

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

A Day in the Life of Christ

By Eldon Joslin
of Birmingham, AL

In Matthew 14:22-23, we find a group of events that happened during the life of Christ. These hold a most amazing number of keys that would guide us as we follow in His steps. I would like to point out about five for your consideration in this article. As we come to this story in the Scriptures, we notice that Christ has finished teaching the multitude and fed this great group of people that the Bible says included five-thousand men, as well as women and children. This was not a "spiritual feeding" where they saw the food and ate of it in their minds or were blessed by the fact that the boy was willing to share of his lunch. But, five barely leaves and the two small fishes were "literally" multiplied until all ate and were filled. There were twelve basket fulls left over for any doubting Thomas that needed to be convinced.

After this we come to the first point. Christ sends His disciples on a boat to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. During



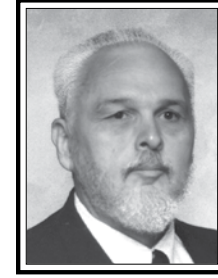
Christ's ministry. He often sent His disciples on ahead before He came to a place. Time after time this caused them to see the needs of the people, and yet they found themselves so helpless to meet these needs. We are also in this position, without

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Do You Feel at Home?

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma

From outward observation it must be said that most professing Christians feel quite at home in this world. Most Baptists in our day are included in that group. Professing Christians on the whole take part in the same activities as the world. They are given over to sports of all kinds, seeking after whatever pleasure tickles their fancy. They live for the



acquisition of wealth to heap upon themselves. Their participation in worldly celebrations and pagan holidays, etc. is the norm. In short, most professing Christians participate in the same things as those who do not profess faith in Christ. They seem to do so with the same great gusto as those who reject Christ and God. Their pleasure in worldly activities is demonstrated by their zeal for these kinds of things. They seem to feel quite at home in the godless society in which they dwell. We are mindful of I John 2:15-17 where it is written, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God

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How A Lost Sheep Got Home

By Roy Mitchell
(1928 - 2013)

"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he



hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine

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A man of silence is a man of sense.

Even if he has no other sense he acts sensibly when he keeps quiet.

He has at least sense enough to conceal his want of it.

"Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding" (Proverbs 17:28).

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

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

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A Day in the Life

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Christ, we are helpless to either help ourselves or the people that we try to minister to. Except Christ come and move with His power amongst us, there will be nothing accomplished during our ministry. How important the work of our Blessed Savior.

Our second point carries us up the mountain with Christ to be alone with God His Father. If Christ needed these times to be alone to pray and commune with His Father, how much greater our need must be. It is very important that we take time from our busy schedule to have a one on one period with our Father, praying and communing that we might draw close to our Savior's feet, and being prepared to face the problems we face from day to day.

Point number three brings us back to the disciples who are totally in the will of God doing exactly what He told them to. We find them in a terrible storm. This should teach us that after one is saved we cannot expect to be carried through the skies on flowery beds of ease. We, like the disciples, will also find ourselves in times of hardship and suffering that we may also be glorified together. The idea

that when one is saved he will then have financial success, never get sick, or ever have any great difficulties until we find ourselves in glory sounds good but is not at all Scriptural; Paul suffered; as you continue to name the disciples, you will notice that one by one they suffered greatly to be a follower of Christ. We are not better than our forefathers. We will also have to suffer and be tried that we might be better servants of Christ and that we might be better prepared to go to be with the One who loved us most. So let us rejoice and thank the Lord that He has counted us worthy to suffer for His sake.

