," then that is not really seeking with all your heart, is it? Seek Him with "all" your heart and "all" your soul, and never give up! God will not despise such a heart and soul search! (and yes, I know that it is going to take sovereign grace for that to happen. Praise God for such a gift of a broken heart and contrite spirit!) Selah! Think about it!

I still cannot guarantee that if you take this article and follow it step-by-step, that God will save your son or daughter. That is still actually up to election and manifest predestination, as our super-smart kids already know. But if we continue to faithfully point them to Jesus and their pressing need of Him because of

♦ (Continued on page 17)

¹ Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists* (1890; reprint ed., Watertown, Wis.: Maranatha Baptist Press, 1976), 1:449.

Safety Net...

(Continued from page 16) ♦

our sin, we can do no more, nor any better. Sin and Jesus! To the best of our ability, do not allow them to be distracted from that Gospel truth. Acknowledge the truths that they know! Never deny the sovereignty of God that is their only true hope of real eternal security and preservation! Do not try to trick them, either, as so many evangelists have already done to their peers, by preying on their emotions. Stick to the Bible and her truths, and do not ever stop praying for them and loving them unconditionally. That is what God will bless! He has promised that He will not despise a contrite heart and a broken spirit! **“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise”** (Psa. 51:17). May the Lord break our hearts... bring us to David's point... I am so sorry, Lord! Selah! Think about it!



What is Church?

(Continued from page 10) ♦

Catholics or Protestants in the first church. True churches of the Lord Jesus Christ have been following the Great Commission pattern without fail since Jesus first gave the command. Real, visible, local churches of the Lord Jesus Christ preach the one and only true Gospel (I Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 1:16-17) as the only way of salvation. Real, visible, local churches administer the ordinance of baptism by immersion in literal water to signify symbolically that the new believer is dead to his old way of life, buried with Christ, and raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4-6). Once added to the church by scriptural baptism the new believers are then taught

to believe, practice, and defend the faith once delivered unto the saints. Catholics and Protestants may preach the Gospel (though precious few really do) and they may teach some truth. However, they have never truly administered the ordinance of baptism in its pure and primitive form. If a religious organization has no authority to administer the ordinance of baptism they cannot be recognized as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A church of the Lord Jesus Christ assembles as a body of Christ to worship the Lord on the Lord's Day as a means of proving their profession of faith. Hebrews 10:23-25 commands: **“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.”** In I Corinthians 14 Paul is carefully explaining the gift of tongues and its proper use in the early church. It is interesting to note that Paul believed like all true Baptists that a church congregates or comes together in one place to worship. I Corinthians 14:23 and 26 declare: **“IF THEREFORE THE WHOLE CHURCH BE COME TOGETHER INTO ONE PLACE** (emphasis mine, TWR), **and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?...How is it then, brethren? WHEN YE COME TOGETHER** (emphasis TWR), **every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath**

an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.” I love that Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, identifies the church at Corinth as the whole church that **“came together into one place”!** Not a body within a body, but a local, visible body of Christ that comes together and assembles for worship. The universal visible nor the universal, invisible “church” has never once done this! Its a myth!

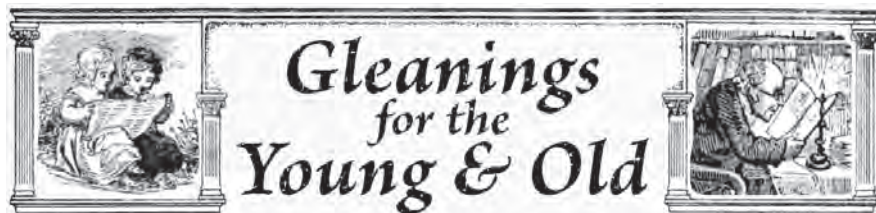
A church of the Lord Jesus Christ has the authority from Christ to receive members and also to discipline wayward or heretical members. Jesus gave clear instructions how to deal with a brother guilty of personal offenses in Matthew 18:15-17: **“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee then take with the one or two more** (verses 19-20, the Lord is in the midst of those dealing with the erring brother), **that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”** These instructions from the Lord Jesus can only be carried out in a local, visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its quite impossible to **“tell it”** to a universal visible or universal, invisible church! Its a myth!

