

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

Silencing the Hypocrites

By Tom Ross
of South Point, Ohio

(Titus 1:10-16)

After having gone to great lengths in describing the character and qualities of the men who were to occupy the office of a Pastor, the apostle now addresses one of the most important reasons why able men must occupy the pastorate. Men who believe and practice the truth must be able to confront and refute the hypocritical teachers of error. In the early days of Christianity it was not uncommon for churches to be infected with teachers of heresy and hypocrisy. There were Jewish men known as Judaizers who professed faith in Christ, but also taught that observance of the law and the rite of circumcision were required for salvation to be complete. In essence these ancient legalists were teaching that salvation could only be achieved through a mixture of grace and good works, of faith plus legal righteousness. Such false teachers still exist in our world today



who insist that faith in the observance of certain rites and standards must also be added to complete salvation. This is a perversion of the grace of God and is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture. Therefore, their mouths must be stopped and their false teachings exposed by preachers of truth.

RECOGNIZING HYPOCRITICAL TEACHERS V. 10-13a

"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Creteans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is

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In Order To Be Saved

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma



Salvation is such a misunderstood concept that many people do not even understand the meaning of the word. So let us start there: A good definition of the word salvation is (1) "deliverance from sin and its consequences" or (2) "preservation or deliverance from harm, ruin, or loss." The latter part of that definition is often the meaning in the Old Testament when it is used regarding natural things. Notice that both these definitions set forth the idea of deliverance. That is the basic meaning of the word. We sometimes speak of salvation as being in three tenses: past, present and future. We have been saved from the penalty (guilt) of sin. We are presently being saved from the power of sin. This is sometimes called progressive sanctification and has in it the idea of growing in holiness, knowledge, love, etc. Then the future tense is that we shall one day be saved from the presence of sin. If

we would think of the word salvation as including in it everything that God does for and in and to His elect we would begin to understand the things that are encompassed in this very general word.

Because of the all-encompassing nature of this word salvation and the related words "save" and "saved," we find the terms used in various ways. As stated before, salvation and being saved in the Old Testament, often mean deliverance from death, disease and even financial and political ruin. A prime example of this usage is in Exodus 14:13 where we read, **"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever."** Jehovah's

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Looking Up

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

We live in a day and time when men and women are rushing around and caught up in the things of the flesh. In our day and time, it seems that the entire world is concentrating on the affairs of this life – prosperity and pleasures that concern only our mortal lives. All around us, we see that folks spend their time and effort looking at the world and what it has to offer.



Today, I want us to take a little bit of time out from this hectic and busy world, and I want us to "look up." There is more for us to consider than just what this

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The Testimony of the Lord Makes Wise the Simple

By Alexander Carson
(1776 - 1844)

The question which, in vain, is put to the wisdom of this world, receives a satisfactory answer from the weakest of those who are taught of God. Ask the authors of all the systems of philosophy that ever were promulgated, how a sinner can be saved, and you will receive an answer very different from that of the Scriptures. They whose genius has invented the most profound and subtle theories, supported by the most abstruse speculations---they who have discovered the laws that regulate the course of nature---they who can solve the most difficult problems in the abstract sciences, will speak like children or simpletons, when they attempt to point the way of fallen man to Heaven.

They will talk inconsistently of virtue and of merit, of mercy and of justice, of imperfection and of moral worth. If they deign to recognize the Christian system under any view, it is only to make it speak their own sentiments, and sanction their vain speculations by the authority of Heaven. None of all the mere philosophers that ever lived could perceive how mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. There is a parable in their sentiments on this subject, and each system differs not more from truth, than one part of it does from the other. If human virtue is acknowledged by all to be imperfect, it must come short of the standard by which it is to be measured. How, then, can it either merit reward, or screen from punishment? That which

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Rejectors and Receivers of Christ

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11-12).

One of the greatest events in human history was when God became incarnate. When Christ came to visit this planet we might have thought the world would have hailed this event as a wonderful time. But the reverse was the case. Christ made the world, but when He appeared in the world, clothed in a human nature, the

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He works hard who has nothing to do.
There is no fatigue so wearisome as that which comes from want of work.
"He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster"
(Proverbs 18:9).

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

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

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true. . ."

1. It is evident that several false teachers had infected the newly formed churches on the island of Crete. Wherever God is pleased to establish true churches led by faithful Pastors you can be sure that the ministers of Satan will be busy spreading heresy and practicing hypocrisy. That is why it is essential for those who lead the Lord's church in spiritual things be thoroughly acquainted with the truths of Scripture. Every true Pastor at one time or another will be called upon to confront teachers of error either in the church or the community in which he labors.

There are several warnings in Scripture concerning the proliferation of heretical teachers. Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus: **"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them"** (Acts 20:29-30). Paul warned the church at Colosse: **"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"** (Col. 2:8). Peter issued a similar warning **"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies. . ."** (II Pet. 2:1). Faithful undershepherds must take heed to these warnings and carefully guard the flock of God by recognizing the false teachers and reproving them.

2. The hypocrites on the island of Crete who had infected the churches were to be recognized by their spirit of willful rebellion. They were **"unruly"**, unmanageable, disobedient, and not subject to authority. False teachers and hypocrites generally reject the authority of the Word of God as well as those preachers who have been called to proclaim it. They refuse to submit to the authority of the church and the administration of the Holy Spirit within the church. Peter describes such people in the following way: **"But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities"** (II Pet. 2:10).

3. The false teachers were also marked as being **"vain talkers and deceivers"** meaning that they spoke empty words, void of the truth but filled with deceit. Often times the most popular teachers of error will use Biblical terminology taken out of context to establish their heresies. They know how to use certain words to make it seem as though they are scholarly, but when their teachings are examined in the light of Scripture they are found to

be bereft of truth. Rather than teaching solid, substantial truth from the Word of God they present their own superficial opinions and shallow ideas.

Hypocritical teachers are also guilty of incorporating deceitfulness into their ministry. They are adept at manipulating their hearers and skillful in the art of lying. I can think of a whole host of Charismatic preachers in our day who are deceiving multitudes of people through their falsehoods. They are like the prophets in Jerusalem of old whom God condemned in Jeremiah 23:14: **"I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah."**

4 Paul identifies the false teachers on the island of Crete as being **"of the circumcision"** meaning that they were Jewish legalists who taught that salvation was not complete apart from the works of the law and the rite of circumcision. Anyone who teaches that you must add human merit to the finished work of Christ in order for salvation to be accomplished is a legalist. Anyone trusting in the very least in their baptism, good works, law-keeping, or standards rather than Christ alone for salvation is a legalist who is void of the grace of God.

5. Paul makes it clear that the false teachers on the island of Crete had to be stopped; their mouths had to be silenced. They were going from house to house subverting entire families with their heresy. Rather than publicly declaring what they believed they would privately infect individual homes with the poison of works salvation. The heresy of works salvation in any of its varied forms must be exposed and refuted. Teachers of error are not to be coddled or ignored. Rather they must be silenced with the truth before their falsehoods gain a foothold within the church.

6. The motive of the Jewish legalists is also identified by Paul. They were spreading their heresies for the sake of financial gain. Many false teachers are guilty of using their influence and manipulative powers in order to make a profit off of their unsuspecting hearers and followers. All one has to do is look at the lavish lifestyles of many of the televangelists in our day who are bilking multitudes of people out of their hard earned money through their ministry of deception.

7. The character of the Cretian heretics is also described in verse 12 where Paul quotes a Cretian poet named Epimenides who lived around 600 B.C. They were known as pathological liars who were famous for their falsehoods. In ancient times if you wanted to call a man a terrible liar you would call him a Cretan. They are also identified as being

"evil beasts" meaning that they were cunning, savage, brutal, and ruthless. They were also said to be **"slow bellies"** meaning that they were known for their laziness and gluttony.

Men who fit the description of depravity and deception set forth by Paul must be recognized as the worst sort of heretics. Their errors must be exposed and their teachings must be refuted with the truth of the Word of God.

REACTING TO HYPOCRITICAL TEACHERS v. 13-15

". . . Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth."

1. Paul makes it crystal clear that false teachers and their teachings are not to be tolerated within the church. They are to be rebuked sharply, meaning that their teachings must be cut off with penetrating force. Preachers of truth must take the Sword of the Spirit and wield it with mighty force against the teachers of heresy and hypocrisy. Wherever the tree of works salvation begins to spring up and bear evil fruit, preachers of righteousness must follow the examples of John the Baptist who said unto the Pharisees and Saducees: **". . . O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come. . . And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire"** (Matt. 3:7, 10).

2. This severe rebuke is not intended to destroy the teachers themselves. Rather the desired end of every rebuke is to show people the error of their ways so that they may repent and become sound in the faith. When dealing with heretical teachers of works salvation we must not be unkind or mean-spirited. Rather we are to cut them with the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to convince them of their errors and their need to embrace the truth. II Timothy 2:24-25 describes how the Lord's servant is to conduct himself when dealing with teachers of falsehood: **"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."** We are not to slay the heretics just for the sake of conquest, but rather desire their conversion to the truth. This is the true spirit of Christian charity.

3. Heretics are not only to be sharply reproved with the Word of God, their false teachings must be repudiated and rejected. We are not to give place to religious notions, stories, or commandments that are devised and popularized by men. The Jews were famous for embellishing Scripture with their own opinions and interpretations.

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Their traditions eventually resulted in blinding men from the truth. Rather than encouraging men to obey principles of righteousness and spirituality their teachings had the opposite effect, by turning men from the truth. Their teachings tended toward hypocrisy and empty worship as Jesus declared: “. . . **Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men. . . Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered; and many such like things do ye**” (Mark 7:6-8, 13). They began placing emphasis on the outward observances of religion rather than an inward, spiritual work of grace in the heart. They were guilty of majoring on issues of little consequence while failing to give heed to commandments of great spiritual importance. This is precisely the reason why Jesus issued the following rebuke: **“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mind and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel”** (Matt. 23:23-24).

4. God's people must mark and avoid those whose doctrines tend toward self-righteousness and fleshly pride. Legalism in its varied forms causes men to focus on their own performance rather than the work of Christ as the only means of acceptance with God. This in effect turns men from God to self-trust which is the worst sort of error.

REVEALING THE REPROBATE v. 15-16

“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

1. The context reveals that Paul is still dealing with the false notions of the legalists who made it their business to pronounce everything that didn't line up with their own traditions as unclean and defiled. Paul refutes this idea by stating that those who have been made inwardly pure by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and the cleansing blood of Christ, will also be outwardly pure in their moral conduct. A purged conscience and an attitude of inward

purity will produce a moral freedom which enables the believer to embrace and practice the truth. John 8:32 and 36 declare: **“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”**

2. The legalists, on the other hand, were bound by their false traditions and opinions. They falsely asserted that men can somehow make themselves acceptable to God by merely abstaining from things considered evil on the one hand, and observing religious ceremonies on the other. This is the basic heresy of every false religious system. No man can make himself acceptable to God by observing a system of religious ceremonies and standards. Those who focus on the outward observance of religious rites as a means of acceptance with God don't realize that the inward part of man must be cleansed before the outward conduct is acceptable to God. Until the mind and conscience of an unbelieving individual is cleansed everything about them is considered unclean and impure by God. The basic flaw of every legalistic system is that it focuses on outward conformity to certain arbitrary standards rather than on the need for the inward cleansing of the mind and conscience by the blood of Christ. Mere religionists fail to see that the true source of defilement is not in outward things, but rather from inward impurity as Jesus illustrated when He said: **“Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. . . But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man”** (Matt. 15:11, 18-20).

3. Paul then reveals the mark of a religious reprobate as not only being inwardly defiled, but outwardly unacceptable to God as well. **“They profess that they know God”**, and usually this profession is marked by an attitude of self-righteousness and superiority. The Pharisees loudly proclaimed that they were the true worshippers of God when in fact they were false. They made a religious profession but were void of spiritual power. (I Tim. 5:8). They paid strict attention to their own religious rites but failed to obey the commandments of God. By trusting in their own works they denied the finished work of Christ. Their self-righteous and sinful conduct revealed that they had never experienced a true work of grace within their hearts. Even though they were esteemed in the eyes of men, they were considered by a Holy God to be **“abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”**

May God grant us the grace to recognize hypocritical teachers of falsehood and rebuke them with the Word of God. We also need to examine our own profession of faith and make sure that God has made an inward change resulting in cheerful obedience and submission to the commands of God. II Corinthians 5:17 states: **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”**



In Order To Be

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salvation was to be seen that day by His earthly people Israel. It was their deliverance from Pharaoh's army.

In the New Testament we read that we have been saved and can say that in that sense we are saved. We read in II Timothy 1:9, **“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 the idea of salvation is also used in the sense of a progressive of ongoing work in converted individuals. We read I Timothy 4:16, for example, **“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”** Here the idea is of an ongoing salvation. In this case it was deliverance from the disastrous and manifold consequences of false doctrine. Timothy and the congregation in which he labored were doubtless “saved,” but Timothy would “save” himself and his auditors if he took heed to himself and “the doctrine.” We also find the word saved used in the sense of something that is going to be experienced by all of God's elect people from this age. Romans 5:9 says: **“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”** Surely this demonstrates something of the all-encompassing meaning and usage of the words “saved,” “save,” and “salvation.” The words deliver, delivered, and deliverance can be substituted for the words “save,” “saved,” and “salvation” and we would have the same meaning.

The idea of salvation includes predestination, election, regeneration, calling, justification, sanctification, glorification and anything and everything else that God does in delivering His people from sin and sins. The title of this piece is “In Order to be Saved.” There is a sense in which we could say that in order to be saved, a person must be predestinated to be saved. That is true, but predestination occurred long before any of us were born and we did not experience it in our lifetimes. So also it is with election. And there is a sense in

which a part of our salvation is yet future. So then, there are things that God did for His elect before the foundation of the world. There are things that God does for, to and in His elect people during their earthly sojourn upon this globe. And there are things that God will do for, to and in His elect people that are yet in what we understand and speak of as the future.

Let us consider our title again: it says, “In Order to be Saved.” We may list a multitude of things that must take place in order for a person to be saved. As we have stated, some of these things are unknown to man in his experience, even God's saints, having occurred prior to their lives. For instance, none of us experienced our election unto salvation. The only knowledge we have of it is from the Word of God. Let us rather limit our thoughts at this time to what must happen in the experience of God's elect people in order for them to be saved. If I may put it this way, where is it that the rubber of our experience meets the road of God's grace? The phrase selected for the title of this piece comes from what this writer estimates to be one of the weakest old Baptist confessions of faith ever penned: i.e. the New Hampshire Baptist Confession which was published in A.D. 1833. Weak as it is on some points, there are nuggets of great value that can be mined from this confession. The words in the title of this piece appear in Article 7 of that confession. It says, “We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated or born again...” Here, and I think rightly so, the writer(s) equate regeneration and the new birth. Jesus told Nicodemus, **“Ye must be born again”** (John 3:7). It is interesting that the original King James Version has two marginal notes which deal with Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus. They both give an alternative reading for “born again” as “born from above.” James Strong says that the Greek word transliterates as “another” and that it is translated 5 times as “from above,” 3 times as “top,” 2 times as “again,” and 1 time each as “from the first” and “from the beginning,” and that one time the Greek word is not translated at all in our version, making a total of 13 times this word appears in the Greek text. Perhaps we would better understand what Jesus was telling Nicodemus if we use the KJV alternative reading: “born from above.” Nicodemus, the number one rabbi in Israel, did not understand many things and so came to ask Jesus – what things we do not know. Immediately, without allowing Nicodemus to ask anything, Jesus told him that he needed to be born again, or if you please, born from above.

Baptists that have been “sound in wind and limb” (as horsemen say) have believed down through the centuries that “in order to be saved, sinners must

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be regenerated, or born again..." This is the first thing that must happen to a person in his experience if he is to be saved! By first, I do not mean so much the first thing in time, as if regeneration can be separated or segregated from conversion, but rather the first thing in sequence. And I mean that this first thing (regeneration) is the cause of other things that take place – i.e. things that come under the general heading of salvation – repentance and faith and newness of life. These last three make up what we may term conversion. Regeneration is God working in us while conversion consists of those outward things in our lives that are evidence that God has worked in us. And so our Baptist forefathers believed. And so the author(s) of this old Baptist confession believed and stated. And so we preach, **"Ye must be born again!"**

When this writer was a very young believer, still very much an Arminian having been naturally born into that philosophy and mode of thought, he had a difficult problem with Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus. I thought, here was a perfect opportunity for the Lord Jesus to have told Nicodemus just what it was that Nicodemus, as a lost sinner, needed to do in order to be born again. I remember praying and telling the Lord that I knew that He knew best, but that it would have been really helpful (in my ignorant opinion) if He had told us somewhere in the Bible just what it was that a person had to do in order to be born again. You see, I thought that a lost sinner could do something to bring about his own new birth. (I record this to my shame, but hopefully as a helpful illustration.) Think of it! Jesus never did tell Nicodemus what he should do in order to be born again. And on top of that, nowhere else in the Bible does the Word of God tell us what we must do in order to be born again! The Bible is clear. We, like Nicodemus, must be born again or born from above or regenerated. Use whatever term you wish for they all speak of the same thing. We must be thus made alive by the Holy Spirit if we are going to be delivered from our sin and our sins! But we do not know how to be! We are not told what to do to bring about our own new birth or regeneration! Why is that? Well, the answer is quite simple, really. It is this: there is nothing a lost sinner can do in order to bring about his own new birth or regeneration. That is why Jesus said to Nicodemus, **"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit"** (John 3:8). The new birth or being born from above – regeneration if you please – is a work of the Holy

Spirit who is as sovereign in His actions as either the Father or the Son. He is as uncontrolled and uncontrollable as the wind! (By sovereign it is meant that the triune God is uncontrolled or uninfluenced in His purposes and actions. He is not capricious, but He does as He pleases. God is One who is capable of **"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"** (Isa. 46:10). (This is sovereignty.) Simply stated, you cannot push, entice or bribe God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit into doing anything that He has not purposed to do from the foundation of the world and before. So then, there is nothing that a lost sinner can do in order to be born again or regenerated! That is why Jesus did not tell Nicodemus to "do something" in order to be born again. That is why you cannot, search as you may, find any verse or passage in the whole of the Bible that tells us what a person needs to do in order to bring about his new birth or regeneration. Regeneration is out of man's hands. The new birth or being born again is out of men's hands.