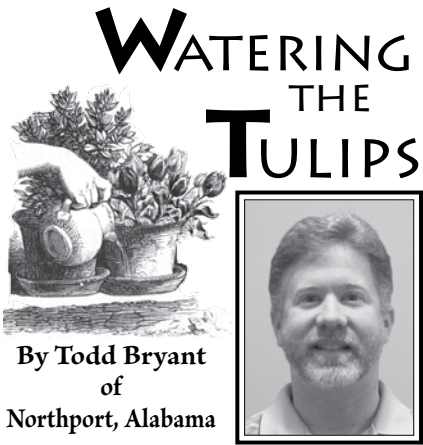
We will now move to the fourth point, it comes to us. Look out into the storm, what do you see? Yes, this is one of the greatest miracles in Christ's ministry. As we see Christ coming back to His disciples walking on the water, we realize that the great Creator has total power over His creation. This shows us that Christ came to the aid of His troubled disciples. He did not leave them to suffer above and beyond what they could endure. He came, showing His power over the elements and that He could protect them over any power in this world. I trust you have seen His protective hand save you from a great tragedy in this life. When you have, as I have, it will cause you to bow to His Lordship and then go as a willing servant striving to please Him. Peter is so overwhelmed by Christ and His power that he believes Christ and walks on the water following the example of Christ. We also can do great things when we believe God and trust Him for unusual power. Then we notice that Peter fails

to keep his trust in Christ, he looks at the waves, and hears the wind, and begins to sink. Many criticize Peter for this, and it is true that Peter looked at the world and took his eyes off Christ and sank. Let us not be too critical as we have not walked on water as far as Peter. One thing that we can be most thankful for is that Christ loved Peter, and He did not let him sink, but took him by the hand and led him back into the boat. This is another proof that salvation is for eternity; and once you are saved, you cannot be lost. Paul said it well in Romans 8, nothing can separate the Christian from the love of God. I do not know about you, but this makes me most thankful for a Savior that really saves.

My last point brings us back into the boat where we find Christ and His disciples. The sea has now become calm as Christ again has displayed His power over the creation and stopped the winds with a word. This gives us the assurance that He will come, and abide with us, and provide all that is needed as we face the trials and storms that we must meet in this life.

I close this article by saying, there are many that try to explain away the miracles of Christ. This is very foolish, for if one explains away the miracles of Christ, one has a Savior that has no power. If He has no power to perform these miracles, He has no deity and He is not capable of being our Savior. Let us believe the miracles of Christ and continue to trust Him to save. Continue to remember us when you pray. (*Scripture Notes*, February, 1984).





By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama

Alien Citizens

“Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex. 22:21).

Clearly, the child of God has been freed from the Mosaic Law (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:18). Still yet, the Old Testament is the inspired Word of God and good for God's children to study. Even in the Law, we find principles that are beneficial to us. We certainly get a glimpse into the character of God in the commands that He gave Israel through Moses. Our text verse is certainly one of those that needs to be considered from that perspective.

Christians today seem more driven to be involved in politics than they are the study of the Bible. Many speak of it being our “duty” as a follower of Christ. Interestingly, we never once see Jesus or the early churches involved in any way in the political process. And, for that matter, we continually see them stand before those in authority. That having been said, Christians are entrenched in the political process today and are seemingly unwilling to give it up no matter the lack of Scriptural precedence. One of the biggest problems with this position is that politics nearly always brings out the worst in

people. From everything we see on social media today, Christians are not exempt from this. Sadly, many of the Lord's own are constantly spewing political venom, as it were, towards their opponents.

The verse before us today focuses on a specific group that many today seem to be opposed to – foreigners. In the spirit of conservatism and law, many true believers would set aside the pattern we see here and oppose immigration of any kind into our country. We often hear slang terms and hateful words aimed at those that would come to America for a better lifestyle for their family. In all honesty, it matters not whether these aliens are legal or illegal. It matters not whether they are honest and hardworking. All that matters is that they are from another place and they need to “go back where they came from.”

God reminded Israel that they, too, were once **“strangers in the land of Egypt.”** Perhaps we would do well today to remember that America is a country of immigrants. Most of the people reading His article can trace their family tree across the ocean to another continent. Few even acknowledge that the Native American was driven off his land by our ancestors. Virtually all of us are immigrants if we are honest. Our forefathers were coming here for a better life for their family just as many are still doing today.