A church of the Lord Jesus Christ observes the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. In order to do this they must come together as a unified body of Christ. When Paul was correcting the Corinthian church for the irregularities and improper

observance of the Lord's Supper he made this point quite clear. **“Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that YE COME TOGETHER not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when YE COME TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be manifest among you. WHEN YE COME TOGETHER THEREFORE INTO ONE PLACE, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye THE CHURCH OF GOD, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not”** (I Cor. 11:17-22) (emphasis TWR).. The universal visible nor the universal, invisible church has ever come together to observe the Lord's Supper. If it is invisible how would you share the elements with the members? Nor is it possible for this mythical, spooky church to have any sort of unity (I Cor. 1:10) with all the conflicting and contradictory beliefs its invisible members have. Its a myth!

A church of the Lord Jesus Christ has authority to send out missionaries to preach the Gospel, baptize the converts, and teach them with the ultimate aim of organizing new, autonomous, independent churches. The church at Jerusalem did this when they sent forth Barnabas to organize the believers at Antioch into a church: **“..when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the**

♦ (Continued on page 19)



Gleanings for the Young & Old

Predestination
Or
Has America Broken God's Heart?
By Elder Roger Reed

From time to time, I have a man who writes me and asks me to answer questions he may have, or wants a title to a certain verse of Scripture for an outline, and, at times, he has asked me to send him an outline on a certain subject or verse which I have done numerous times (he gets the paper and enjoys reading my answers). But in his most recent letter, he asked that I would give him some Bible verses and outline for a message titled 'America Has Broken the Heart of God!' This is the first time I was in disagreement with his request.

Below is my reply to the brother. There have been many people over the years who do not agree with the stand I take on predestination, so in response to the brother's request, I have written him back and I am sharing the letter with you, dear reader, my belief on the subject. We hope God will open the minds of the readers and that they may come to this precious truth. God Bless!

Dear Brother:

I am sorry, but I cannot help you with this one. I believe in predestination for it says in Ephesians 1:5-6 **"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."** Ephesians 1:11 says **"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."**

The word predestination means: an act of predestinating or predestining. The state of being predestinated or predestined, destiny. Theology; the action of God in foreordaining from eternity whatever comes to pass. The decree of God by which certain souls are foreordained to salvation.

Let me explain how I believe the Bible teaches predestination. Everything that has happened or will happen, God has already pre-ordained it. There is nothing that surprises God or will happen that He did not order it to happen that way. I believe that when the leaves start to fall off the trees in Autumn that each and every leaf that falls to the ground, God predestinated to fall in that very spot. This is the doctrine of reprobation. See The Sovereignty of God in Reprobation A.W. Pink!

I will not take the time to elaborate on it any further here, I think every Christian needs to study this for themselves **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Timothy 2:15). Every Christian has the responsibility to do so!

So, God ordained what America was going to do, and that is what they have done, turned their back on Him, just like Israel did and is still doing. See, God gave America to us, like He gave the promised land, flowing with milk and honey to Israel. America is all but destroyed because of the depravity of man. It makes me sick to my stomach, and should do the same to every Christian if they love America as I do.

Actually, it is what Satan is doing through mankind (by God's permission of course) (read the Book of Job, especially the first three chapters). Psalms 92:7 says **"When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever."** Look up the word iniquity in your Bible! And if you do not have Strong's Concordance, buy one! God hates all that work iniquity. **"The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity"** (Psa. 5:5). **"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"** (Matt. 7:23).