The Arminian position so popular today is to equate the new birth with conversion. By so mixing the two and ignoring Holy Ghost regeneration they lay the burden of what they call repentance and faith upon the poor lost sinner. They demand that he, dead in his sins, unable to please God and actually at enmity with God – nevertheless, they demand of such sinners that they produce what our Baptist forefathers called the twin gifts of repentance and faith. The old New Hampshire Baptist Confession, with all its weaknesses states it clearly in Article 8. It says, "We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God..." And thus this old confession puts regeneration by the Holy Spirit as that which produces both repentance and faith. Clearly they believed that regeneration is the cause of repentance and faith. Furthermore, they had not fallen into the error of the so-called "Primitive Baptists" who believe that regeneration can occur apart from its consequences which are repentance and faith. The regeneration of the "Primitive Baptists" has no necessary consequences in the life of the person regenerated for they say that a man may be regenerated apart from ever hearing the Word of God. They say a man can be regenerated and never ever in this lifetime know it. So they believe that there exists a multitude of regenerated unbelievers – persons who are blood-bought children of God who have never heard of Christ. Absurd! And totally unbiblical for no regenerated unbelievers exist in the

Bible.

And yet probably most of our contemporaries – professing believers in Christ – think that if you will pray, open your heart's door, go forward, invite Jesus into your heart, feel sorry for your sins, make a decision for Christ, commit your life to Christ, pray the sinner's prayer or lift your hand during "the invitation," you will bring about your own new birth. The religious world does not believe in Holy Ghost regeneration, but believes that a man can birth himself into the family of God. Surely Jesus used the metaphor of birth for wise reasons. We do not dare attribute a casual mistake or ignorance to the Lord Jesus Christ. He had a reason or reasons for using the exact terminology which He used in His conversation with lost Nicodemus. Think for a moment about the birth process to which Christ likened regeneration. A baby does not bring about his own birth. He is not causative in the birth process, but he is a vital participant for it is the baby who is born. It is a part of his life experience, but one of which he has no memory. Apart from the birth process, a baby would never experience life, interact with a congregation of saints, or achieve anything worthwhile in this life. His birth sets him free from the confines of his mother's body. It is only after a birth that a baby can grow and develop sufficiently as to achieve his full potential. So it is with the new birth or regeneration. A lost sinner does not bring about his new birth. He is not causative in the matter of regeneration. He does not experience this new birth as a conscious being so as to have a memory of it. Only after being born from above can an individual achieve his full potential for God and eternity.

Now someone will say, 'Why, you believe that a sinner gets saved before he gets saved.' I have heard that charge made against regeneration by the sovereign will of God before. Such a statement is often the result of not understanding the differences between regeneration and conversion. What I believe is what the old Baptists believed and stood for in the past. It is exactly what is stated in this New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith. We have looked at only a part of Article 7 thus far. Here it is in its entirety (except for proof texts). "We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life." According to this confession, regeneration (1) consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind;

(2) it is accomplished in a way above our understanding; (3) it is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit; (4) it is brought about in connection with God's Word; (5) it is brought to pass in such a way as to cause us to willingly believe the gospel; and (6) that its evidences are the holy fruits of repentance, faith and a godly life. Now you know what the author(s) of the New Hampshire Baptist Confession believed about the subject back in 1833.

But what is important is what does the Bible say, not what this writer or any Baptist confession says! And so we ask these questions. Did Jesus tell Nicodemus that it was necessary for him to be born again? Yes! Did Jesus tell Nicodemus that the new birth was a work of the Spirit? Yes! Did Jesus tell Nicodemus that there was anything he could do to effect his own new birth? No! Does the Bible teach that lost sinners are spiritually dead and therefore in need of life? Yes! Does the Bible tell lost sinners that there is something that they can do to resurrect themselves or birth themselves into God's family? No!

But let us close on a positive note. **"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"** (Rom. 8:9). It is the high privilege of those who are regenerated to be made partakers of the divine nature by that very regeneration (II Peter 1:4). It is their privilege to be "in the Spirit" because the Spirit of God indwells them. This indwelling of the Spirit began when the Holy Ghost moved in at regeneration or the new birth. And in this condition, you can please God! Reader, if you are yet lost in your sins, may the knowledge that you cannot bring about your own new birth lay heavily upon your heart and mind so much so that you will consider seriously your present state as well as that future place to which you shall surely and justly be condemned. If these things do not concern you – if in considering them you are not most miserable in your inner self – it is evidence that you yet lack regeneration. That does not necessarily mean that God has finally rejected you, but rather that you are in a perilous condition and in need of regeneration and its fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life. The tree must be made good, for good fruit does not come from an evil tree. (See Matthew 7:16-20 and 12:33). And that is exactly what regeneration or the new birth does. It makes the tree good so that the good fruits of regeneration which are repentance, faith and newness of life spring forth. "In order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated or born again."



A Dose of Reality

"Common Sense Comments"

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



Are You A Liberal?

I am not a liberal. I am a conservative. When I say conservative, I do not mean the rank and file CINO, or conservative in name only. I mean that I am a genuine, common sense, down to earth person who will vote for a candidate based on moral constitutional principles of integrity regardless of party. Now before you turn me off labeling me as some fringe wacko libertarian kind of nut, just hear me out.

I am conservative! I am conservative in my suits, ties, manners, religion, music, politics . . . etc. I am a church attending Christian, pro-life anti-abortion, heterosexual husband and father, gun owning, Bible totin', evangelistic man. I agree with your right to disagree with me and will help you defend that right, but will not stand by passively while you shove your opposing views down my throat. Your opinion is not more important than mine and warrants no special treatment above mine. I believe prayer in Jesus' name in public or private is constitutional and believe the state should keep its nose out of the free exercise of religion, as stated plainly in the first amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America.

I am not for legalizing drugs, and am opposed to big brother government, and think government should be shrunk by at least 95 % since government has now gone boldly where our founding fathers never intended. I am for the average American little guy of any color or ethnic background, who breaks his back supporting this country and its socialist agenda of spending. I believe I know how to spend what little I make better than out of touch politicians who are more concerned about padding their pockets, pleasing fringe groups and influencing their constituents, rather than representing their constituents.

May I continue in honesty? Thank you. The Democrats started giving away the store under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, then mainstreamed it with Lyndon Baines Johnson's "Great Society," and finally perfected it though William Jefferson Clinton's conniving, Barack Hussein Obama has now taken this country to new heights (by the trillions) making Roosevelt, Johnson and Clinton look like amateurs. Though the Republican Party has in the past, vigorously opposed this type of liberalism

and socialism repeatedly, there is not a dime's worth of difference today between the elite leadership of the Democrats and the Republicans. The GOP has not stood where it should have stood concerning such things as NAFTA and TARP and stimulus spending, and raising the debt ceiling, to name a few.

I am not a party man. I swear allegiance to principle, not party, and that principle is reflected in every candidate I may support. The issue today is no longer between the donkey and the elephant. The battle is between the America hating, Marxist/socialists from both parties as they try to run rough shod over We The People, the real America who elects these charlatans. It is time to wake up smell the coffee, re-elect NO ONE and throw every politician out of office, replacing each and every one with statesmen and patriots who will serve the people who elected them, then go back home to their jobs and let the next round of elected officials serve their term, then go home, etc. etc.

2012 is coming. It very well may be our last chance. Will the real America wake up, unite and prepare for battle? This can be our finest hour.

Jesus, Tebow, and Saturday Night Live

Just when I thought the excuse for a comedy show, SNL, couldn't sink any lower, it has. Their feeble attempt at humor through the Tim Tebow bashing sketch effectively places the show in the trash can as never before. When word leaked out ahead of time of the sketch, the first thought that came to mind for sane thinking people is that they would not be able to do the sketch....because it would take a man to play the part of Tim Tebow and the comedy troupe of SNL is lacking when it comes to real men.

Then, there is the blasphemy issue. Jesus was mocked and ridiculed. There was nothing funny about the portrayal. I use the word blasphemy because Jesus is God in the flesh, not just a prophet or representative of God. Therefore it was not funny, but extremely offensive. Even non-Christians should be offended by this unfunny skit, out of respect for Christianity. If nothing else, it validates Christianity, as one more attempt in a long series of attacks by Hollyweird and the world on Christ, Christians, and Christianity. Remember the words of Jesus in John 15:18, "**If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.**"

Also, notice the positive validation of Mormonism given by the actor in his attempt to play the part of Jesus. He said, and I paraphrase, "All that stuff about Mormonism; it's true." Their promotion of Mormonism is consistent with their hatred of Jesus and Christianity. Mormonism denies the deity of Jesus and eternal salvation by grace exclusively

through faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection. It is not surprising SNL would promote Mormonism, after trashing Christianity.

Now I am waiting. I am waiting for the SNL episode where they mock Islam and Mohammed. Yeah, right! SNL doesn't have the guts, nor the desire to make fun of that darling religion which is protected by their siblings in the news media. And even if some of the cast and writers were to begin such an undertaking, the plug would be pulled because you don't touch Mohammed, but it's open season on Christ every day. So go ahead SNL. I double dog dare you. I'll be holding my breath.



Rejectors and

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world knew Him not. The creatures did not recognize the Creator. In the main they yielded Him no respect; they hailed Him with no song of joy and praise. What a sad day this was for planet Earth!

In the two verses of my text I see two classes of people: Those who rejected Jesus Christ and those who received Him. Across the centuries it has ever been the case. Even to this remote day the same two classes still populate the world. It will be so until the end of the age. When Christ returns He will find wheat and tares in the world--believers and unbelievers.

CHRIST REJECTED BY HIS OWN

Verse 11 says: "**He came unto his own, and his own received him not.**" The careful readers will notice that the word "**own**" is in the neuter gender, meaning "unto His own things." Christ came to His own land, His own city, His own temple, and His own Messianic rights and possessions. In the broadest sense it may also mean the world which He created. The second "**own**" is of the masculine gender, meaning "His own people, His own friends, His own subjects, His own family, etc." This "**own**" refers especially to the Jewish nation to whom Christ was first sent (Matt. 15:24; Rom. 15:8). They were His own by a sovereign choice. They were His by redemption from Egypt and His gift to them of Canaan. They were His by the law and the covenants of promise. But in the broadest sense it means the whole world of Jew and Gentile.

Jesus Christ came to Judea, fulfilling the words of the prophets about His lineage and birth. John the Baptist had told the dwellers of Judea: "**Prepare ye the way of the Lord**" (Matt. 3:3). But in the main the cry fell on people "**stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears**" (Acts 7:51). The people of Israel did not care to know Him, although they had every reason to do so. "**He came unto his own, and his own received him not.**"

Why did the Jews reject their Messiah? First, they had fixed their attention on

only one class of prophecies. They paid attention only to those prophecies about His regal glory and His sovereign reign on earth over the nations. They confused His second advent with His first; they did not see the two phases of His coming. They seemed to ignore those prophecies which described His humiliation and suffering. Their whole sacrificial system showed how the Messiah must suffer. The psalmist described the crucifixion of Christ in Psalm 22, even saying: "**They pierced my hands and my feet**" (Ps. 22:16). Isaiah the prophet foretold how the Messiah would be wounded, bruised, and "**cut off out of the land of the living**" (Isa. 53:5,8,10-11). Daniel said the Messiah would be "**cut off**" (Dan. 9:26). The Prophet Zechariah predicted how the Shepherd would be smitten by the sword of Divine Justice (Zech. 13:7).

Second, the people of Judea were filled with desires after worldly pomp and power. They wanted a messiah with a great army who would deliver them from the yoke of Roman bondage. Christ offered them deliverance from the chains of sin, which they loved. He came to be a fountain of cleansing, but they denied they needed to be washed from their filthiness. He came to be their Physician, but they claimed they were not even sick. Therefore, they "**denied the Holy One, and desired a murderer**" (Acts 3:14).

Third, Christ's preaching stirred the Jewish people up. He disrobed them of their cloaks of hypocrisy. He exposed the covetousness of their evil hearts and denounced their self-righteousness. He corrected their perversion of the Law of Moses. He demanded a spiritual change of heart and a reformation of life--holiness in heart and life. This did not appeal to them; therefore, they received Him not. After three years of calling them to repentance, He let them have it with both barrels: "**Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . .Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell? . . .Behold, your house is left unto you desolate**" (Matt. 23:29,33,38). Shortly after this sermon they, with wicked hands, put Him to a cruel and shameful death.

REJECTED BY THE MAJORITY

A few received Christ as the glorious Messiah. These were the exceptions, not the general rule of that day. They received Him individually, not as a nation. The rejection of Christ by the majority of the Jews was a sad dereliction of duty. God had been teaching and training them for centuries to receive Him as the Desire of all nations. Their ceremonial rites and sacrifices pointed to His coming. The prophets had repeatedly promised that He would come. Israel had been chosen and preserved for this purpose for ages. But when the Messiah came, they sadly failed to perform their duty. They rejected their King. "**His own received him not.**"

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Rejectors and

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Their rejection of their King was fatal to them. Christ had the power to make them sons of God, but they refused Him alone who could give them the power. The long-expected Messiah, the Son of God, the Prince of life, their rightful King, came to the land of Judea and to the Jewish nation only to be cruelly treated and put to death. They crowned Him with thorns instead of the royal diadem of King David. They rejected their best Friend and only Deliverer! This brought national ruin to them. They are victims of their own conduct to this day. His blood is on them, and the manslayer is on their trail. To reject Jesus Christ is fatal to nations as well as individuals.

SOME RECEIVED HIM

“But as many as received him. . .” A few received Him--a small but noble minority. They received Him even though the majority rejected him. These were mostly publicans and sinners--the lower class of people socially. A few dared to buck the crowd and to swim against the tide. These noble souls received the One despised and rejected of men. They accepted the Stone which the builders rejected. This involved independency of conduct and courage of conviction on the part of those who did receive Him as the glorious Messiah.

A small band received Him, although the majority of the Jewish people rejected Him, as the old prophet foretold (Isa. 53:1-5). The glories of the Son of God were hidden from the wise and the prudent, but they were revealed unto babes. This minority heard Him preach, and understood, and were brought to acknowledge Him as the Christ of God. They declared: **“We have found the Messiah”** (John 1:41), and **“Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel”** (John 1:49). This little group believed Christ was the eternal Word in the beginning with God (John 1:1) and the true Light (John 1:9). They believed His words; they credited His doctrines; they trusted His promises.

RECEIVING AND BELIEVING THE SAME

Just what does it mean when it says they received Him? John explains this in the latter part of verse 12 by saying: **“Even to them that believe on his name.”** Receiving Christ and believing on His name are substantially the same thing.

Most people think that believing on Christ is the easiest thing in the world. Careless sinners think they can exercise faith any time they please. But faith in Christ is not a natural ability: **“For all men have not faith”** (II Thess. 3:2). Man can only believe in Christ through the grace of God (Acts 18:27). A sinner convicted by the Holy Spirit feels that nothing is more out of His power than the act of saving

faith. He is deeply sensible that he never shall be a believer in Christ until faith is given him by Divine power (Eph. 1:17-19). He despairs of all help, except the sovereign mercy of God. In this condition the Spirit of faith gives him the faith of God's elect to believe the gospel.

Faith has a discovering power. It sees through the visible to the invisible, through the immediate present to the distant future. That noble band of believers in the first century saw through the outward to the inward when it came to the person of Christ. They saw through His physical body His Divine nature--through the outward humiliation and poverty to the real Lord from Heaven. Instead of a man of sorrows, they saw the Son of God. Instead of One despised and rejected of men, they saw the Desire of all nations.

TO RECEIVE HIS PERSON AND OFFICES

To receive Christ is to receive Him in all His person and attributes. We must receive Him as very God or very God, the eternal Word (John 1:1), the Maker of the world (John 1:3). We must also receive Him as One who **“was made flesh”** and tabernacled among us (John 1:14). He must be received as **“the only begotten Son”** (John 1:18), God **“manifest in the flesh”** (I Tim. 3:16). Unless men receive the Messiah as the God-man, they cannot properly be said to receive Him in the sense of John 1:12. It is not enough to extol Him as a good man, or a mighty teacher. Those who deny the divinity of Christ are to be considered unbelievers.