Perhaps a greater reason not to mistreat a stranger is that we realize **“our citizenship is in Heaven”** (Phil. 3:20). From the spiritual standpoint, Christians are not citizens anywhere on this earth. We are hated outcasts. Opponents have tried to eradicate us many times. Even today, many

would “send us packing” if they had a way to do it. How is it that we do not see the correlation when we mistreat those that would come here seeking a better opportunity for their families?

Child of God, let us not mistreat those from other lands. Let us apply the principles that God gave Israel in the Law. Let us remember that we are strangers here on Earth. If nothing else, let us take the opportunity to share the message of Christ dying for sinners with them. This may be our biggest failure.



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abideth for ever.” Probably the insertion of those verses at this point in this article is enough to cause some folk to stop reading. Perhaps that is an indication of their love for the world and their distaste for what God says in those three verses.

Old time preachers used to preach against worldliness. They used to preach against settling down in this present evil world. Baptists used to be a separate people. There was a time long past when Baptists stood against worldliness, but that was when they followed the Bible. Today, even among the few who claim to believe and follow the Bible, little difference can be seen between the way they live and the things they do as contrasted with the worldlings among whom they dwell. In those almost-forgotten historic days Baptists dressed modestly, lived clean lives, and pursued conformity to the teachings of the Bible. Their churches tried to be pure. Unrepentant erring members were excluded from the church

fellowship. Today most Baptists knowingly pursue conformity to the world. To them it is a horrible thing to be considered different from the world. They are like boys on a cliff or other precipice. They delight in walking as near the edge as possible. Their questions about sins go like this: can I do this and still be regarded as a Christian? And so they dress immodestly just like most people do in their church and participate in worldly activities right along with their lost friends and neighbors. Their music and methods, even in their religion, is that of the world. They have lost the idea of a **“solemn assembly”** as commanded by God to His people Israel. Their assemblies are more like a jamboree or a rock concert than they are a time of solemn contemplation of the glory of Jehovah. Preachers are more like stand-up comedians who use buzz words and catch phrases to entertain and make their hearers feel good. Applause praises religious performers instead of praise from the heart honoring the Christ of God. Most Baptists are not even aware that true worship of God involves heart-adoration of Him in a solemn and truly joyful manner. They do not understand that true worship springs from a regenerate heart in response to God's enlightening that heart to Divine Truth. They have no spiritual ears with which to hear and so they cannot hear and cannot respond in joyful, solemn adoration and praise. They have never been thrilled by hearing! They have substituted the worldly thrill and excitement of flesh-tickling music suited to the tastes of their fellows rather than seeking worship that is pleasing to God. “Feel-

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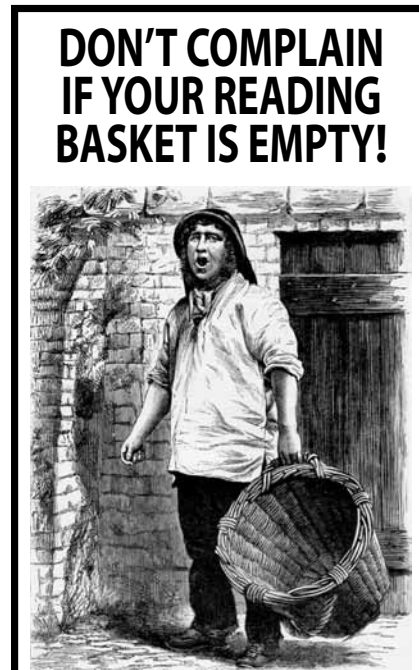
Do You Feel at

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good religion” is the norm. Foot patting and hand clapping has been substituted because of their inability to experience heartfelt praise.