God is not "heartbroken"; as you think: He is angry with not only the Jews but with America: remember, everything is going as God planned it, and He planned it all before the foundation of the world, **"God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day"** (Psa. 7:11). **"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil"** (Isa. 1:16). There are a multitude of Scriptures that warn us of the things to come, plus God is warning us right now, but not many are listening. It is so disgusting to me how Christians and even some preachers are acting today, but that is another subject. Again, it looks like we may be at an impasse on what we believe, my prayers are that you will come to this truth as you study God's Word. What Christian America needs, is repentance, and when that happens there will be a revival for our beloved America, we can only seek our Sovereign and Holy God for this. God Bless!

In His Service,
Roger D. Reed (pastor)



Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 15) ♦

you belong in church and not some sporting event, and to pick anything over church on The Lord's Day is sin! Xmas was on Sunday this past year: how many Christians (Baptists) skipped church to stay home and play with the kiddies or go to grandma and grandpa's house instead of worshiping the Lord in spirit and in truth in His house on His day?

Second, church members are responsible to study, **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Tim. 2:15). Members believe this is only something the preacher/pastor needs to do and they will learn from him. But that can be a real problem sometimes, even though the pastor is responsible

for preaching the truth. I have a real good friend and Christian Brother in Tennessee. Back in in the 70's we worked at the same place and attended the same church. We had one of the finest preachers of our time, and he was well-studied. But we bought so many books back then, it is almost unbelievable. We really studied then; you will not find that too much today in many of our church members. Now I am not saying none of you church members do not study, I just do not believe it is like it used to be.

The third and last responsibility of a church member that I will comment on is having the utmost respect for the pastor of the church you attend. I will throw this in for free: if you do not like the pastor at the church you attend, then leave, but give him the respect he deserves by telling him you are leaving, because he

♦ (Continued on page 19)

What is Church?

(Continued from page 17) ◊

Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed. and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people were added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year THEY ASSEMBLED THEMSELVES WITH THE CHURCH, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:20-26) (emphasis TWR). Not long after the church at Antioch followed the pattern set forth by the church at Jerusalem and sent forth missionaries to do the work of the Lord (Acts 13:1-3). The universal visible nor the universal, invisible church has ever ordained or sent out a missionary. It is a myth!

I could go on defining a true church by what it does illustrated by scriptural examples, but what I have set forth will suffice for now.

Just to reinforce what a church is, I offer this excellent definition set forth by J.E. Cobb in his Baptist Church Manual:

“A New Testament church is an assembly of people called out from the world by the preaching of the Gospel accompanied by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and baptized in the faith

and fellowship of the Gospel, to a life of conformation to the will of God, to execute the will and perpetuate the ordinances of Christ until He comes.”

(All of the quotes by other authors are cited in my book *Teachings on the Local Church*, TWR)



Israel in Eschatology

(Continued from page 11) ◊

which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Gal. 3:7). Here, we are told that all those who are of faith are the children of Abraham. And that is true: we are. However, this does not mean that the church is the new Israel in all senses. There are physical promises made to a physical nation, as we see answered in Romans 11 and like we saw in Hosea, too. Not all of the promises given to Israel could possibly be fulfilled in the Lord’s church.

“**For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God”** (Gal. 6:15-16). Paul does not say anything here about Christians being the “new Israel.” In this epistle, he has just attacked Jewish legalists, so the comparison is between true believers and legalistic Jews. Context means something folks.

“**For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh”** (Phil. 3:3). The comparison here is not between the church and Israel but between legalistic Jews and the church at Philippi.

“**Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my**

kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (John 18:36). Christ is not commenting here on the place of His kingdom, but He is speaking of the source of it. Nowhere does He say anything about never establishing His kingdom on earth. In fact, the Scriptures are plain about that.

“**Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: For I will forgive their iniquity, And I will remember their sin no more”** (Jer. 31:31-34).

CONCLUSION

“**I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin”** (Rom. 11:1). I trust that we can see in all this that God has not cast away Israel. When we speak of Israel in Bible prophecy we mean the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We do not mean all descendants of

Abraham, nor do we mean the church or all the elect. God is very clear about this topic!



Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 18) ◊

has prayed and watched out for your soul, “**Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you”** (Heb. 13:17). I can not begin to tell you how hurtful and devastating it is to a pastor when a church member does not show respect to him: it is very hurtful and cowardly.

I have left a couple of churches in my day, but I always had respect enough to go to the pastor and tell him I was leaving, whether I liked him or not. I do not have the words to describe how disrespectful that is. One thing the church member forgets, God knows everything.

Also, Paul told Timothy, “**Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward”** (I Tim. 5:17-18). The pastor of a church is ordained of God, not the members of the church. It may be good to remember that.

It may be good for a church member to remember two things here “**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”** (Rom. 12:1). “**To whom ye forgive any**

◊ (Continued on page 22)



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

By Joseph M. Sidders of
Guntown, Mississippi



What of Demas?

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when

thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (II Tim. 4:1-18).

This letter to Timothy was written during Paul's final days as he was imprisoned in Rome. Paul knew this was the end, and not long after this writing, it is believed that he was martyred for the cause of Christ. It is no surprise, then, that we find in this chapter an intense personal appeal for Timothy's faithfulness to the Lord and to his beloved Paul.

We see in this chapter (vs 16) that "no man stood with" Paul during his trials. He was arrested so suddenly by the Romans that he was not able to even collect his belongings. In this letter he asks Timothy to bring his cloke

(Strong's "used for protection against stormy weather") that he left with Carpus (only mentioned here and referenced to be a Christian at Troas). He also asks for his books, which are likely to be his own writings and "especially," or "most of all," the parchments which are believed to be his copies of the O. T. Scriptures.

Let us first consider the forsaken charge of Demas. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica..." (II Tim. 4:10). Demas is only mentioned three times in the Bible: "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house" (Col. 4:12-15). "There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers" (Phil. 1:23-24).

In these two passages above, Paul beseeches those in receipt of his letter to "salute" or embrace Demas as a brother or companion in service to God (fellowlabourer). We must consider the Lord Jesus' words in His Sermon on the Mount as we analyze this forsaken charge: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). In our text, Paul now describes Demas

as having forsaken the work and his co-labourers for his love of the present world.

What was the labor? "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles" (II Tim. 1:7-11).

What is the charge that Demas had forsaken? "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (I Pet. 4:16-19). "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even

Country Preacher

(Continued from page 20) ◊

unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:7-15).

In Paul's letter he does not specifically tell us what event or person may have led Demas away but we know from the Sermon on the Mount (above - Matt 6:24), that he could not have such a great love for this world in tandem with the love that he should have had for the Lord. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen" (II Pet. 3:17-18). "Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me

thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day" (Psa. 25:1-5).

As we read this letter, Timothy let us notice the charge to church leaders. Keeping in mind that the letter we are using as our text is a letter to Timothy, another Saint who had been ordained to a work as a leader in the Lord's church, we see then in this letter a charge to church leaders, and these charges are to keep us steadfast in the work that is before us:

Preach - "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (II Tim. 4:2-5).

Teach - "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (II Tim. 2:1-7).

Sanctify - "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:19-21).

Glorify - "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Tim. 3:14-16).

Finally, let us consider what the Bible has as a charge to church members. Let us consider with our thoughts of Demas this charge from Peter: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word

which by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Pet. 1:22-25).

We find, therein, four "musts" that we cannot escape as born-again believers. We "**must be born again**" (John 3:7)! We must be purified! We must abide in Him lest we be as the flower, falling away! We must exercise and display an unfeigned love for the brethren! The word "unfeigned", which Paul uses, means sincere or genuine. The love Paul showed toward his brethren in our text, even from his death bed. More specifically, consider his comment of Mark "**he is profitable to me for the ministry**". There is evidence in the book of Acts that Paul may not have initially been so fond of him, but in the end, he could see his value to the kingdom.

These four "musts" are not the laws of the church, my friends, but what the Apostles had found to be greatly profitable during their walk with Christ. Words of caution of the dangers that lie on the road ahead for us.