Those who receive Christ must receive Him as the great Prophet of whom Moses spake (Deut. 18:15,18-19). Christ by His teachings on earth demonstrated He was that great Prophet of whom Moses wrote. If we receive Him we must receive Him as a Teacher sent from God (John 6:45). We must submit our minds to Him and learn of Him (Matt. 11:29). Man by nature is blind and unwilling to be taught of God. But when quickened by the Spirit, he sees his extreme ignorance and is suddenly endowed with a teachable disposition. As long as men remain in a state of nature, they will not come to the school of Christ. But when made alive by the Spirit we sit at His feet, like Mary, and learn of Him. We continually come for instructions and receive all He says as infallibly true.

Second, those who receive Christ must receive Him as the High Priest

of our profession (Heb. 3:1). Without the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, careless sinners will never come to see Christ as **“a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people”** (Heb. 2:17). But when wounded by the stroke of the law, we behold Christ as **“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29). By faith in His blood (Rom. 3:25) we receive the atonement (Rom. 5:11). Our faith follows Christ to Heaven where we see Him making intercession for us. We believe in Christ as our Priest and commit our eternal interest into His hands, believing He will keep our souls unto the day of the redemption of our bodies.

Third, those who receive Christ must also receive Him as their King. All power in Heaven and on earth belong to Him who is **“the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords”** (I Tim. 6:15). Christ has the right to our allegiance, seeing we are the subjects of His kingdom of grace. Every knee should bow and every tongue should confess loyalty to Him. When His grace subdues our proud and rebellious hearts, we renounce all other lords and voluntarily submit to the King of the saints. We cheerfully resolve to keep His commandments and to observe His ordinances. We place Him on the throne of our hearts where He reigns as supreme. We do all we can to bring every thought and imagination into subjection to Him (II Cor. 10:4-5). We grieve whenever a failure of due obedience is discovered.

THE REWARD OF RECEIVING HIM

“But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” The Greek word translated **“power”** is *exousia*. This word does not mean “power” in the sense that we normally use it today. It must not be pressed so as to mean strength or ability by which men make themselves God's children. The Greek word *dynamis* does mean “explosive” or “miraculous power.” *Exousia* means “authority.” It is by the authority of Jesus Christ we become the sons of God. This is the gift of Christ to those who receive Him.

Men are not God's sons naturally. The universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man is a popular theme in this liberal age. But this is not according to the teaching of the

Bible. The Apostle Paul told the man of Athens: **“For we are also his offsprings”** (Acts 17:28), but Paul did not mean by this that all are God's legitimate children. In the Old Testament the nation of Israel was called God's son (Ex. 4:22), and Israelites were at times called God's children (Ps. 103:13; Jer. 3:19-20). These verses spoke of God's special relation to their nation and which was not possessed by any other people on earth at that time. But this did not make the relationship of father to son the relationship of God to any individual Israelite (Rom. 11:7).

Christ alone can give authority to become a son of God. He bestows this honor only to those that receive Him, or who believe on Him. To as many as receive Him He gives the power. There has not been a single failure, not a single exception. Those who receive the Son of God come to see themselves as sons of God. The word **“became”** means they were aliens before and **“by nature the children of wrath”** (Eph. 2:3). To these Christ gives the privilege of adoption into God's family. **“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”** (Gal. 3:26). **“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”** (I John 5:1). There is no sonship without living faith in Christ. There is no such thing in Scripture as a man who dies in unbelief and wakes up a son of God in Heaven.

Adoption originates in the free grace of God. In the before-time covenant God put some of Adam's race among the children (Heb. 2:11-18). **“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will”** (Eph. 1:5). Christ became the Son of man that we might **“receive the adoption of sons”** (Gal. 4:5). The Holy Spirit brings us to see this honorable position: **“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together”** (Rom. 8:15-17).

John 1:12-13 reveals adoption is effected by regeneration on God's side (v. 13) and by faith on man's side. Faith is the first and immediate effect of regeneration. It is sometimes mentioned before regeneration because it is the element which is nearest to man and that element by which man has his first point of contact with Christ. But there can be no faith till it is given by the Spirit of faith in regeneration. Nor can we doubt that the Spirit gives saving faith through the preaching of the Word of God (John 17:20; Acts 4:4; 18:8; Rom. 10:17; II Thess. 2:13-14).

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Rejectors and

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THE CHARACTER OF THE SONS OF GOD

Verse 12 concludes with the words: “. . . **even to them that believe on his name.**” The proposition (*eis*) expresses more than “on.” It indicates motion toward and rest upon the object of belief. It expresses the strongest belief, involving a union with Christ (See *John* by W. E. Vine. P. 12).

“Name” in the Bible is often put for the person. Those who receive Christ are said to believe on His name because the direct object of their faith is the person of Christ. Believing in Christ is more than belief of the fact that “Christ died for me,” or any such proposition. It is trusting in a Divine person; it is receiving a Divine person. We believe on Christ as the Savior from our sins. The great question facing sinners is not: “Have you joined the church?” or “Have you signed a decision card” or “Have you been baptized?” Rather it is: “Have you received Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King?”

CONCLUSION

1. The majority is not always right. Often the minority is right and the majority wrong. It was so, on the plains of Dura in Babylon in the days of the three Hebrews. It was so in Judea in the days of Jesus Christ. The Jewish nation rejected their King; a few received Him. It is better to be with the minority when right than with the majority when wrong.

2. Adoption into God’s family is the very highest honor. It means we have all the rights and privileges of children. We have an interest in the love and favor of the Father. We have a right to all the promises and blessings of the new covenant. We have access to the Father at all times and in all places. We are disciplined gently and severely (Heb. 12:7). We have the right to a merciful providence (Rom. 8:28). We have a title to a heavenly inheritance (I Pet. 1:2-4), and it is the Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom. We have the hope of a resurrection body like that of Christ. We can expect to receive a royal crown and a harp of gold. We have angelic attendance and ministration (Heb. 1:14).

3. Some of you do not know Christ. You have never believed in Him; you have never received Him. You disapprove of His doctrines and laws. Like the Jews of old, you are wedded to your religious forms and ceremonies. By rejecting Christ you are guilty of a wicked and cruel deed. If you die a rejector of Christ, you will discover that He will reject you on the great day. How tragic will be your end. Oh, may it please the Lord to cause you to receive Christ and be brought to see your heavenly sonship.



The Testimony of

(Continued from page 21) ◊

comes not up to the standard, is in all things rejected. If God has not raised that standard unreasonably high, there can be no excuse for coming short of it. If God does not require men to come up to His standard, in order to escape punishment, or receive a reward, then His standard becomes no standard. It lies, then, upon philosophers and theologians, who propagate the sentiments of philosophers, to point out that second standard, and to ascertain the necessary degrees of excellence. But human virtue is defective, even according to the standard of philosophers themselves. How, then, can the best of men escape divine wrath? No mere philosopher will ever succeed in giving consistency even to his own scheme.

But while the wise men of this world talk at random about the divine attributes, and flatter their deity with a pomp of incongruous phraseology, the illiterate peasant, who is taught by the Word of God, exhibits the divine attributes in all their extent, expatiates with wonder on their harmony, and proclaims the name of that God, whom to know is eternal life. The truth that the wisest of the sons of men do not understand, is understood by thousands of the weak things of this world. Ask poor Joseph, the London simpleton, the way to Heaven, and he will reply---“It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, not excepting the very chief.”

It is astonishing to observe what cultivation of mind the knowledge of the truth confers on the illiterate. They are enabled to talk rationally and consistently on the divine character and plan of salvation, when there is nothing but darkness, inconsistency, and error, in the discourses of the philosopher. Viewing this world in the light in which it is represented in the Scriptures, they obtain more correct views of everything respecting the state of man, and the divine government. The present state of man is the most difficult problem that human wisdom has to encounter---a problem that it cannot solve. But the knowledge of the truth explains all the phenomena of human conduct, and makes the Christian the only true philosopher. Self-knowledge, it has always been the boast of philosophy to confer, and her employment to recommend. “Know thyself,” is the great injunction of the ancient philosopher, which has always been supposed to contain the essence of all wisdom. But no man knows himself, till he knows the truth in which his true character and situation are exhibited. Of all truths, self-knowledge is the one of which the philosopher is most ignorant.

He speculates on the human character, and traces the sources of human action; but he wants the key that can alone open the secret recesses of the heart. He may ascertain with great accuracy, the various powers and faculties of the mind, and communicate many valuable observations on their culture; but, to the moral state of the mind, he is an utter stranger. Partiality to himself and his race, makes him mistake its language on this subject. He hides the depravity of human thought, and veils the evil that appears in the conduct, under the names of imperfection, or defective virtue. When he draws a picture of human nature, flattery guides the pencil. Her hectic cheek he suffuses with the redness of health and vigour, and her loathsome diseases he throws into the shade, or covers with drapery. While the philosopher’s motto is, “know thyself,” it ought rather to be, “know every thing but thyself.”

The Christian, however illiterate, views human nature in a juster light. He traces her seeming virtues to their true source, either in appearance only, or in her constitution. The benevolent affections which are the philosopher’s great boast, and which are almost his only hope, the Christian ascribes to the constitution, which is the result of divine wisdom, and entitled to the rank of moral worth, no more in man than in the brute, in whose nature they are found as far as they are necessary for the preservation of the individual and the species. What the philosopher considers as slight failings or frailties, the result of excusable imperfection, the Christian condemns as manifesting enmity to God. He sees that in him, that is in his flesh, or as he is born, there is no good thing.

How much the light of the Christian peasant, with respect to Providence, and the divine government, exceeds that of the philosopher, may be seen in an instant from their observations on a newspaper. The former speaks like one admitted to the council of his heavenly sovereign; the other speaks as if there were no God, or no control of Providence. Where the one finds all things dark, unaccountable, and forbidding, the other finds all things clear and consolatory. While the man of wisdom hides his head, like a child, in a thunderstorm, the man of God smiles when he hears the terrible voice of his great Creator. In short, the Christian sees everything around him with so much more clearness and accuracy, that he is like a man with an additional sense. A great philosopher observes, that to comprehend time and space, the human mind perhaps wants an additional faculty. To behold the character of God and of man, the human mind wants the light of Heaven. May the Lord open the heart of those deluded men, to attend to the things spoken by the apostles, instead

IT’S FINAL AND IT’S NOT COMING BACK

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of their own vain speculations.

The cultivation of mind, conferred by the knowledge of the truth, is seen in a striking point of view, in the precision and facility with which many illiterate men speak on subjects, on which even those who have employed all their lives in schools and studies cannot speak, without committing everything to memory. This is so observable, that many who are enemies to the gospel, cannot but wonder while they revile.

It has been often said, that it is necessary for philosophy to go before, as the harbinger of Christianity, that the minds of men may be civilized before they be Christianized. How unfounded this opinion is, no Christian needs to be instructed. Its fallacy may appear even to blindness itself. Who were the bitterest enemies of the truth in the days of the apostles? --- the philosophers, next to the religious zealots. Fanaticism expresses her rage by the paroxysms of madness. Philosophy attempts to laugh the gospel out of the world, and scowl her from the earth by the supercilious brow of cool contempt. Instead of taking the apostle by the hand at Athens, and introducing him to the favorable reception of the people, both the Stoics and Epicureans encountered him. Come, said the haughty wise men, let us hear what these babblers have to say. The gospel, so far from finding a friend in philosophy, meets her as an enemy, and treats her as an impious seducer of men to the worship of a false god. She needs not her services; she fears not her attacks. Though the gospel is the power of God to the salvation of the philosopher, as well as the vulgar, it is an awful truth, that not many of the wise men of this world are enlightened by it. The wisdom and sovereignty of God have left the schools of philosophy, and seats of learning generally, in the possession of His enemies, while He has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. This is a fact obvious to every Christian that is at all conversant with the world. What reason can we assign for this? Shall we say that the gospel is not able to change the philosopher? Shall we ascribe it to the weakness of the gospel, or to the wickedness of the philosopher? To neither. We reply with Jesus.



Looking Up

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world has to offer! There is more to life than just mortality! There is more to the creation of God than just what we can see with our eyes of flesh! Stop spending all of your time “looking down”; instead, let’s devote some time and effort every day to “looking up.”

FOR HELP

In general, the world looks to itself for “help.” Natural man does not have a relationship with God, whereby they can call upon Him for help. So, when trouble comes, or when need arises, mankind will seek to other men or natural forces or even false gods, for the “help” that they need. As an example, consider the plight of the nation of Judah in the time of King Hezekiah. We read the words that came from the king of Assyria in Isaiah 36:4-6, **“And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.”** The king of Assyria spoke correctly: there was no help in Egypt! There was no aid that could come from this earthly source!

Well, though this might be the case with the world, it ought not to be the case of those that trust in God! The king of Assyria’s words continued to Hezekiah: **“But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: is it not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar”** (Isa. 36:7)? You see, the world might trust in the works of man’s hands, but Hezekiah and many of his people trusted in the works and words of the most high God! We cannot only pray for help from this source, but we can expect it.

Let’s notice the words of King David: **“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth”** (Ps. 121:1). Some have said that King David is initially asking a question here: “Where does my help come from?” He looks to the hills and he sees no help from men or from the earth. But, he immediately acknowledges that his help comes **“from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.”**

The world can’t do much for us. When we need aid, assistance, or help of any real and lasting kind, we will not find that help in the world. Paul trusted in a man named Demas. But, in the end he

had to acknowledge that **“Demas hath forsaken me”** (II Tim. 4:10). Indeed, all men will forsake us and leave us destitute and helpless. But, our God will never leave us nor forsake us. **“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”** (Heb. 13:6).

The psalmist Asaph recorded these comforting words for us: **“Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works”** (Ps. 73:23-28). These are the verses that caused me to consider the things that we are discussing today. We must realize that there is no help for us but God! In all the Heavens, it is our God and our Saviour that should draw our attention and our love! In all the earth, it is our Lord God and Jesus Christ that should be our focus and our desire! If our hearts or our eyes stray, then we will find that these earthly desires or false gods will only cause us to fall. All of these earthly attractions can never help us or bring us relief. We must put our trust in God.

FOR HOPE

When we look at the world around us, we can see that there is no hope in this world. I mean to say, that there is no person or place or situation or possibility amongst all of mortality, that offers any hope of eternal life or any hope of everlasting glory with God. Consider the words of Job: **“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one”** (Job 14:1-4). A little later Job said, **“For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he”** (Job 14:7-10)? Earthly man is made up of flesh. And, in that flesh dwells no good thing. We can even say that every hope that this flesh might conspire to have, is only a fleshly hope. In other words, we cannot hope for more

than flesh can provide.

Really there are two thoughts to consider here concerning the hope that man has in himself. First, there cannot be any good thing that will come out of man. Therefore, how can man bring forth any true and noble and pure hope? What righteousness does he have to hope in, that has come forth from men? Second, there cannot be any lasting or enduring thing that will come out of man. Man is flesh, and will die and decay away. Therefore, any hope that he has, or any hope that he procures, will only last as long as his life. So, the hope of man is fading and decaying, and cannot stand forever.

Do you see the truly hopeless situation that men are currently in? Do you see how they set their hopes and their desires on the imaginations of their hearts – when their hearts are only evil and wicked continually? Do you see how they profess to have genuine hope – when their hopes are limited by their own feeble mortality? It is a terrible thing to consider the plight of the world of men! They go about manufacturing pleasures for themselves; they go about satisfying desires in their lives; they go about manifesting hope in their own abilities and the abilities of others; they go about seemingly content with their own accomplishments. And yet, in the end, all that is flesh shall perish.

Though this might be the condition of the unsaved members of humanity all around us, this ought not to be the condition of those that have been made to know the goodness and the hope that lies in Jesus Christ! We read the words of Zophar in the Book of Job: **“And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee. But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost”** (Job 11:18-20).

You know, the hope that we have in God when we look to Him not only comforts us on this earth, and not only gives us hope in this life; but, the hope that we have in God gives us comfort and hope as we consider the eternity that awaits us. We, who know Jesus Christ today, recognize that this life is only temporary. We, who know the Lord God today, understand that though the world is wicked all around us, and though Satan may be seemingly very successful in his attempts to corrupt this world; still, we know that Jesus Christ is returning! We have hope in His return! We have hope in the resurrection and the rapture! **“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for**

fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:25-28). Don’t spend your time today “looking down!” Make a deliberate effort to spend more of your time “looking up!” Our help and our hope do not rest in this earth or in the world of men. Rather, our Help and our Hope even now reigns in Heaven!

I don’t know about you, but even in a real and literal sense, I find that looking up at the sky and considering the beauties of the heavens – the sun and the clouds by day, and the stars and the moon by night – somehow separates me from the distresses and burdens of this life for just a little while. Maybe considering the vastness and the beauties of the heavens causes me to consider how small and helpless and hopeless I am; while at the same time reminding how big and immense and vast and powerful and full of hope my Lord God is!

FOR HEALTH

“Help” and “hope” are found in God. I think that the Scriptures make this plain. Now, I want us to consider the “health” that all of the world seems to desire. I believe, when we consider the “health” or “strength” or “vitality” of men, we will find that both the Scriptures and our own experiences will prove to us that “health” comes from above, through God – not from below and the wisdom and efforts of men.

I know that today much of the world looks to man or man’s inventions for health in the flesh. Men believe that they can prolong lives and improve health through their own wisdom and science and inventions. A brief perusal of current statistics reveals that the United States – considered by many to possess the best medicine and science in the health industry – has a very average infant mortality rate (ranking somewhere around the 46th lowest in the world), and a very normal average life expectancy (ranking somewhere around the 36th highest in the world).

Now, I know and have experienced first-hand the fact that our doctors and hospitals and the health sciences that our generation possesses can help and improve the health of our people. But, in the end, the advances that science has made have also contributed to our sins. Consider the travesty of abortion in our country, and how easy and convenient we have made it to kill innocent babies! In fact, if we were to incorporate abortion into the equation, I imagine that the infant mortality rate in the United States would be near the worst of any civilized and peaceful country on the face of the

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Looking Up

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earth! And, if we were to include in our statistics the very limited life-span of those aborted babies, then I imagine that the overall life expectancy figures of the people of this nation would plummet by a very significant amount! In reality, the longer lives, and the improved health that we imagine that we are gaining in this life, only serves to grant unto people more years of life and health in order to defile ourselves, and work wickedness in our country!

This is what Jeremiah had to say when he considered the condition of the Nation of Judah: **“We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble”** (Jer. 8:15)! When for the time, we ought to be enjoying the benefits of science and good health and long days, we instead are heaping up the sins and transgressions of a seemingly “enlightened” people.

I reckon that we ought to trust in God for the health of our bodies and our minds. Though we should be thankful for some of the medicines and medical advancements that the Lord has granted unto us; still, we have to give God the glory and God the praise for what health and strength and vitality that we might have – even give Him thanks for the long years that we live on this earth! When we consider how un-thankful and ignorant our supposedly advanced society has become, let us remember the words of King David: **“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God”** (Ps. 43:5).

It is God that gives us health – both naturally, and in the spirit. Again, I encourage you to “look up” for the health or the strength that you might need. God is good to us, and He will give us whatever it is that we need to continue in this life so that we might properly serve Him and exalt His Name in the sight of the world.

FOR HAPPINESS

Finally, I want to remind you that we will find true happiness only in Christ Jesus. I know that the world around us is looking down here for happiness. I know that most of humanity spends much of its time in the “pursuit of happiness.” However, sadly, I think that in the case of most of those that live in our society, “happiness” is equated to laziness, satisfying mortal lusts, and fulfilling all of our greedy desires.

I will read this passage to remind you of the situation of the world at the time of the great flood: **“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that**

Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37-39). At the time of the Great Flood, men were so enamored with the things of the flesh, and they were so caught up in seeking out the happiness that mortality might provide, that they were caught unawares when the flood came, and they were all carried away to their own destruction.

Well, the Lord says that the attitudes of men will be similar when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. Men and women will be eating and drinking and lusting after one another when the Lord returns – just as they were when the Great Flood came. Isn't this a description of our day and time? Aren't men indulging in the lusts and the pleasures of the flesh like never before – at least in recent memory? Mankind might find happiness for a little while; but, again, that happiness that comes from below in this mortal plane, can only provide temporary and mortal happiness.

Consider the words that Paul had for the Romans: **“For the kingdom of God is**

not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14:17). If you will separate yourself from the world below; and, if you will focus on that world above; then, you will find **“righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”** On this earth men find happiness in **“meat and drink.”** But, our happiness ought to be in the things of God, and in the **“peace”** and **“joy”** that come from above.

I know that sometimes it seems that the world has many advantages and privileges and riches and luxuries that we might desire for ourselves and our families. But, these things will all pass away! It is better for us to have just a little with God, then to have much in the flesh and be without God! True “happiness” from God will last forever! Look up, and don't look down. Consider God and His ways rather than focusing on man and his ways. **“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God”** (Ps. 146:5).



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Sons of God in Genesis 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” (Gen. 6:1-4).

These verses have been debated for centuries by good and great theologians. What I am about to say on these verses will not end the debate, but it will probably add to it. Our paper has in times past set forth the traditional view in the Forum and in other articles. The Editor has remained silent to date. It is only proper and fair that I should make known my views on this subject. Some, of course, have their minds made up and do not want to give a fair hearing to the other side. Such individuals should stop here and read no farther.

THE TWO VIEWS

Two general views have been held as to the identity of the sons of God and

the daughters of men in Genesis 6. One school of interpretation holds that the sons of God is the godly line of Seth and the daughters of men is the ungodly line of Cain. This is and has been the view of some able scholars. This no intelligent and informed person would deny.

The second school of interpretation holds that the sons of God were fallen angels who cohabited with the daughters of Adam. This resulted in a race of giants and brought the flood. Some good men have held this view such as A. W. Pink, Robert Govett, Clarence Larkin, G. H. Pember, Henry Morris, and others.

The first view is generally held today, but the second view is the oldest and is more in line with other Scriptures as I see it.

PROBLEMS WITH THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

It seems to me that those who make the sons of God to be the godly line of Seth and the daughters of men to be the ungodly line of Cain have a number of problems in their view. First, if they are correct “it would appear that at the time the amalgamation took place God's people were limited to the male sex, for ‘the sons of God’ were the ones who ‘married’ ‘the daughters of men’” (*Gleanings in Genesis* by A. W. Pink, pp. 92-93). Why did not

some of the daughters of God marry some of the sons of men? The traditional view cannot answer this question. The use of the word **“men”** in **“daughters of men”** (vv. 2,4) signifies the whole human race. The word **“man”** in the Hebrew is the word **“Adam,”** meaning the race that came from Adam (Gen. 5:2). This same Hebrew word is rendered in the early parts of Genesis **“Adam”** in the following places (2:19,20,21,23; 3:8,9,17,20,21; 4:1,25; 5:1-5, etc.). It is *bnoth-ha-Adam* and could read **“daughters of Adam.”** There is no suggestion of contrast if the sons of God were also men.

Second, there is no proof the race of Seth were all godly and the race of Cain were apostates. This is a pure assumption and contrary to all human history and experience. Did not the Sethites partake of the same fallen nature as the Cainites? The traditional assumption is a hypothesis to get rid of difficulty. Children of godly parents are not always godly. Consider the sons of Eli (I Sam. 2:12-25). Did not David have his Absalom and Solomon his Rehoboam? Nor is it always true that all children born to ungodly parents are ungodly.

Third, there is no evidence in the Divine Record that God had at this time forbidden the godly and ungodly to marry. In the early days of the race brothers and sisters had to marry each other and later near of kin. There can be no doubt that the descendants of Seth and Cain had been intermarrying for sometime. In all ages of man there has been some intermarriage of the righteous and the wicked, but there has only been one world-wide flood that destroyed the race save eight souls.

Fourth, the union of believers and unbelievers does not produce giants. Nevertheless, when the sons of God married the daughters of Adam, giants were born (Gen. 6:4).

Fifth, where were these sons of God when the flood came? Why were they not in the ark with Noah? Had they apostatized? If so, down the drain goes our teaching of the security of the saints and the fifth point of sovereign grace (perseverance of the saints). Genesis 6:11-12 gives no hint of the godly line of Seth in great numbers. Peter tells us the flood came **“upon the world of the ungodly”** (II Pet. 2:5). When the flood came there were only 8 righteous souls on earth (I Pet. 3:20). Hence there were no sons of God outside the ark. Let those who hold to the traditional view tell us what happened to them.

Sixth, Noah was the only one **“perfect”** in his generation (Gen. 6:9; 7:1). This not only suggests the moral purity of Noah, but it reveals that none of his parents or present family had cohabited with the fallen angels and had children by them. There were no demigods in Noah's family tree. Why was no one else perfect in his

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. What are the "fruits" spoken of in Matthew 3:8?

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Fruit is a Biblical analogy of the outward "evidence" of an inward nature. Several times Jesus Christ used this physical parallel to make a point, in both parables and doctrine. **"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit...Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them"** (Matt. 7:15-20). It is really a scriptural axiom, that you can tell the nature of a person by the 'fruits' or consistent actions and lifestyle of any particular person. If it walks like a duck, talks like a duck, acts like a duck-it probably IS a duck...! Selah! Think about it!

Most people consistently display corrupt fruits. They're listed in Galatians 5:19-21, **"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."**

So, when we examine our lives (or the lives of others), we should see fruits, or evidences, of the radical change that God made in regenerating our dead, carnal selves into children of the Living God! But as the question states, what are these fruits? Let's continue our reading in Galatians 5:22-23, **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance."** This is exactly what John the Baptist was looking for! His baptism was not a 'saving ordinance', but **"the answer of a good conscience toward God"** (I Pet. 3:21). So before he would baptize ANYONE, including these transient pharisees, he was looking for the fruits of the Spirit, such as love, faith, longsuffering and meekness! If these outward manifestations of an inward work were not there- he REFUSED them scriptural baptism! Wow! Now

that's pretty strict, isn't it!

Perhaps the most evident "fruit" is the one that John was looking for most of all... The spirit of repentance... Along with faith, it is the firstfruits of salvation. Before he would baptize, they MUST show this fruit that is evidenced in the life of members of the First Baptist Church of Corinth after they read his first epistle. That letter from the apostle Paul had much rebuke and stringent instruction for this haughty, cliquey church. Before he could write the passage below in joy- he required the same thing that John required of the pharisees. **"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter"** (II Cor. 7:9-11).

It's a marvelous progression in spirituality that will be evidenced as fruits in the lives of God's children. The repentant sorrow wrought carefulness in Corinth, then clearing (or transforming!), then indignation (holiness!), then fear (reverence!) and finally desire and zeal! Awesome! That was what marked the earnest fervor of the publicans and harlots coming out to John the Baptist- fruits meet, or acceptable that show true, godly repentance! Selah! Think about it!

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The fruits that John Baptist speaks of are the fruits that the Apostle Paul explains to the Galatian church in the Spirits. **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"** (Gal. 5:22). These fruits come from the Father of lights at the time of salvation. The process of strengthening

these fruits is not accomplished over night. The children of God are to turn from the life once dominated by the fruits of the flesh and walk in the Spirit.

Fruits can be best described as what you do or don't do. This will prove your change of heart. **"But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance"** (Acts 26:20).

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"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8). The fruits are not specifically listed in John the Baptist's scathing call for the Pharisees and Saducees to repent. He called them a generation of vipers and warned them not to say that Abraham was their father. It was obvious from their religiosity that they were not spiritual children aligned with the faith of Abraham (Rom. 4:1-17).

I think the **"fruits meet for repentance"** are concisely summed up in II Corinthians 7:10-11: **"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."** Though this passage was written several years after John the Baptist's ministry, I do believe it gives us an idea what the fruits meet for repentance consist of.

The Pharisees were strict legalists who believed in salvation by works by observing laws and man made traditions. The Saducees were liberals who did not believe in miracles or supernatural acts of God like the resurrection of the dead. I believe John the Baptist was calling upon these two groups representing both extremes of religion in Israel to have a change of mind about their sin, their false religion, their opinions, ideals, philosophies, and way of life. He was calling upon them to thoroughly renounce their old way of life to embrace the message of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. True repentance would have been marked by a complete change of life as evidenced by the repentance of Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee who would

later be saved and would have this to say about his transformation: **"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"** (Phil. 3:4-11).

True repentance is always marked by a sincere change of mind about one's self, sin, and relationship to God. That change of mind is always followed by a change in action as evidenced by the repentance of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:17-21). Godly sorrow and repentance is always marked by a humbled spirit, contrition, confession of sin, and a desire to be made whole by the God of all grace. This is why in my preaching I constantly urge people to examine whether or not they have truly been changed by the power of God in sovereign grace. If you have never been changed and you have never received the gifts of repentance and saving faith from the Holy Spirit you have never been saved! II Corinthians 5:17 declares: **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."** In our day of easy-believism and rampant religiosity, preachers rarely call upon people to truly repent, renounce their old way of life, and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord. The results have been devastating as superficial religious professions without real repentance and saving faith are rampant in these last days. Titus 1:15-16 states: **"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."**

TOM ROSS

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What is the meaning, in the first portion of Scripture, in Mark 9:46 that says **"Where their worm dieth not"?**

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What is meant by Mark 9:46 is a horrible thought for those that will be cast in the lake of fire. To imagine having a worm crawling all over you and eating your flesh is not a very pleasing thought to say the least. But first let me point out something here, this, to me at least, is important to note, Jesus repeats this warning not once, not twice, but three times. He says, **"Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"** (vv. 44, 46, 48). It is also worthy to note two things, first not only will the worm not die but **"the fire is not quenched"** we must not leave that part out. Second, **"Where their worm dieth not"** the word **"their"** is implying (at least to me) that these folks (the lost, who I'll get to in a moment) have their own private worm. I have heard this verse miss quoted many times, "the worm" instead of **"their worm."** This makes me think of at least two other places (there are more) in the Bible that speaks of a specific person and their **"worms"**, (Jonah 4:7 and Acts 12:20-23) Jonah and Herod had their own personal worms. The study of the word **"worm"** or **"worms"** might help the reader understand more clearly the question that is asked here.

As I mentioned above, I believe the verse in question is referring to all lost souls who will be cast into the lake of fire, **"Where their worm dieth not"** at the Great White Throne Judgment. When I first heard this as a young Christian I was horrified at the thought of being eaten on by a worm that will never die and I had no problem understanding or believing what that meant (do you?).

If you do not believe there is a hell (the eternal lake of fire where all the unsaved will go) then read no further because that is what this verse is referring to, HELL (Gehenna in the original Greek Translation), the everlasting resting place of the body and soul of the wicked. Many preachers today will not preach such a message to their people (to their shame) but it must be preached and often. The modern church goer wants to hear feel good sermons, ones that won't convict them of their wickedness before a Holy, Sovereign God. So, in fear of losing his congregation, the preacher of the day

chooses not to rock the boat.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon who preached during the last quarter of the 1800's, about 140 years ago says, "Everywhere there is apathy (indifference, unconcern). Nobody cares whether that which is preached is true or false. A sermon is a sermon whatever the subject; only, the shorter it is, the better."

A good reading of Job concerning "worms" will give the reader a good understanding of the worm also. **"How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm"** (Job 25:6). How do you like being called a worm? It doesn't set real well, does it? I have had many tell me we should never refer to ourselves as a worm because we live in the day of grace. Yes, that is true we are living in the day of grace, but the truly saved man will acknowledge his depravity and see himself as a worm, and if you don't, then I say you need to go back and examine your life as Bildad the Shuhite did.

For me, Job helps us answer the question that the questioner asks, **"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"** (Job 19:26). Here on earth when we die and are put in the grave the worm will devour this old flesh, but we who are saved will see God in the flesh. But the wicked will not see God and the worm will eat at his flesh forever, and ever, and ever, and ever, etc. and that old worm will never die. Oh, dear sinner do you not see your end? Do you not see how that there will never be any getting out of such a horrible place, that you will never be pardoned from the eating worm or the fire that shall never be quenched!

It is amazing to me how many so called Christians today do not believe in the Old Testament but yet our Lord and Saviour quotes from the Old Testament, (Mark 9:44, 46, 48) from Isaiah 66:24, **"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."** And for Jesus to repeat it three times in the Book of Mark should give us an idea of how important this warning is.

To the lost I can only say, turn from the wrath to come and repent of your wickedness, **"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"** (Acts 2:21). May the elect be saved as God shows His mercy and grace and may they be added to His Church! God Bless!

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I believe that God's Word is literal, until we are informed by God's Word it is to be taken as a parable, which in this instance it is to be taken not as a parable, but literal. Hell is a place of eternal torment reserved for the reprobates of this world. Torment is torture and it never ceases for eternity.

The worm is a maggot, a gnawing worm that eats flesh. Those who are in Hell will have gnawing worms eating their flesh for eternity. **"...to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"** (Mark 9:45-46).

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This verse is a warning by Christ of the judgment that awaits those who do not repent of their sins. They will be condemned to an eternity unending torment in hell where the fire is never quenched and the wrath of God is unabated. Jesus was quoting Isaiah 66:24 which contrasts the joy of the new heaven and new earth during the eternal ages (66:22) with the eternal punishment of the Lake of Fire.

I personally believe that the phrase has reference to the conscious existence of the unsaved as they endure the torments of the Lake of Fire throughout a Christless eternity. The unsaved will possess corrupt bodies, carnal minds, perverted wills, depraved hearts, fallen souls, and a conscience that will remind them of their wickedness and refusal to trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Each moment in the Lake of Fire will be one of remorse, sorrow, and remembrance of their sins that damned them to an eternity of woe. They will not be annihilated or unconscious. Rather they will be fully aware of the judgment and wrath of a Holy God.

John Gill, the Baptist expositor of the 1700's limited the worm to that of man's conscience in his comments that are excellent:

"...By their worm is meant, their conscience; for as a worm that is continually gnawing upon the entrails of a man, gives him exquisite pain; so the

consciences of sinners, will be continually flying in their faces, bringing their sins to remembrance, accusing them of them, upbraiding them with them, aggravating them, tormenting them for them, filling them with dreadful anguish and misery, with twinging remorse, and severe reflections, and which will never have an end. This will be always the case; conscience will be ever distressing, racking, and torturing them; it will never cease, nor cease doing this office;... but shall ever continue in the dreadful torments and unspeakable horrors of a corroding conscience; and by the fire may be meant the fire of divine wrath..." (Gill's Expositor, Vol. 7, pg. 452).

Thankfully, the Lord Jesus Christ took the place of the elect and bore this punishment for them in His sacrificial offering on the cross. Psalm 22 is a Messianic Psalm that describes the sufferings of the Saviour and the torments of the wrath of God poured out on Him on the cross. Psalm 22:6 declares: **"But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people."** How it humbles my heart to know that the Lord suffered the equivalent of the Lake of Fire in my stead so that I will enjoy the glories of His presence throughout eternity. Hallelujah what a Saviour!