In his final hours Paul was writing to the brethren and desirous of a cloke and scriptures. What of Demas and his final hours? Was he lonely? Was he eventually called from the pig troughs of the world and used of the Lord? Was he even saved at all? What of you this hour...what if this is your final one? Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Will you be found faithful?

END



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER
Financial Report
1-1-2023 to 1-31-2023

Beginning Balance \$10,193.40

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 750.00
Berea B. C. Bookstore Tax Refund 135.35
The Willetts, Cottonwood Shores, TX 125.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL 25.00
Grace B. C., Gladwin, MI 50.00
Grace B. C., Germantown, NC 25.00
The Lord's B. C., Goose Creek, SC 100.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY 45.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH 100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL 100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR 50.00
S. G. B. C., Wellington, KS 200.00
Beauty Mtn. B. C., Edmond WV 50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV 300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL 60.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV 200.00
Victory B. C., Courtland VA 25.00
Grace B. C., Corbin KY 100.00
Southside B. C., Fulton MS 25.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen IN 100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn AR 12.50
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX 50.00
Parkway L. B. C., Springfield OR 100.00
West Jefferson B. C., West Jefferson OH 75.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg KY 150.00
Bruce Allen, Cross Plains, TX 25.00
Eld Donald Parker, Milport, AL 100.00
S. G. B. C., Texarkana, TX 100.00
S. G. B. C., Hazard, KY 200.00

Subscriptions 80.00
Divided Checks 150.00
Anonymous 165.00
Sub Total \$3,772.85
TOTAL \$13,966.25

EXPENDITURES:

Postage: 1,037.86
Printing (2 mo) 918.20
Wages 2,000.00
FICA 153.00
Misc (MS Sales Taxes) 135.35
Div Cks 150.00
Total Expenditures \$4,394.41

ENDING BALANCE \$9,571.84



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST
Financial Report
2-1-2023 to 2-28-2023

Beginning Balance \$5,721.33

RECEIPTS:

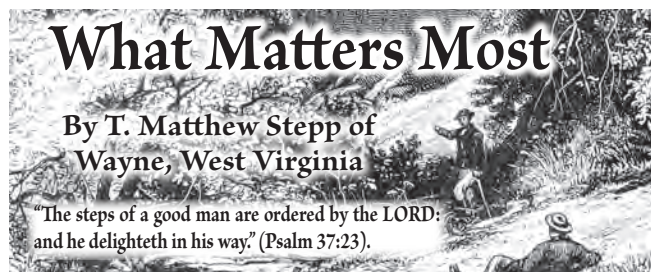
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 150.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY 100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA 100.00
..... 450.00
TOTAL 6,171.33

EXPENDITURES:

Radio time 607.96
Adobe 32.09
Order of Checks 26.25
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 666.30

Interest +0.21

ENDING BALANCE \$5,505.24



What Matters Most

By T. Matthew Stepp of
Wayne, West Virginia

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD:
and he delighteth in his way." (Psalm 37:23).



"Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia" (Acts 15:22-23).

There are three Scriptural ways for a church to receive a member into their number. The first is to baptize them upon their confession of faith in Jesus Christ and a showing the fruit of a godly, repentant heart. The second is by letter of recommendation from another recognized church of like, precious faith and doctrine. The third way to take in a member is by statement of faith.

The purpose of church exclusion is ultimately that the one being excluded might see the seriousness of their offense and that God will gift them with a spirit of repentance and they would come back before the church and "make things right." In other words, they would 1) Repent of the offense; 2) Resume a godly life of Christian service; 3) Regain the confidence of the church in their daily walk; and 4) be Restored unto full membership again by the vote of the church.

The fact that a disciplining church has disbanded or gone out of existence does not make it impossible for said member to

come back and receive restoration. As we look into the study of the Lord's church, we realize that individual churches are not promised perpetuity. However, the institution is granted that promise! There will always be found one of the Lord's true New Testament churches that the disciplined saint can locate and then submit to their ecclesiastical authority.