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Three of the worst torments that Hell holds are found in this passage and amplified in the story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19-31. They are 1) the familiar torment of eternal fire and brimstone, that burns the prisoners, but never burns them up; 2) the corrupting and decaying destruction of worms that eat from the inside of the reprobates eternally, again, consuming, but never consumed; and 3) the inability to forget the rejection of Christ and His Gospel during the mortal existence of this present life.

We'll focus today on the awful significance of the presence of worms for all eternity in that place called Hell. Worms (or maggots) are always appropriately associated with death and decay. Leave the dead body of an animal out in the summer heat and the sight and stench will turn the strongest stomach. The book of Job has several references to the ultimate end of our flesh- doomed to decay and the work of maggoty worms. **"One dieth in his full strength... another dieth in the bitterness of his soul... They shall lie down alike in the**

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Forum #1

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“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” (Gal. 5:22-24).

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:8-10).

Taking into consideration the above verse with the question asked in Matthew 3:8 we must conclude that John the Baptist wants to see the evidence of a changed life, mind and attitude toward God. I believe that is what all Baptist preachers are looking for today in the lives of church members.

If church members are only hearers of the Word and not doers it is hard to tell who the Christians are, **“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed”** (James 1:25).

If you notice in verse 9 of Matthew 3, John is basically saying to the Pharisees and Sadducees, don’t use the excuse that Abraham is your father, that is not going to get you to heaven, you need to show fruit, which of course is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance before you can repent. If you’re resting on the fact that you have Abraham as your father and do not believe in the One who is greater than me, then you are doomed, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11 NKJV). (I quoted the NKJV here because the proper translation is “Spirit” not “Ghost”, as Elder Harry Balmer has said, “I don’t believe in ghosts”).

John is warning them (v. 7) that they need to show real heart felt repentance and not just to rely on who they are, even though Israel is God’s chosen people, they still need to believe in Jesus Christ and show it by their fruits, in other words their walk, talk and how they conduct

themselves before the world (Matthew 7:15-20). We need also to take heed to the warning for today as well, may we also show forth **“fruits meet for repentance”!** God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

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dust, and the worms shall cover them” (Job 21:23-26). **“And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God”** (Job 19:26).

In the last verse, Job was expecting worms to destroy his present body, but that God would give him a body, immortally preserved from the influence of worms and corruption. Hence the marvelous hope of I Corinthians 15:52-53, **“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”** But if we’re not brought face-to-face with our iniquitous nature in this life by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, we will be subject to eternal corruption! What is the Hell of eternal corruption? We have a preview in Acts 12:23, where Herod the king gave a great oration **“And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.”** **“The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree”** (Job 24:20).

For all of eternity, those that reject God in this life will be condemned to eternal hellfire and the eternal corruption and decay so appropriate for an eternal death. An awful picture of this endless torment is given in Isaiah 66:23-24, **“And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”**

An eerie presaging of the Lord’s words in our text, **“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,”** Isaiah is closing the prophesies of the Millennial reign and the Eternal Ages with this solemn gathering of God’s people and bringing them to the ‘scenic overlook’ of Holy justice and indignant righteousness. There the Elect shall stand and view unceremoniously the horrors of eternal Hell. Just as surely as God has foreordained the glories of Heaven for His precious children, even

so has He ordained specific worms and flames for all others. THEIR worm was ordained, created and set to its awful task by a holy, righteous Creator and LORD of the universe. We shall be looking upon repulsive ‘carcasses’ as Isaiah calls them. Not much left... just eternal dying, burning and worm-eating abomination... I hope that this fate is not yours, beloved reader... Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



The Sons of God in

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generation? Let those of the traditional view give the answer.

Seventh, the Hebrew text could read in Genesis 6:4: **“. . .when the sons of Elohim came in unto the daughters of Adam, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men. . .”** The daughters of Adam can hardly be limited to the so-called ungodly line of Cain. The text in Genesis 6 does not say nor imply that the daughters of men were all ungodly. This must be read into the text, for it simply is not there.

THE SONS OF GOD WERE ANGELS

The true identity of the **“sons of Elohim”** is crucial to the correct interpretation of Genesis 6. This expression occurs but six times in the Old Testament. In all cases the meaning seems to be angels. Consider Job 1:6-7: **“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD, said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.”**

Satan, a fallen angel (Isa. 14; II Cor. 11:14), had been on earth. Hence the scene in Job 1 is in Heaven. That angels are meant by **“sons of God”** or **“sons of Elohim”** is in the highest degree probable. The scene is quite parallel that of I Kings 22:19: **“And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.”** Most scholars are agreed that the sons of God in Job 1:6-7 and Job 2:1-2 are the angels of God in Heaven.

An almost indisputable verse is Job 38:7. The context is about the creation of the earth (vv. 4-6). Then we read in verse 7: **“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”** No men were present when the earth was created. Both the morning stars and the sons of God are angels, for they only were present when the foundations of the earth were laid. Nearly all scholars agree these sons of God were angels. It is strange they give

“sons of Elohim” a new meaning in Genesis 6:1-4.

The term **“sons of Elohim”** seems confined to those who were directly created by God, and not born of other beings of their own order. Hence, in Luke’s genealogy of Christ, Adam is called a son of God (Luke 3:38). In John 1:12 Christ is said to give to some the power to become sons of God. These are born of the Spirit of God in their inner man in the present life on earth. At the resurrection they will be clothed with a spiritual body, a building of God (II Cor. 5:1), and then they will be in every respect equal to the angels, being altogether a new creation (Luke 20:36).

The sons of Elohim are seen again in Psalm 29:1: **“Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.”** The Septuagint reads: **“Bring to the Lord, ye sons of God. . .”** In the Emphasized Bible Joseph B. Rotherham renders it: **“Give to Yahweh, ye sons of the mighty.”** Again most scholars concede these are probably angels also.

The sons of Elohim are seen again in Psalm 82:6: **“I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.”** Rotherham has it: **“Yea sons of the Highest are all. . .”** In verse 1 of this Psalm God is said to judge in the congregation of the gods (*Elohim*). In verse 7 these angels are threatened that, if they go on in evil of which God complains in verse 2, they will die like men (Adam). Now if the sons of God are children of Adam, it was superfluous so to warn them, for death would be a fact of depraved human nature.

The Alexandrian manuscript of the Septuagint reads in Genesis 6:2 and 4 **“the angels of God.”**

The Book of Enoch, written about 200 years before the birth of Christ, gives this information about Genesis 6: **“And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied in those days that beautiful and comely daughters were born unto them. And the angels, the sons of the heavens, saw and lusted after them, and spake to one another, ‘Come now let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget children’”** (Sec. I, VI:1-2). It continues: **“And they took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and they mixed with them, and taught them charms and enchantments, and made them acquainted with the cutting of roots and of woods. And they became pregnant, and they bear great giants, whose height was three thousand ells”** (Sec. I, VII:1-2).

Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37-100), the Jewish historian, writing upon Genesis 6, says: **“For many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own**

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strength; for the tradition is, that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book I, Chap. III, Sec. 1).

William Whiston, who translated the writings of Josephus, has a footnote at the bottom of this page (36) which reads: "The notion, that the fallen angels were, in some sense, the fathers of the old giants, was the constant opinion of antiquity."

W. F. Albright has written: "Yahweh was believed to have created astral as well as terrestrial beings and the former were popularly called, 'the host of heaven' or 'the sons of God.' In Genesis 6:1ff1, for example, . . . the (astral) gods had intercourse with mortal women who gave birth to heroes (literally, meteors, nephilim), an idea that may often be illustrated from Babylonian and Greek mythology. But the Israelites who had this section recited, unquestionably thought of intercourse between angels and women (like later Jews and Christians)" (*From the Stone Age to Christianity*, p. 226).

The oldest of the church fathers contended that the sons of God in Genesis 6 were angels who married the daughters of Adam. Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) wrote in his Second Apology: "But the angels transgressed this appointment, and were captivated by love of women, and begat children who are those that are called demons; and besides, they afterwards subdued the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings, and partly fears and the punishments they occasioned, and partly by teaching them to offer sacrifices, and incense, and libations, of which things they stood in need after they were enslaved by lustful passions; and among men they sowed murders, wars, adulteries, intemperate deeds, and all wickedness. Whence also the poets and mythologists, not knowing that it was the angel and those demons who had been begotten by them that did these things to men, and women, and cities, and nations, which they related, ascribed them to God himself, and to those who were accounted to be his very offspring, and to the offspring of those who were called his brothers, Neptune and Pluto, and to the children of these offspring. For whatever name each of the angels had given to himself and his children, by that name they called them" (*The Anti-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I, p. 190).

In the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs we find this information: "For moreover the angel of God told me concerning them, and taught me that women are overcome by the spirit of fornication more than men, and they devise their hearts against men; and by

means of their adornment they deceive first their minds, and instill the poison by the glance of their eye, and then they take them captive by their doings, for a woman cannot overcome a man by force. . . . For thus they allured the Watchers before the flood; and as these continually beheld them, they fell into desire each of the other, and they conceived the act in mind, and changed themselves into the shape of men, and appeared to them in their congress with their husbands; and the women, having their mind's desire toward their apparitions, gave birth to giants, for the Watchers appeared to them as reaching even unto heaven" (*The Anti-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VIII, p. 10). The translator has a note at the bottom defining the "Watchers." It reads: "This name, occurring once again in the Testaments (Naph. 3), is one frequently applied to the angels as the custodians of the world and of men."

Robert Govett comments: "That the 'sons of God' were angels, was a belief held by Justin Martyr and Tertullian, who both allude to it in their respective Apologies; by Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Cyprian, Methodius, Lactantius, Eusebius, Ambrose, and Sulpitius Severus, as the author of 'Evuvin' affirm" (*The Sons of God and Giants or Rephaim*, the book has no page numbers).

It is freely granted that these quotes are not inspired as is the Bible, but they do most certainly prove what the ancient Jews and early Christians believed about Genesis 6:1-4.

THE SINNING ANGELS

There are two passages in the New Testament that speak of sinning angels. The first is II Peter 2:4-5: "**For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.**"

We are not, in this passage, told what their sin was, although the passage immediately speaks of the days of Noah and the flood as if to give a close connection between the two events. We are merely told that they did sin and that they are now imprisoned in Tartarus (our version has "hell"). Generally "Hell" is a translation of the Greek word *Hades*, but here only in the New Testament the Greek has *Tartarus*. This word is right out of Greek mythology. In Homer it is *tartaros*, and it is found in Job 40:15; 41:23 of the Septuagint. It is also found in the Book of Enoch 20:2 where it is the place of punishment of fallen angels, while *Gehenna* is for apostate Jews (See *Word Pictures in the New Testament* by A. T. Robertson, Vol. VI, p. 162). The judgment Peter makes mention of is most likely the great White Throne Judgment

in Revelation 20:11-15. These angels are in prison while Satan angels are still loose on earth. The sons of Elohim in Genesis 6 may have rebelled in the days of Noah, and their rebellion may have had no connection with the rebellion of Satan and his angels (Rev. 12:7-10) who are yet to be imprisoned (Matt. 25:41; Isa. 24:21-22).

The second passage is Jude 6-7: "**And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**"

The passage in Jude discloses the sin of the angels. They "**Kept not their first estate,**" or "their own principality," or "first place of power" (I Cor. 15:24a; Rom. 8:38). The reference is to the lordship held by angels in creation in the kingdom of the air. They "**left their own habitation,**" or "their own proper habitation" (*oiketerion*). They left the kingdom of the air and descended to earth. The Greek word for "habitation" is the word for "dwelling place" (from *oiketer*, dweller at home, from *oikos*). It is found only here and in II Corinthians 5:1 where it refers to the body as the abode of the spirit of man (See A. T. Robertson on this). The meaning in Jude is that the angels left their normal spiritual bodies to assume an abnormal physical form to cohabit with human women.

The words "**even so**" and "**in like manner**" in verse 7 about the Sodomites are very significant. It can mean no less than like the fallen angels in verse 6. The Sodomites went after the unnatural use of the men (Gen. 19:1-17; Rom. 1:27), even as the sinning angels went after the daughters of Adam. Both the angels and Sodomites were guilty of the indulgence of passion contrary to nature. Both the Sodomites and the fallen angels are set forth as an example of eternal fire, suffering punishment for their sins.

ANGELS CAN ASSUME HUMAN BODIES

Those who have studied the doctrines of angels in the Scriptures know that they have the power to assume a human body, or to dismiss it, as they please. It is also well known that when they assume human bodies they appeared as men. In the Bible angels are always spoken of in the masculine gender. Abraham welcomed three "**men**" in the plains of Mamre (Gen. 18:1-8). They walked, talked, and ate with him as "**men,**" but they were in truth angels (Gen. 18:22; 19:1). The angels at the empty tomb of Christ is by Mark described as "**a young man**" (Mark 16:5) and by Luke as "**two men. . . in shining garments**" (Luke 24:4). The "**two men. . . in white apparel**" in Acts

1:10 were probably angels. Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, during his feast saw only a "**hand**" of an angel which wrote on the wall of his palace (Dan. 5:5), showing an angel can assume only a part of a human body.

The physical realism of angels in human bodies is seen in the visit of two angels to Lot in Sodom. The Sodomites sought to misuse them sexually: "**And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them**" (Gen. 19:5; cf. Judg. 19:22; Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:27). In the Old Testament a lawful copulation with a man's wife is expressed by knowing her (Gen. 4:1,17,25), and the unlawful and shocking copulation of man with man is expressed by the same phrase. To properly convey the meaning of Genesis 19:5 to the modern mind it might read: "Bring them out to us, that we may sodomize them." The two angels smote the Sodomites with blindness so they were unable to perform this evil act (Gen. 19:6-11). Why was this miracle performed if angels in human bodies could not be sodomized? And if this was possible why would it not be possible for them in human bodies to have sex with the daughters of Adam?

The sinning angels are now in prison in *Tartarus* and cannot get out until the judgment of the great day (II Pet. 2:4). Satan and his angels are loose on earth. In Greek mythology *Tartarus* was a dark abode of woe, as far beneath Hades as Earth is below Heaven (*Homer II*, Vol. VIII, 16). This idea corresponds to Peter's pit of darkness. In Greek mythology Zeus put the rebelling Titan in *Tartarus*. In Christian theology *Tartarus* is the prison house of the fallen angels who copulated with the daughters of Adam in Genesis 6:1-4.

We know from Genesis 6:4 that "children" were born as a result of the unlawful union of angels and the daughters of Adam. These were giants, and I doubt not that some were men as well as women. There are legends of Hercules and of Amazonians (strong women). The bodies of these offspring of fallen angels and the daughters of Adam were destroyed in the flood. Since the flood came upon the world of the ungodly (II Pet. 2:5) we can safely assume these giants men and women had their bodies destroyed in the flood. What about their spirits which could not be destroyed? I believe they are still loose on the earth and are the demons we read about in the Bible. Justin Martyr held this view. This would account for why the demons seek to take over the bodies of men and women. It would also allow for male and female demons, a belief held by the ancient nations of the earth, including the Hebrews. I shall say more on this later.

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OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

First, those who oppose this view I am advocating say that angels cannot marry. It is true that angels are immortal beings who do not need to maintain their number by procreation as do men. It is not the ordinary nature of angels to seek the marriage relationship. Jesus said in Matthew 22:30: **“For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven”** (cf. Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35-36). Those who remain unfallen **“in heaven”** do not marry. This is the general rule, but it does not follow that angels are sexless, for they are always spoken of in the masculine gender. Could it be there are no female angels for them to marry? Matthew 22:30 could hardly be the rule for fallen angels. Genesis 6:1-4 plainly teaches that angels can assume human bodies and cohabit with women and have children who are giants.

Second, some will say this is a new light teaching which they have never heard of before except for this article. They may not have heard of it before, but it is certainly not a new teaching. It is as old as Genesis 6:1-4. It was the view of the ancient Jews and the church fathers. In fact this view was not ever questioned until about the Fourth Century of the Christian Era.

Clarence Larkin writes: “That the ‘Sons of God’ of Genesis 6:1-4 were ANGELS was maintained by the ancient Jewish Synagogue, by Hellenistic Jews at, and before the time of Christ, and by the Christian Church up until the Fourth Century, when the interpretation was changed to ‘sons of Seth’ for two reasons. First, because of the worship of angels had been set up, and if the ‘Sons of God’ of Genesis 6:1-4 were angels and fell, then angels might fall again, and that possibility would affect the worship of angels. The second reason was, that Celibacy had become an institution of the Church, and if it was taught that the angels in heaven did not marry, and yet that some of them seduced by the beauty of womanhood came down from heaven to gratify their amorous propensities, a weakness of a similar kind in one of the ‘earthly angels’ (Celegates) might be the more readily excused. In the Eighteenth Century the ‘Angelic Interpretation’ was revived, and is now largely held by Biblical scholars” (*The Spirit World*, pp. 26-27).

So in truth the angelic interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4 is not new light; it is old light. The Seth and Cain idea is a carryover among our Baptist churches from the heresies of Roman Catholicism. The angelic interpretation is an old landmark which has fallen and needs to be reset. Hence this article.