It does not really matter that it is not the same church, it is the same kind of church, which is Jesus Christ's church! He is the Head of each church and it is "His" authority that we are to submit unto.

Now before someone misunderstands the concept and doctrine of independent, Baptist churches, we must clearly define the parameters of this restoration by another church. If the church that exercises discipline is still in existence, then that is the only church the ousted member can return unto for restoration. No other church has the right or the authority to override that first church's vote and mandate, without there being serious extenuating circumstances. She must respect the autonomy and sovereignty of each independent Baptist church to rule and govern over her members.

It is only in rare and specific circumstances that this third option of receiving a member by statement of faith should be considered acceptable. When the baptism is clearly valid and letters are impracticable or impossible.

Each circumstance should be carefully evaluated and once all the facts are in and considered, then each church should act according to the dictates of God's Word in meekness and love, with all authority. **"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven"** (Matt. 18:15-19).

(Matt Stepp is pastor of the Big Creek Baptist Church of Wayne, West Virginia.)



Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 19) ◊

thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (II Cor. 2:10-11).

Like I said at the beginning, there are, I am sure, different views of what a church member is responsible for when it comes to serving in the church, but these are three that are important to me as a man called and ordained

◊ (Continued on page 23)

P
O
N
D
E
R
S

revealed energy patterns enabled scientists to develop the quark theory.

Even though the quark is currently considered the basic building block, physicists are certain because of experimentation that there are even smaller particles.

Points to Ponder: There is no book other than the Bible, religious or scientific, of 2,000 years ago that mentions the scientific fact that **“things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”**



Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 22) ◊

by God to be a pastor of one of the Lord's true churches. God Bless!

<p>Mike DeWitt Sr. PO Box 950 Springfield, OR 97477</p> <p><i>Pastor</i> Parkway Landmark Baptist Church PO Box 950 Springfield, OR 97477</p>	
---	--

First and foremost is to pray for the members. **“ Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak”** (Mark 14:38), **“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”** (Jas. 5:16).

Be involved in the church, or be present and engaged with what is going on, and those around you. **“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”** (Acts 2:42), **“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind”** (Phil. 2:2).

Attendance, **“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”** (Heb 10:25). **“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do”** (I Thess. 5:11). We cannot do this if we are not all physically attending each worship time.

To sum up the answer to the question, we must always remember that in our daily lives as members of the Lord's churches, **“That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour”** (II Pet. 3:2).

<p>Matthew Stepp 286 Big Creek Road Wayne, WV 25570</p> <p><i>Pastor</i> Big Creek Baptist Church 286 Big Creek Road Wayne, WV 25570</p>	
--	--

“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (I Tim. 3:2-7).

I preached a message a few months ago entitled “Seventeen

Steps to Being a Good Church Member.” It is not too often I can get 17 points in on one message, but I managed to cover the attributes deemed essential to being a good Pastor, as the Apostle Paul outlines it here to Timothy! I did not actually use this passage as my text, and was careful not to let the congregation “know” that I was getting my points from this chapter, until my final point, where I read the verses and stated that if these qualities were good enough for a pastor, then they must be good qualities for any church member that wanted to live a godly life for the Lord...! Selah! Think about it!

The salient point is that being a good representative of the church should be just as important for each and every member as it should be for the pastor, eh? Certainly, the pastor is held to a higher standard, and that is Scripturally proper. If he finds himself deficient in any of the above categories of godliness, and unable to recover his blameless status, it would be incumbent upon him to resign as the spiritual leader of the church. The burden of leadership does come at a cost, and it requires the best efforts of purity and diligence before any congregation will place their trust and future in his tested and worthy hands. But should we not, as role members, desire such a confidence from the ones that we witness unto in our community? If we fail, we, too, must seek forgiveness and restoration. But, whereas the pulpit may be unavailable any longer as consequences to the fallen, yet forgiven pastor, church membership can never be denied unto the grossest sinner that comes clean by God's Grace and seeks said forgiveness and restoration! Not until the

◊ (Continued on page 24)

Forum Question #2

(Continued from page 23) ♦

“seventy times seven” is exhausted! Hallelujah, Praise God!