Third, some say that Israel is called “sons of God.” But according to the Old Testament it would be better to say that Israel is called **“my son”** (Ex. 4:22) and **“my sons”** (Isa. 43:6; 45:11). Hosea 1:10 says: **“Ye are the sons of the living God.”** But in none of these verses is Israel called **“the sons of Elohim”** as the expression is in Genesis 6:1-4. Most of the verses about Israel concern her future conversion when she is brought into the blessings of the New Covenant. In the Old Testament the **“sons of Elohim”** is restricted to angels, but in the New Testament it is applied to sons of God by regeneration (John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-16; Gal. 4:6; I John 3:1-2). In this age the inner man is born anew by the Spirit of God. At the resurrection we will be clothed with a spiritual body, a building of God (II Cor. 5:1). Then we will be **“equal unto the angels”** (Luke 20:36), being altogether a new creation!

THE GIANTS

The Seth and Cain interpretation does little to explain the “giants” in Genesis 6:1-4. These are played down or explained away. Look again at Genesis 6:4: **“There were giants in the earth in those days (the days before the flood); and also after that (after the flood, Num. 13:33), 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.”**

Like our KJV, the Septuagint has “giants” (from *gigantes*). In the Hebrew it is *nephilim* which Robert Young in his Analytical Concordance to the Bible says means “fallen ones, fellers.” The “fallen ones” (*nephilim*) points to the offspring of the fallen angels and the daughters of Adam. These are also called **“mighty men”** in Genesis 6:4, a word commonly used for military men of great strength. The giants were the results of the union of heavenly natures with earthly natures. Angels, a higher order of being than man, have great knowledge of genetic manipulation. If man can now make a clone just think what a fallen angel might be capable of with his great wisdom.

The word *nephilim* occurs again in Numbers 13:33: **“And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants (nephilim): and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”** Here are some of the mighty men like those in Genesis 6:1-4. These were also doubtless some more demigods or half man and half angel. This sin did happen after the flood, but it would seem never to the point of corrupting all flesh as in the days of Noah.

It appears from the Old Testament that the Land of Canaan was a land of giants. There were Rephaim who inhabited Canaan, Edom, Moab, and Ammon. At the conquest of Canaan, Og, king of Bashan, was of the race of giants (Deut.

3:11; Josh. 12:4; 13:12). In Deuteronomy 3:11 it is written: **“For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man”** (cf. Deut. 3:13). Scholars differ as to the length of a cubit. But taking the shortest length his bedstead was 10 feet and 6 inches, or, taking the longest, it was 11 feet and 9 inches.

There was the Emims who were giants in the land of Moab: **“The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims”** (Deut. 2:10-11). There was also the Zamzumins of Ammon: **“That also was accounted a land of giants: giants dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites called them Zamzumims; A people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; but the LORD destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead”** (Deut. 2:20-21). From a remnant of the Anakims in Philistine Gath came the famous Goliath (I Sam. 17:4; cf. II Sam. 21:16-22). He was 6 cubits and a span. Either 9 feet and 9 inches, taking the shortest length, or 10 feet and an inch, taking the longest.

The existence of giants in Canaan is very significant. It would seem that these offspring of angels and the daughters of Adam were there to keep Israel out of her promised land. This is doubtless one of the reasons the Israelites were to exterminate the Cainites (Deut. 20:12-13).

The Hebrew **“Rephaim”** is found 8 times in the Old Testament, although it is somewhat obscured by our English translation. The Septuagint of Job 26:5 reads: **“Shall giants (Rephaim) be born from under the water and the inhabitants thereof;”** an allusion to the drowning of the offspring of angels and the daughters of Adam by the flood. It is seen again in Proverbs 2:18: **“For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead (Rephaim or giants).”** Here Solomon dissuades from sexual impurity because it brings the transgressor to the assembly of the giants. Proverbs 9:18 is similar to this verse: **“But he knoweth not that the dead (Rephaim or giants) are there; and that her guests are in the depths of Hell (Sheol in Hebrew or Hades in the Greek).”** Wicked women caused the sons of Elohim to sin and suffer punishment. If angels could not resist an adulterous woman, how much less a depraved man?

Proverbs 21:16 says: **“The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead (Rephaim or giants).”** While the word “giants” is not

mentioned in Proverbs 7:26 it is surely implied: **“For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men (note “men” is in italic, showing there is no word in the Hebrew for “men” which is supplied by the translators) have been slain by her.”**

Rephaim is also in Isaiah 14:9 and Isaiah 26:19 where it is rendered **“the dead.”** In Isaiah 26:14 Rephaim is rendered **“deceased.”** The New Berkely Version makes it easier to see: “The dead do not live; the ghosts (Rephaim or giants) do not stand up. Accordingly, Thou hast visited and destroyed them and caused all memory of them to perish.”

OTHER THINGS WHICH SEEM TO CONFIRM THIS

Where did the heroes of heathen mythology come from? Persius, Esculapius, Hercules, and others came from the tradition of the giants, offspring born to the sons of Elohim and the daughters of Adam. The heathen confused the sons of Elohim with the gods and made these giants the sons of earthly women and the gods.

During the Middle Ages it was a common belief that a demon could put on a male body (incubus) and impregnate a woman, or put on a woman's body (succubus) and tempt a man. Long before this many ancient civilizations had their incubus and succubus. The early Assyrian *Lili* was a sexually insatiable female demon who roamed the night looking for a mortal man to lie with. A Hebrew tradition about *Lilith* existed in very ancient time. In Isaiah 34:14 the words **“the screech owl”** in Hebrew is *Lilith*, which occurs no other place in the Hebrew Old Testament. *Lilith* was the name of a female demon, or some say the mother of succubi. Satyrs (Isa. 13:21; 34:14) are believed to be male demons behind idol gods.

GENESIS 6:3

Notice again Genesis 6:3: **“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.”** What is meant by the words **“he ALSO is flesh”**? It would seem some other nature beside man had become flesh. The giants had been born of marriage of fallen angels with the daughters of Adam. The Seth and Cain theory cannot make any sense out of the word **“also”** here. The meaning of Genesis 6:3 is that as the Spirit had ceased to strive with these rebellious angels, so it would be also with man, for he too had become corrupt (Gen. 6:5,11-13).

WHY BOTHER WITH ALL OF THIS?

I can hear some pious souls ask, “Why go to such length to deal with this? of what profit is it to God's people? Does it edify?” I would answer that **“all scripture. . . is profitable for doctrine”** (II Tim. 3:16). This includes Genesis 6:1-4. Please

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do not call something “unprofitable” that God has called “**profitable**.” To do such would be to attack both God and His Word. A number of important truths are seen in Genesis 6:1-4.

First, the account in Genesis 6:1-4 shows an early plan of Satan to corrupt the human race by angels marrying the daughters of Adam. There is no salvation for fallen angels and no Messiah could be born of a race of demigods or demons. The Messiah must be the Seed of the woman, not the woman and an angel. This is just the sort of work we might expect from Satan, a fallen angel.

Second, when Israel was ready to enter the promised land the giants (the offspring of fallen angels and the daughters of men) were there to resist them. Israel faced some of the greatest military men who ever lived on earth (Num. 13:33). These Hercules scared them to death. Satan had his best fighters there to make Israel fearful and afraid in hopes of keeping them out of Immanuel’s land (Isa. 8:8). Who do you think is making all the trouble in the Middle East today? It is Satan, a fallen angel!

Third, there is to be a revival of the days of Noah before Christ comes back and sets up the kingdom on earth: “**And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all**” (Luke 17:26-27). Note the stress upon “**they married wives, they were given in marriage**” by Christ here. As we near the end of this age, I believe fallen angels may again marry the daughters of men and produce giants. The modern-day sexual revolution is being carried on by men possessed by male demons and women possessed by female demons. Young girl, beware of this sleeping around with just any person. Young men take warning! Don’t go to bed with a girl possessed by a female demon! Worse still young girl take warning. You could entertain a fallen angel unaware and give birth to a demigod!

Genesis 3:15 declares: “**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.**” All will concede that the Seed of the woman was Christ, and I believe the Seed of the Serpent is Antichrist. Satan, a fallen angel, will impregnate a woman who will give birth to a superman, Antichrist. Has this already happened? Or, is it soon to happen? God only knows. Satan leads men to perdition, and Antichrist is “**the son of perdition**” (II Thess. 2:3) and will do the same work as his father.

To those who want to argue that a spirit cannot impregnate a woman, I ask them to consider that the Holy Spirit impregnated the womb of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:35). Don’t forget the Devil will heal the deadly wound of Antichrist (Rev. 13:3,12) and give life to the image of Antichrist (Rev. 13:15). Do not be so foolish as to make too little of his power. If ordinary angels could produce children of the daughters of Adam, doubt not the greatest of the fallen angels can do as much. Satan by doing this will attempt to imitate the virgin birth of Christ. Satan is not an originator; he is an imitator.

The days of this present dispensation are near an end. If there ever existed a generation which ought to repent and believe the gospel it is the generation

now living. How is it with your soul? Do you know Christ as your Savior? Are you ready to go out into eternity? Repent and believe the good news about Christ.

I conclude this article with a poem given to me by Elder Ernest Parks, Winston-Salem, NC:

SONS OF GOD

The sons of God must have been

Angelic beings and not men.

Does not one teach an awful mess,

In proving they were sons of Seth?

And could men so heep-um tall

Become such giants without the fall?

Some say my poem makes not good sense

To you, my friend, it was not meant!



- A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS -

By Timothy Hille
of Ashland, Illinois

vs. 44-47

I. VERSES ONE THROUGH EIGHT.

“**And the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron.**” Moses and Aaron are now both together addressed, Moses as the divinely appointed leader of the people, and Aaron as the high priest, who, having represented the people at the altar, was now to teach the people the difference between holy and unholy, unclean and clean (Lev. 10:10-11). These commandments were given by God. Those whom He chose and saved were to live in a manner which pleased Him and which distinguished them from the world as His people. This is still true today – God’s people are to be separated from the world by following the commandments of God. Many today do not like the teachings of the Scriptures that pertain to godly living, and so they say, “I do not think there is anything wrong with this, or that, or the other,” as going to dances, wearing clothing that pertains to the other gender, wearing immodest clothing, frequenting restaurants that serve alcoholic beverages, going to the movies, and mixed swimming. They want to partake in those things and take pleasure in them. God gives these commandments and He is the One who is being displeased. The nature of these commandments was sacred (Deut. 14:1-3). These restrictions were given to make a distinction between Israel as a people belonging to God and the rest of the world. The problem in our day is that there is little or no distinction being made in the lives of people who profess to be children of God: they behave like and pursue after and take pleasure in the same things as the unbelieving.

God commands Moses and Aaron to instruct the children of Israel in the things which they were to eat, as being considered clean, and the things they were not to eat, as being considered unclean. Of beasts which were to be eaten, the

restriction was given, “**Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat**” (Deut. 14:4-6). These characteristics identified those animals which were to be considered clean and whose flesh could be eaten. Of those animals that did not meet these characteristics, God said, “**Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.**” Many things which the world considers acceptable ought to be unclean to children of God. These restrictions were temporary and served a purpose under the law, and spoke of spiritual cleanliness and fellowship with God (Acts 10:9-15, 28; Rom. 14:14-23; I Tim. 4:4-5). We are able to eat all kinds of food, so long as we do so with thanksgiving to God, and our doing so does not place a spiritual obstacle in the path of another person.

II. VERSES NINE THROUGH TWELVE.

“**These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters.**” The regulations pertaining to fish and water animals as food are here given. The guideline is given as such: “**whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat.**” Those water animals that did not meet these criteria were to be regarded as “**an abomination**”. We ought to hold that in abomination which God holds in abomination. That to which God is utterly averse we ought to utterly shun. God tells us of that which is sinful in His Word. We ought to regard sin as sinful, defiling, contaminating, and harmful (Prov. 8:13, 16:6; Ps. 101:3, 119:28). “**Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good**” (Rom. 12:9). “**Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity**” (II Tim. 2:19).

III. VERSES THIRTEEN THROUGH TWENTY-THREE.

These verses contain the commands regarding clean and unclean birds. Several types of birds and flying creatures are described as unclean (vs. 13-19). These birds were ravenous, flesh eating, and often scavengers which fed on the dead bodies of other animals. Flying creeping things, such as insects, were also not to be eaten (vs. 20, 23). Certain classes of locusts were considered clean and edible (vs. 21-22).

IV. VERSES TWENTY-FOUR THROUGH FORTY.

In these verses we find instructions concerning:

- 1) uncleanness caused by the carcasses of unclean beasts (vs. 24-28);
- 2) unclean creeping things (vs. 29,30);
- 3) uncleanness caused by the dead bodies of creeping things (vs. 31-38);
- 4) uncleanness caused by the carcasses of clean beasts (vs. 39,40).

Contact with that which is unclean causes defilement: “**for these ye shall be**

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Chapter Eleven – The Law of Clean and Unclean Beasts

In this chapter, God gives commandment to the children of Israel concerning dietary laws and ceremonial sanctification pertaining to meats and animals. We here see God ruling over all aspects of Israel’s life, spiritual and temporal. This should also be true of children of God today. The purpose of these regulations was sanctification: they were to live holy and be set apart to God who were represented at the altar by divinely ordained sacrifices and an anointed priesthood.

“Holiness, or separation from the unclean, is the burden of this chapter. After a full atonement has been made, and the Lord has revealed Himself to His people, as we have seen in chapter 9, it surely becomes His redeemed ones to be imitators of God as dear children (Eph. 5:1). This is the desire of His heart, ‘Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.’ We cannot be followers of the Holy One and take pleasure in those things which are unclean in His sight.”¹

The nature of these regulations is that they were ordered “**after the law of a carnal commandment,**” (Heb. 7:16), (Heb. 9:8-10). If they were to be holy in observing shadows and types, how much more then ought we today who have received the fulfillment of those former things in Christ sanctify ourselves in abstaining from lusts and serving God in righteousness and virtue (Eph. 5:1-10)!

Chapter Outline

- i. Clean and unclean beasts: vs. 1-8
- ii. Clean and unclean fish: vs. 9-12
- iii. Clean and unclean birds: vs. 13-23
- iv. Uncleanness caused by carcasses: vs. 24-40
- v. Uncleanness of creeping things: vs. 41-43
- vi. An Holy God and an holy people:

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unclean. Contact with the dead body of an animal caused ceremonial defilement: **“whosoever toucheth the carcass of them shall be unclean until the even.”** We are to be of the mind that sin defiles, and that we require daily cleansing in order to have fellowship with God. We are not to have a part with sinners, in foolish talking, jesting, evil speaking, bad behavior, lying, cursing, swearing, dishonesty, gossip, malice, anger, lusts, fleshliness, greed, covetousness, or any other sin (Eph. 5:11). As we go through this world, we are to be **“hating even the garment spotted by the flesh”** (Jude :23).

If the dead bodies of small animals came into contact with household utensils, clothing, or food, then these items were defiled and in some cases must be cleansed ceremonially, and in other cases must be destroyed. That which was defiled and could be cleansed was washed in water, and was considered unclean until the evening. An oven or range which was used to prepare food was considered defiled by contact with a dead animal, and must be **“broken down”**. **“A fountain or pit, wherein there is plenty of water,”** and into which the dead body of some small animal fell was not considered unclean; but whatsoever touched the carcass of the dead animal, as the tool used to extract the body from the fountain or pit, was unclean. Seed for sowing was not defiled by a dead body unless the seed had water put on it; and if the seed was made unclean, it was not to be used. Uncleanness could also be contracted by touching or eating the carcass of a clean animal, in which case the defiled person must **“wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even.”**

V. VERSES FORTY-ONE

THROUGH FORTY-THREE.

The final class of animals described is that of **“every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”** This would include snakes, worms, and many other such creatures. These were to be regarded as an abomination by the children of Israel. **“Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby.”** To partake of that which is unclean makes a person unclean. To participate in sin brings defilement. We know that a person is not defiled spiritually by what he or she eats, but by the sins which come from his or her own heart (Matt. 15:10-11, 17-20). If we sin after that we are saved, then we need to be cleansed in order to have fellowship with God restored on the basis of holiness and righteousness (I John 1:9).

VI. VERSES FORTY-FOUR

THROUGH FORTY-SEVEN.

For the children of Israel, these commandments were to be held as sacred regulations. The purpose of these commandments is here described. **“For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves.”** The children of Israel were to be set apart unto the Lord. **“Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.”** He was a sinless God, and they were to be separate from sin. They were to be set apart from the world unto the praise, honor, and glory of God. The reasons that believers are to live in an holy manner through obedience to the commands of God are found in:

- 1) the sovereign claim of God over His chosen people – **“I am the LORD your God;”**
- 2) the immutable, perfect character of God – **“I am holy;”**
- 3) the saving work of God which

every believer has experienced – **“I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt;”**

4) the reason for which every believer has been saved, and the nature of the relationship of every believer to the Lord – **“... to be your God.”**

The reason that Jesus died on the cross was to save His people from their sins, and that they should be an holy and distinct people unto Him and His Heavenly Father (Matt. 1:21; Tit. 2:11-14; I Pet. 1:15-16, 2:9; II Cor. 6:14-18; I Cor. 10:31). We are to sanctify ourselves by being separate from sin in word and deed, and by following after the Lord in being obedient to His commands and precepts.

NOTES

1. *Handfuls on Purpose*, Series III, by James Smith, 1971.



THE

BIBLE AND NEWSPAPER

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

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

NEW JERSEY HOSPITAL RELENTS ON ABORTIONS

(WNS)--The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) appears to be relenting on its policy of forcing pro-life nurses to help perform abortions, but a lawsuit waged by the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) is going forward nonetheless. “No nurse is compelled to have direct involvement in a procedures to which she or he objects based on his/her cultural values, ethics and/or religious beliefs,” UMDNJ spokesman Jeffrey Tolvin said in a Dec. 2 statement. “At the same time we needed to find a solution that is in the best interest of the patients we serve. We are therefore hiring additional staff who will provide care to our full complement of patients.” Until the hospital agrees in court not to discriminate against its employees, however, ADF isn’t relaxing in its fight for 12 nurses who said rights were violated when their administrator told them earlier this year they either had to assist with abortions or face losing their jobs. One hearing took place on Monday, and another is scheduled for Dec. 22.

CDC REPORTS SHOW INCREASE IN ABSTINENCE

(WNS)--Two reports recently released by the Centers for Disease Control show teens are embracing abstinence, despite the prevalence of promiscuity portrayed in music, movies and on television. According to a report on teen sexual activity released in October, the number of girls having sex between the ages of 15 and 19 dropped 8

percent between 1988 and 2010, from 51 percent to 43 percent. The number of boys having sex dropped 18 percent, from 60 percent to 42 percent. The rates of abstinence were highest among 15- to 17-year-olds, with only 27 percent of girls and 28 percent of boys reporting sexual activity. In 1988, 37 percent of girls and 50 percent of boys in the same age range told researchers they already had started having sex. Another report released earlier this month showed birth rates for teens also are declining. In 2010, the number of babies born to mothers between 15 and 19 years old dropped to the lowest level ever recorded in the United States, a 9 percent decrease from the previous year. Births to teens younger than 20 declined 10 percent, reaching the lowest level recorded since 1946.

HOUSE COMMITTEE INVESTIGATES RELIGIOUS BIAS IN GRANT-MAKING

(WNS)--Members of the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform spent more than an hour on Dec. 1 sharply questioning two representatives of the Department of Health and Human Services about how a Catholic organization was denied a grant to work with sex-trafficking victims. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) worked with trafficking victims for several years with the aid of a federal grant, and was rated by HHS reviewers as the second-best applicant for the grant this year. But after the Obama administration issued a new edict this year,

saying it would give “strong preference” to applicants who provide or refer women for abortion, contraception and sterilization services, USCCB lost the grant.

HOUSE CONSERVATIVES CALL ATTENTION TO GENDER- AND RACE-BASED ABORTIONS

(WNS)--Conservative lawmakers in the House of Representatives are making a push to ban abortions based on the gender or race of unborn babies. The Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act of 2011, authored by Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., would make it a criminal and civil offense to perform abortions for sex- or race- selection reasons. While women who seek such abortions would not be jailed, those who coerce women into getting such abortions could face up to five years in prison. “Today in America, 40 to 50 percent of all African-American babies, virtually one in two, are killed before they are born,” Franks said at a hearing this week on the legislation, “which is a greater cause of death for African-Americans than heart diseases, cancer, diabetes, AIDS, and violence combined.” At a Dec. 6 House hearing on the legislation, Steven Mosher, the president of Population Research Institute, said 89 percent of immigrant Indian women participating in a recent study had aborted girls. Nearly half of those had aborted more than one girl.

PASTORS WORK TO OVERTURN NEW YORK’S BAN OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(WNS)—On Dec. 8 more than 100 pastors, church members, and legislators gathered on the steps of New York’s City Hall. The demonstrators—many black, Hispanic, and Asian-American—did not get the media coverage received by Occupy Wall Street, but their mission has national implications that are at least as equally significant. Many groups rent New York public school rooms for evening or weekend use, but the city now bans their use for religious services. Courts have declared the ban legal, and the U.S. Supreme Court on Dec. 5 refused to hear an appeal. The demonstrators want the New York City Council to overturn the ban. Meanwhile, churches and religious groups all over the city are scurrying to find, if necessary, alternative locations in a city where rental space comes at a premium. New York City Council members will have to decide whether school property can be used for all kinds of purposes except one: religious.

SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY CLINTON TO CHAMPION GAY RIGHTS

(WNS)--In a speech marking International Human Rights Day in December, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced the United States would champion “one of the remaining human rights challenges of our time.” The challenge: promoting and protecting gay rights worldwide. ◊ (Continued on page 37)

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Exactly what that means—and how it would work—wasn't clear, but some gay advocates hailed the speech as a landmark moment for U.S. advocacy of international gay rights—even during a year of severe abuses against masses of other minorities around the world. Clinton's speech to UN delegates gathered in Geneva followed a memo from President Barack Obama directing all federal agencies involved in foreign affairs to "promote and protect the human rights of LGBT persons." (LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.) The White House called the memo the government's first comprehensive strategy to promote gay rights around the world.

Some ideas made plenty of sense: Both Clinton and Obama spoke about opposing violence and abuse against homosexuals in foreign countries, including places where gay people face beatings, imprisonment, or death.

SPENDING BILL REINSTATES ABSTINENCE EDUCATION FUNDING

(WNS)--A \$662 billion omnibus spending bill passed by Congress to avoid a government shutdown contained \$5 million for abstinence education programs. In 2009, the Obama administration slashed community-based sexual risk avoidance (SRA) programs from the federal budget — giving comprehensive, condom-based sex education programs \$16 for every \$1 spent on abstinence education. "We are very pleased that Congress has chosen to redress a real problem in sex-education policy by re-establishing abstinence education as a program for America's teens," said Valerie Huber, president of the National Abstinence Education Association (NAEA). The bad news is that the bill also contains \$297 million for Title X, the main federal funding stream for Planned Parenthood. The House version aimed to completely defund the group, but the Senate version wanted to give it \$299 million.

HIGH COURT ASKED TO HEAR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CASE

(WNS)—The Alliance Defense Fund filed a petition in December with the U.S. Supreme Court asking the justices to hear a religious liberty case that could determine whether Christian groups can continue to operate freely on secular college campuses. The case, *ADX v. Reed*, involves Christian sorority Alpha Delta Chi and fraternity Alpha Gamma Omega at San Diego State University. School officials denied both groups official recognition because the groups required their leaders to agree to a statement of faith. Although other campus groups are allowed to exclude members based on viewpoint, such as political party affiliation, and even sex, in the case of fraternities and sororities, school administrators said the Christian

groups could not discriminate based on religious beliefs. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sided with the school. Lawyers for the Alliance Defense Fund maintain such a policy violates students' First Amendment rights. David Cortman, senior counsel for the ADF, said he thought it likely the Supreme Court would take the new case.

VIRGINIA ALLOWS FAITH-BASED ADOPTION GROUPS FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

(WNS)--The Virginia Board of Social Services voted 5-1 on Dec. 14 on a new set of regulations allowing faith-based adoption agencies the right not to place children in households led by same-sex couples. Of the state's 81 private child-placement agencies, 42 are faith-based organizations. Under the new regulations, set to take effect in May, the only characteristics adoption agencies may not take into consideration when placing a child are the prospective parents' race, national origin and ethnicity. The state allows both single and married people to adopt or become foster parents, but not cohabiting couples.

MICHIGAN STUDENT SUES AFTER BEING PUNISHED FOR VIEWS ON SEXUALITY

(WNS)—In mid-December, the Thomas More Law Center filed a lawsuit against Michigan's Howell Public School District and one of its high school teachers on behalf of a Catholic student who was punished for saying homosexuality doesn't align with his religious beliefs. Jay McDowell, an economics teacher at Howell High, told a girl in his class wearing a Confederate belt buckle she had to take it off because its message was offensive to him. Daniel Glowacki, a junior, said that was unfair because McDowell was wearing a shirt and teaching a lesson related to homosexuality that day, which some of the students found objectionable. According to the legal group, McDowell asked Glowacki his views on homosexuality — and when Glowacki expressed his religious viewpoint, McDowell ordered him out of the classroom and threatened to suspend him. He then asked the rest of the class if there was anyone else who was offended by homosexuality, and kicked out another student who raised his hand.

COUNSELING STUDENT DENIED REQUEST TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

(WNS)--Counseling student Jennifer Keeton will not be returning to Augusta State University while she fights against the school's attempt to make her complete a remediation plan designed to change her views on homosexuality. In early December, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denied Keeton's request for a preliminary injunction, which would have forced the school to allow her to complete her studies while the case works its way through the courts. The Alliance Defense Fund, representing Keeton, filed suit against the east Georgia school in July 2010 after administrators put her on

academic probation for acknowledging in private conversations and during class that she disagreed with homosexuality. School administrators claimed Keeton said it would be hard for her to counsel gay clients, a stance they said violated ethical standards for licensed counselors, as put forth by the American Counseling Association.

MINNESOTA CITY MUST ALLOW PEOPLE TO SHARE FAITH

(WNS)--A federal court in Minnesota ruled Dec. 20 that Duluth doesn't have the right to shut down free speech at an event in a public park whenever officials don't like the viewpoint being expressed. Last year, two men were passing out religious literature and sharing the Gospel with people at the annual Bentleyville Tour of Lights. After a police officer ordered them to leave, one event organizer told them that other people "don't want to hear religious crap" and another offered to help the men meet Jesus more quickly. The city backed up the event organizers, but the federal court upheld the First Amendment. Alliance Defense Fund Litigation Staff Counsel Jonathan Scruggs applauded the ruling. "The court made the right decision in suspending the ban," he said, "so that people can share their faith in a nondisruptive manner at this year's event."

WASHINGTON GOVERNOR TO SPONSOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE BILL

(WNS)--On Jan. 4, Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire announced her plans to make the state the seventh to legalize same-sex marriage. Gregoire — a Catholic — said in the 20-minute press conference announcing the legislation she will sponsor that she has "been on my own journey" and that "it has been a battle for me with my religion," but that her beliefs should have no bearing on how she does her job. Same-sex civil unions, which Washington legalized in 2009, are not the same as marriage, she said. Joseph Backholm, executive director of the Family Policy Institute of Washington, said he's fairly optimistic the bill ultimately won't pass; though both chambers of the Legislature are controlled by Democrats, some have voted with Republicans to oppose bills advancing the gay agenda in the past. The state's best interest is served by creating "the greatest probability that children will be raised by their mother and father," he said.

STUDY: A HOME WITH A MOM AND A DAD IMPROVES BOYS' BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOL

(WNS)--An analysis of 20 years' worth of school suspension rates nationwide shows that the greatest influence on boys' behavior at school is not the type of school they attend or teacher they have, but the type of home in which they're being raised. Researchers at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business found that boys being raised in intact homes with both parents had the least behavioral problems and school suspensions, while those being raised by single mothers

had the most. However, this was not found to be the case among girls.

PAGAN MOM CHALLENGES BIBLE GIVEAWAY AT NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL

According to FOX News, Ginger Strivelli, who practices witchcraft, a form of paganism, said she was upset when her 12-year-old son came home from North Windy Ridge Intermediate School of Weaverville, N.C. with a Bible. The Gideons delivered several boxes of Bibles to the school office. Interested students were allowed to stop by and pick them up.

"Schools should not be giving out one religion's materials and not others," Strivelli said. The principal assured her the school would make available religious texts donated by any group. But when Strivelli showed up at the school with pagan spell books, she was turned away. Buncombe County School officials are currently reviewing relevant policies and practices with school board attorneys.

"Many Christians have stood up and said they agree with me, too," Strivelli said. "Because, as much as they may like the Bible, they don't want Jehovah's Witnesses coming in with Watch Tower (magazines) or Catholics coming in and having them pray the Rosary."

MICHIGAN MINISTER OPENS TATTOO PARLOR IN HIS CHURCH

According to the Associated Press a Michigan pastor located in Flint Township has opened a tattoo parlor inside his church saying that he's doing everything he can to reach out to people who don't feel comfortable at a traditional house of worship. The pastor said that his ministry is built on the belief that mainstream religion has become ineffective and irrelevant to most people. To that end, he opened his tattoo parlor in his church. He stated, "We are about doing church in a different way and being relevant to people." The church is located inside a shopping center. According to the pastor about 1,000 people call it their home church with about 500 in attendance in its three weekend services.

NEA, LIBERAL GROUPS RELEASE NATIONAL SEX-ED STANDARDS

(WNS)—Kindergarten through second grade. That's the grade at which the National Education Association (NEA), the Future of Sex Education Initiative and a coalition of sex-ed groups want children to start learning the names of body parts and alternative family structures. The recommendations are outlined in the National Sexuality Education Standards released on Monday to school districts nationwide. Although they are non-binding, having the weight of the NEA behind the recommendations could give them the gravitas needed to quickly — and quietly — be implemented around the country.

SUPREME COURT ISSUES UNANIMOUS DECISION IN

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CHURCH HIRING CASE

(WNS)--In one of the clearest rulings for religious freedom in years, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously decided that courts may not intervene in church hiring decisions, protecting the "ministerial exception" that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission sought to eliminate in *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. EEOC*. "[T]he authority to select and control who will minister to the faithful is the church's alone," Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in the court's opinion. Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, and Elena Kagan wrote separate concurring opinions that said the ministerial exception should be even broader than Roberts allowed in his opinion. "It was a strong rebuke to the extreme position taken by the Obama administration," said Luke Goodrich of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, who served as counsel to the church in the case. "One of the biggest things is it's unanimously decided, which nobody was predicting and is a really big deal. ... It's a great day for religious liberty."

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS EVANGELIST SHOT DEAD IN PAKISTAN

(WNS)-- An evangelist was shot dead in Karachi, Pakistan on Nov. 16 by an unidentified gunman in what his family believes was a radical Muslim group's targeting of a Christian. Zahid Jameel, 25, told *Compass News* that his father, Jameel Saawan, and a helper were opening the doors of their cosmetics shop in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal area of Pakistan's commercial hub of Karachi on Wednesday morning when a young man appeared and shot his father, first in the neck and then in the face. The assassin fled on a motorcycle on which two people were waiting, keeping watch for him, Jameel said. "We firmly believe that my father was killed because of his preaching of the Bible, because there is no other reason," Jameel said.

DECISION STALLED ON IRANIAN PASTOR SENTENCED TO DEATH

(WNS)--A pastor in Iran sentenced to death for refusing to recant his faith may have to wait another year for a ruling on whether the sentence will be upheld, according to sources. Yousef (also spelled Youcef) Nadarkhani, sentenced to death after a court of appeals in Rasht, Iran, found him guilty of leaving Islam in September 2010, has been in prison since October 2009, yet his lawyers said they were told to not expect any movement on his case for another year. The head of Iran's Judiciary, Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani, has reportedly ordered the presiding judge over the trial in Rasht to do nothing for one year. Christian leaders in Iran have called for prayer for their leaders and congregations, as there are fears that

pressures on churches may intensify in the coming days, according to advocacy group Middle East Concern.

NIGERIAN CHRISTIANS FACE ULTIMATUM

(WNS)--A church gathering in northeastern Nigeria turned deadly Jan. 5, as gunmen attacked Deeper Life Church in the country's Gombe State, killing six and wounding several others. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW)—a Christian advocacy group with workers in Nigeria—reported on the raid and said the dead included the pastor's wife. The attack came one day after a Nigerian terrorist group's deadline for Christians expired: A purported spokesman for Boko Haram—an Islamic extremist group responsible for widespread attacks in Nigeria—had demanded on Monday that Christians living in the predominantly Muslim north leave the region by Wednesday. On Wednesday evening, CSW reported that suspected Boko Haram gunmen attacked a Christian compound in the northern Yobe State, killing two. The ultimatum came one week after Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a series of Christmas Day attacks in Nigeria that killed at least 41 people.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Big Creek Baptist Church of Wayne, WV would like to announce their Spring Revival scheduled for Monday, March 19th thru Friday March 23rd.

Speakers are Elders John Fry, Tom Ross, Tom Hysell, Pete Horn and Joe Collins.

For more information please contact Pastor Matthew Stepp at (304) 807-5063(M) or (304) 522-1261(H) or by email at mnbstepp@suddenlink.net.

The Grace Baptist Church of Winston-Salem, NC has called Brother Andy Proctor of Citrus Springs, FL as pastor, and Bro. Proctor has accepted the call and will be coming at the end of this current school year.

The church covets your prayers for them and Bro. Proctor during this time of transition.

The Sovereign Baptist Church of Cortland, Ohio and Elder Chester R. Powell have authorized a mission work in the Sand Point, Idaho area. Brother Richard Hammers will be the overseer. He will answer any questions regarding the mission work and ways one may assist by contacting him at: 6480 Upper Pack River Road, Sand Point, Idaho 83864 or by calling his home phone at (208) 265-5863 or his cell phone at (208) 597-6176.

The Citrus Missionary Baptist Church located at 6690 Turner Camp Road, Inverness, Florida and Pastor Troy

Sheppard would like to announce their upcoming Bible Conference, February 17th thru 19th, 2012.

Service will be at 7:00 p.m. Friday, 10:00 a.m. and 1:45 p.m. Saturday, and at 10:00 a.m. Sunday. Meals will be provided by the church at 5:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday and at Noon on Saturday and Sunday.

For more information please contact Pastor Sheppard at (352) 464-1636 or email him at ourbaptisthome@yahoo.com.

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 Calvary Baptist Church of Piqua, Ohio is in need of a pastor. Any interested party may contact the church at 726 Wilson Avenue, Piqua, OH 45356, or call Terry Allen at (937) 773-9272.