It is therefore the responsibility of a church member to 1) have personal integrity that can be vouched for by open morality; 2) be faithful to their spouse; 3) be ever aware of temptations to both self and church; 4) have a solemn inclination to serve God and church daily; 5) be on their Sunday-best conduct during the week, too; 6) be hospitable to both strangers and friends on behalf of the church; 7) be a ready teacher of good things garnered by their Christian experiences; 8) be an abstainer of alcoholic beverages; 9) be unruffled by the Devil’s attacks, and a keeper of their temper; 10) not be tempted by money or power, giving freely in tithes and offerings as the church has need; 11) be patient with young, old, rich, poor, wise and foolish members; 12) be a peacemaker on all occasions, particularly within the church membership; 13) be well content with what the Lord has given them, both monetarily and in status; 14) be aware of their status within their own

family, whether it be as husband as the responsible head, or wife as submissive devotee of the family, or as respectful and obedient children; 15) raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, so as to equip the next generation of church members; 16) not be satisfied with being a mediocre or shallow church member, but to be a core member that can be counted upon, no matter what; 17) have a good witness in the community, so that they can be an effective witness of both the church’s integrity and unto salvation by our Sovereign Saviour. Selah! That about covers it, eh?

If it sounds like the Bible expects us to be perfect and model church members, then you would be correct! **“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”** (I Pet. 1:13-16).

If we put God first, and sacrifice the things of the world to make our families and church the most important things in our lives, then we will be on the road to fulfilling our responsibilities of church membership! Selah! Think about it!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Grace Baptist Church of Gladwin, MI is seeking to start a mission work in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. We are also seeking a sound preacher to go there. If you are interested and feel led of the Lord please contact Pastor Sam Wilson at 989-701-5564. You may also contact Brother Tom Coffee, who is currently working in the area at 843-254-3018.

This ministry currently has a blog written by Bro. Coffee that can be read online at <https://thefaithfulofgod.com/blog/>

The Maranatha Missionary Baptist Church located at 14460 Ravenna Avenue, Alliance, OH, 44601, is seeking a pastor. The church was organized in 1981 and currently has seven members that are grounded in sound Baptist doctrine. Any interested elder can contact Brother Denny Morgan at dennymatco@gmail.com or call (330) 324-3038.

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

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

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

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

The Lord’s Baptist Church in Tacoma, Washington is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Gaylen Russell at 360-879-5565 (home) or 253-495-4567 (cell) or by Email: gaylenr@rainierconnect.com.

Bethel Baptist Church, which is located at 2603 Penfield, Pasadena, TX 77506, is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elders should call Brother Risinger at 832-564-6350 which is his cell phone or you can call him at home at 281-476-5099.

Grace Missionary Baptist Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma is in need of a pastor. This calling has a parsonage located right next to the church building. Interested persons are to contact Brothers Charlie Hodges at 918-633-2713 or David Thorne at 918-373-6057.

Bethel Baptist Church of Lawton, OK is looking for a pastor. They have been an independent, sovereign grace Baptist Church since the late 1950’s and they are seeking to call a man of God to guide, lead, teach, and rebuild their modest congregation. If you are interested please contact Bennie Burnsed at 580-695-4473.

ARTICLE INDEX

What is a Church? by Tom Ross	p. 1
Election is not a Safety Net for Sin by Matthew Stepp	p. 1
From Fire and Thorns by Joseph M. Sidders	p. 1
Israel in Eschatology by David Green	p. 1
Heavenly Hymns	p. 9
Forums	pp. 12-13
Baptist History	p. 16
Gleanings: Predestination Letter by Roger Reed	p. 18
Country Preacher by Joseph M. Sidders	p. 20
What Matters Most by Matthew Stepp	P.22
Points to Ponder by Perry Ames	p. 23