The Amazing Grace Baptist Church of Stockdale, Texas is in need of a pastor. The church believes in preaching and teaching the doctrines of grace and the Lord's church. Any interested brother my contact Bro. Alvin Schuetz at (830) 534-1918 or Bro. Keith Schuetz at (830) 789-2101.

The Liverpool Independent Baptist Church of Liverpool, New York (north of Syracuse) is searching for a sovereign grace pastor. The church believes in the doctrines of grace, the local church, and is pre-trib and pre-mil. Interested brethren should contact Bro. Greg Sigworth at (315) 677-3819.

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

The Bethel Bible Baptist Church, PO Box 85, Mansfield, LA is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elder should call Connie McMellon at 318-872-1647.

The Landmark Baptist Church of Collinsville, IL is in need of a pastor. Any interested Elders may call (618) 288-4236 for more information.

The Windsor Baptist Church at Windsor, IL is searching for a Sovereign Grace pastor. Any one interested may contact Larry Rawlings at (217) 665-3643, or cell (217) 620-4675, or by mail at PO Box 194, Bethany, IL 61914.

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 12-1-2011 to 12-31-2011

Beginning Balance\$2,855.42

RECEIPTS:
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY100.00
.....425.00
TOTAL3,280.42

EXPENDITURES:
Radio Time (US) 600.00
Radio Time (Philippines) 1,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES\$1,600.00
..... \$1,680.42
Interest +.05
..... 1,680.47
Less Corbin, KY des.-603.72
ENDING BALANCE\$1,076.75

CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT

Beginning Balance\$763.72
RECEIPTS:
TOTAL763.72
EXPENDITURES:
WCTT160.00
ENDING BALANCE\$603.72



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 12-1-2011 to 12-31-2011

Beginning Balance\$1,777.87

RECEIPTS:
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS200.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX 50.00
Bible Believer's B.C., Naples, ID 50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV314.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY150.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL 25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR 25.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK 35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV 100.00
L. H. Farrell, Des Allemands, LA 80.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC 50.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN 20.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN 50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR 50.00
South Park M.B.C., Seattle, WA 100.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS 50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX 30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Courtland, OH 75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA 25.00
Subscriptions 20.00
Dividing checks150.00
Anonymous \$1,211.00
Sub Total\$3,519.45
TOTAL\$5,297.32

EXPENDITURES:
Printing 581.00
Postage 631.27
Wages 2,300.00
FICA 175.96
Dividing checks 150.00
Supplies122.25
Postmaster (PO Box rent) 76.00
Total Expenditures \$4,036.48
..... 1,260.84
Bank Charge 13.00
ENDING BALANCE \$1,247.84

What Baptists Baptize For Is It To Wash Away Sins?

By Samuel Howard Ford
(1819 - 1905)

Mercy is the great need of fallen man. Conscious guilt forces from him, at times at least, the cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." In every age and country, and in every state of civilization: in the institution of religious rites, of priesthods, of sacrifices, of self-tortures---from the African savage bowing to his "mumbo-jumbo," to Newton on the "lone mountain of thought" adoring the Eternal Maker, man's felt want and uttered prayer is "MERCY!" "O, Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come"---come to plead. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions: wash me thoroughly from my iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin."

The greatest joy of the soul, as it pauses between two eternities; as it looks over the past darkened by sin, and anticipates the eternal state with its final awards, is the consciousness expressed by Paul: "I obtained mercy."

Mercy and pardon; remission of sins, deliverance from wrath, and peace with God. It is the blessed boon which blots out the past, and brightens the future.

For this Christ died: "My blood of the New Testament shed for many for the remission of sins." For this He rose: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that hath risen again." "He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification." For this is He exalted: "A prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." For this he commanded His apostles to preach: "Be it known unto you, brethren, that through this man is preached unto you remission of sins." "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations."

That commission is given by the glorified Lord to the adoring Saul of Tarsus, is as simple in its language and meaning as it is sublime in its circumstances. Jesus himself, from the shining heavens, addressed the "apprehended" and changed man.

"And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee. Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance

among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:15,16,17,18).

Here is the whole system of the Gospel, languaged by the ascended Lord, in words none need mistake.

First, The preached Gospel by human lips. "I have appeared unto thee to make thee a minister, and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and those things in the which I will appear unto thee." He had seen the King glorified; he had seen the Kingdom of God in its crowned Monarch. "Except a man be born again (or from above), he cannot see the Kingdom of God," said this same Jesus. Saul had now seen the King, and of course had seen that Kingdom, and was therefore born from above. He acknowledged Christ as Lord. He surrendered his soul to Him. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He was told by that acknowledged Lord that he was now made a minister and a witness. He was now fully commissioned. "Unto whom I now send thee to open their eyes," to preach the Kingdom. Was he not now born from above? Was the chosen and approved ambassador an enemy, a child of wrath, an unpardoned, unreconciled man?

Jesus appeared unto him to appoint him then and there not a priest to sacrifice; but a minister and a witness to preach the Gospel. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It has therefore, "pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

"I send thee." Not Peter---as though he was pope or bishop. Jesus alone was the head of His church. "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12). His commission was from Christ; his message was from Christ; his theme was Christ. "I received from the Lord Jesus Christ what also I delivered unto you," is the testimony of this "chosen vessel."

And nobly did he fulfill his mission. "Neither count I my life dear unto me that I may finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify of the Gospel of the grace of God."

And so it is put beyond all question that he dates his new life, his salvation and his ministry and apostleship from that hour; then it was that he was pardoned, accepted and made a chosen vessel. "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. 1:15-16).

Immediately. "I conferred not with flesh and blood," says the apostle. Christ's commission dates from that very hour; Paul's ministry dates from that very instant. His soul was then consecrated; his unswerving purpose was then and there fixed. About this he conferred with no mortal---not with Ananias, or even himself. It was instantaneous as the burst of splendor out of Heaven. It was fixed as the

lode-star. It was as independent of human means, or ordinances, as is the sunrise. "I conferred NOT with flesh and blood."

Whendid Paul's ministry and apostleship begin? He tells us with emphasis: "But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

"He revealed His Son in me." When? It was when "He called me," says Paul, "by His grace." When was this? Paul answers: "Called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me." Where was this? On his way to Damascus when Christ appeared to him. What was this call and this revelation for? To preach. Is there a possibility for a reasonable doubt that Paul's ministry commenced then?

Secondly, Conviction. "To open their eyes," to enlighten their understanding. This is the work of the Gospel ministry. To show to those whom the god of this world hath blinded. "that neither is there salvation in any other save Jesus Christ;" "for there is none other name given under heaven or among men whereby we must be saved."

Thirdly, Conversion. "To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." "The minister and witness" is God's instrument in converting men from the error of their ways; he, in this sense, converts or turns them from darkness to light.

Fourthly, Remission. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins:" gracious, Heaven-bestowed pardon, to be followed finally by "an inheritance among them that are sanctified."

How clearly the Redeemer's language teaches that Paul is to open their eyes, instrumentally, and is to turn them from darkness to light, instrumentally! But in the matter of forgiveness he has no part: Christ said, "I send thee to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light." Here Paul's agency ceases.

"That they may receive forgiveness of sins." How? Not by pretentious priestly absolution; not even by apostolic agency or mediumship; "not by works of righteousness which we have done;" not through or by baptism; not by the agency of any being, angel or man, in Heaven or earth---"that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in men" [Revised Version].

Paul was a chosen example of a pardoned soul, of how remission of sins is obtained.

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all his long-suffering, for an ensample of them who should thereafter believe on Him unto eternal life" (I Tim. 1:16). Christ told Him it was by faith that remission of sins was received. Paul himself received remission by faith. He therefore presented himself (according to

Christ's purpose) as an ensample, a pattern of how remission is received.

It is true as the Gospel that Saul's sins were remitted when he believed, that he obtained mercy when he was commissioned a minister and a witness---a minister to proclaim remission by faith, a witness of Christ's resurrection and of remission by faith as felt in his own person. It is true as the Gospel that he obtained mercy before he saw Ananias---before he was baptized. It was because of this he could say, "I thank God that I baptized none of you (at Corinth) except Crispus and Gaius, for Christ sent me NOT TO BAPTIZE, but to preach the Gospel."

Forgiveness of sins is by faith. It is therefore by nothing else. Jesus Christ Himself so declared it: "that they may receive remission of sins by faith that is in me." Paul so declared it: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful (a believer), appointing me to His service, though a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious; howbeit I obtained mercy" (I Tim. 1:12). He found mercy, he says, when he was appointed to Christ's service. When was that? "Delivering thee from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee" (I Tim. 26:17). Here the Apostle says he obtained mercy when he was put into the ministry, or appointed to His service. He tells us that this occurred when Jesus said "Rise, stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee to make thee a minister and a witness." To say he was not pardoned then and there, that he did not receive remission or obtain mercy then and there, is not so much to mistake as it is to contradict both Paul and Jesus Christ.

"In His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

This is in accordance with the final and glorious announcement of the risen Lord to Saul---"Remission of sins by faith in me."

Peter, as we shall see as we proceed, would not, could not, did not contradict the clear unfigurative words of his ascended Lord. He could not, would not, did not contradict his own solemn testimony--given before Gentiles, before Cornelius and those who with him were baptized--"that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins."

Shall receive remission of sins! Is there any uncertainty, any doubt, any figure of speech, any contingency about this language? It is an eternal, unchangeable truth: every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins. Did Peter on the day of Pentecost deny or undermine, or fling a doubt over it? Is any figurative language, any peculiarly Jewish phraseology, any obscurity as to the meaning of the word translated "unto" or "into" or "for" remission, to be quoted for the purpose of making Peter contradict himself and deny

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What Baptists

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the unmistakable words of the Lord Jesus **“that they may receive remission of sins by faith”**? But of this more hereafter.

Again, Ananias, in telling Saul to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins--literally wash them away himself and in water,--could have meant nothing contrary to the words of Jesus, the teaching of **“all the prophets”** and the certainty felt by Saul (to which he so often referred in after-life) that he had obtained mercy and was sent to proclaim remission (himself an ensample of it) by faith in Christ Jesus.

WHAT WAS PAUL BAPTIZED FOR?

That Saul's sins were remitted, and he was (in Jewish phrase) cleansed when he believed, can only be assailed by the confessedly figurative language of Ananias. What then does this figurative language mean? I will first let the leader of the “current reformation” answer.

“The blood of Christ really washes us who believe from all our sins. Behold the goodness of God in giving us a formal proof and token of it by ordaining a baptism expressly for the remission of sins. The water of baptism, then, formally washes away our sins. Paul's sins were really pardoned when he believed. Yet he had no solemn pledge of the fact [But God gave him that pledge by revealing His Son in him, and making him a minister and a witness], no formal purgation of his sins until he washes them away in the waters of baptism” (“Debate with Macalla,” p. 134).

Formally washed away must, of course, mean that baptism is the form or picture of the real washing away of sin. Paul speaks of the **“form of doctrine whereunto ye were delivered”** (Romans 6:17, Revised Version). It is the blood of Christ that washes away. **“The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin”** **“Him who hath washed us from our sins in His own blood.”** Baptism pictures this. It is the form of this Paul was baptized to picture, that “fountain filled with blood,” to show that

*“Sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.”*

This is the evident meaning of **“Arise and wash thy sins.”** It is true the words quoted from Mr. Campbell were not always adhered to. He said elsewhere, “Now the washing away of his sins was certainly to be accomplished through the water of baptism according to the highest authority in the universe” (“Debate with Rice,” p. 439). But the highest authority had declared **“that they may receive remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified BY FAITH.”** Then washing away of sins was not accomplished really by or through water.”

There are three distinct accounts of Paul's conversion. His baptism is mentioned first in Acts 9:19. But these words of Ananias are not recorded. But if they formed the most essential part of the whole

transaction--the forgiveness, or washing away of his sins--would they have been omitted? In the third recital Paul omits all reference to his baptism, but dwells upon, or gives prominence to Christ's words, **“forgiveness of sins through faith that is in me.”** In the other recital--before the **“Chief Priests and all their council”** [and here only] Paul gives the words of Ananias, **“Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins.”** Is there good reason for the omission in the other accounts and the introduction here? We answer, yes.

He was addressing Jews--the priests and their council. The peculiar phraseology of Ananias would lead to no misunderstanding with them. It was in accordance with the “Hebrew idiom” and general custom. We read (Leviticus 14:3), **“Behold if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper.”** When it was found on satisfactory examination that the man was clean of the leprosy, it says, verse 11, **“And the priest that MAKETH HIM CLEAN.”** And again: **“Him that is to be cleansed before the Lord.”** This formal cleansing was only to be done when it was certain that the man was clean. Such language was readily understood by the Jews. And so, when Jesus healed the leper, just as when He pardoned Saul of Tarsus, He said unto him, **“Show thyself to the priest and offer FORTHY CLEANSING those things Moses hath commanded for a testimony.”**

But if Saul's sins were really pardoned, why be baptized to wash them away? If the leper was really cleansed, why offer for his cleansing? If the leprosy was cleansed, how could the priest make him clean? The council before which Paul repeated these words of Ananias would ask no such questions. It was the formal, the symbolic, the pictured cleansing which had been already graciously bestowed by the Lord Jesus.

“The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sins.” **“He hath washed us from our sins in His own blood.”** **“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”** Thus speaks the Holy Spirit through this same Paul in regard to washing the soul from sins, or purging the conscience from

dead words. It was written in regard to remission: **“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”** What ordinance, what symbol would most fully and sensibly picture this cleansing, this washing of the soul from sin? **“Buried with Christ in Baptism.”** **“Planted together in the likeness of His death”** ---to picture, to declare this forgiveness of sin, this cleansing of the soul by faith in the blood of Christ, is what baptism is for.

Again let Mr. Campbell speak:

“Baptism into Christ, is the effect of faith. It is a ‘sensible’ introduction into this spiritual state, and ‘outwardly’ unites us with the public profession; but when properly understood, spiritually, sometimes calls mystically, or ‘under the symbol’ inducts into an intimate, near and holy union with the Saviour of the world by His spirit. The outward act then is but the symbol of the transaction, inward and spiritual, by which our souls are bathed in that ocean of love which purifies our persons and makes them one with the Lord” (Debate with Rice, p. 493).

I have emphasized the words outwardly, and under the symbol. It is true that all this may be interpreted differently. But its plain English is that Baptism is a SENSIBLE introduction--to be seen or known to the senses; that it “outwardly unites” him who has been already united to Christ by faith; that under a symbol, or symbolically--that is, as a representation--it inducts into a union with Christ him who has already been inducted by faith; “that the outward act is therefore but the symbol [the acted picture or representation] of the transition inward and spiritual” by which our souls are cleansed, or as he afterwards expressed it:

“I believe that when a person apprehends the Gospel and embraces the Messiah in his soul, he has in anticipation received the blessing [pardon]. His mind finds peace in the Lord. He rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He anticipates that end of faith, --his ‘actual’ emancipation from sin. In his ‘heart’ he dies to sin, and by his burial and resurrection with the Lord he thus ‘formally’ receives what was ‘first received by faith’ in anticipation” (Debate with Rice, p. 522).

However Mr. Campbell may have

contradicted elsewhere this clear statement, as is alleged, it stands as his deliberate, carefully-worded belief as to what Paul was baptized for. I have emphasized his words. The actual emancipation from sin, or the remission of sin is by faith, and in baptism he “formally receives what was received by faith,” or, in other words, baptism is the form of the fact--the form, type, pattern or picture of the doctrine. Remission is actually, by faith; formally, or the form of it, is baptism.

It is for this Paul was baptized. It was to show that he received, according to the words of the glorified Jesus, **“remission of sins by faith in me.”** In the crystal stream that flowed from Lebanon through the ancient city of Damascus, (type of the blood of Jesus which He shed for the remission of sins, and which still flows in its cleansing fullness and power from the mountain of His holiness,) Saul was baptized as a witness, as a testimony, as a declaration, as a symbol, as a living portraiture of the remission of sins through faith in the blood of Christ.

This is what Paul was baptized for. This is what Baptists baptize for. This is what baptism is for. And he who quotes the words of Ananias in their literal sense, when he must and does admit that they are figurative---quotes them to prove that sins may be washed away by the waters of baptism, and that the person complying washes away his own sins, for such is the literal sense of the words, ---he who does this contradicts Christ the Lord, and perverts the whole Gospel of the Son of God.

Oh, how much Paul in his epistles speaks of baptism! How much he makes of it! Its symbolism is shown in his writings as it is nowhere else. How frequently he uses it as an illustration and symbol of deliverance from law and death. And yet he never mentions his baptism when relating his conversion and the remission of his sins when writing to Timothy. He did not allude to it when relating his conversion before Agrippa. He makes no allusion to it when proving his commission and apostleship and ministry. He even thanks God that he baptized so few at Corinth, saying: **“Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel.”** All this is impossible if pardon of sins, if the washing away of sins be conditioned in any way that is real, upon baptism or any outward act.

And so it is certain that when Peter on the day of Pentecost said, **“Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins”** (Revised Version), he did not contradict the language of his risen Lord--that they may receive remission of sins by faith in me; nor his own universal statement: **“Whosoever believeth in Him SHALL RECEIVE REMISSION OF SINS.”**

(*What Baptists Baptize For*, pp. 56-67, 1890 edition).

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