And so it is the question arises posed in our title: Do You Feel At Home? The Bible tells us that we ought not to be at home or feel at home in this world. Consider these words: **“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul”** (I Pet. 2:11). We are to consider ourselves **“strangers and pilgrims:”** literally foreigners and temporary residents in a country not our own. James Strong says of the word “strangers” that the Greek means “in the NT, a stranger, a foreigner, one who lives in a place without the right of citizenship.” From the Bible it seems that God’s people have no rights in this world except the expectation to receive verbal and physical persecution for Jesus’ sake. Baptists often boast that our citizenship is in heaven. If that is so, Baptists have for the most part abandoned the practices and customs of that heavenly place as observed by the old Baptists. They have adopted the behavior, culture, and habits of their temporary residence to the point that they are not a visible minority. They are mainstream! Instead of being visitors, they have become immigrants and applied for citizenship in this world. They, like the ancient nation of Israel, have lost their pilgrim nature. They are settled down comfortably, feeling quite at home in this world. No longer being marked out as different, they have escaped persecution! How worldly wise they are!

In Jeremiah 48:11 the prophet says about Israel’s neighbor, **“Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.”** This is an allusion to wine making as practiced among the Jews. It has nothing to do with preserving grape juice as grape juice, by the way. Moab was condemned as being polluted and having **“settled on his lees.”** The word lees means the sediment or dregs which settles to the bottom of wine during the fermentation process. Jeremiah could use this illustration because the Jews round about him understood the process of wine making. Wine, in order to be purified of these dregs or lees and its taste and



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clarity preserved was **“emptied from vessel to vessel.”** That is, the wine would from time to time be carefully poured into another container in such a way as to leave the dregs behind. The sediment was thus separated from the beverage. This act of being poured from one vessel to another pictures what God had done to His people Israel in captivity. What the prophet is saying is that God had not dealt with Moab as He had with Israel. This is in line with what God said to Israel in Amos 3:2: **“You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”** Those whom God knows in this special sense He deals with in correction and chastening in order to bring their behavior into line with His Word. God does not want worldlings! The Book of Hebrews has it thus: **“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth”** (Heb. 12:6). Christ explained to the lukewarm congregation of the Laodiceans what was happening to them. He was on the outside of that assembly because of their nauseating world-like-ness. By the way, worldliness is “world-like-ness.” He told them: **“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent”** (Rev. 3:19). God sent Israel into captivity in order to purge them of idolatry. He did this because He loved them and had chosen them for His own national people. The New Testament teaches that He does the same thing to His people today both as individuals and as His congregations. It is not to be wondered at, then, that we know almost nothing by experience today of true revival. The life-changing presence of God in our meetings is seldom found. It

seems clear that God has treated us as He did His Jewish children. How did He treat Israel when they despised His provision for them? What did He do when they hated the manna He provided? They wanted flesh to eat instead of what God ordained for them. The Psalmist wrote about this sin and what God did to them. It is written: **“But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul”** (Ps. 106:14-15). Can it be that God’s people today have so longed after the pleasures and flesh-teasing activities of the world that God has “blessed” them with those things, but sent leanness to their souls? Like a little boy who loves the smell of the vanilla extract when someone is baking. He thinks since it smells so good, it must taste wonderfully. He begs and begs for a taste. He is told that he will not like to taste the vanilla. Finally the adult gives him a taste. The adult was right! A little vanilla was needful for the baking, but too much is awful. That may be a poor illustration, but has God given today’s American Christians the desires of their hearts and at the same time withdrawn Himself in some measure so that their souls are undernourished and downright skinny? Are we settled upon our lees? Polluted with worldliness? With natural things? With the desires of our wicked hearts?

Or is your heart sick at the sins around you? Do you see that righteousness – that unpopular word and idea – has become a thing of the past as far as our society is concerned? Are you heartsick at the compromising, sin-harboring religious groups

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CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

Encouragement and thoughts from a prisoner to other prisoners and readers.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried" (Rev. 2:10).



T. U. L. I. P.

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader. I pray this finds you in the best of circumstances, not as the world determines "the best," but as our Lord determines them. Did He give you one more day to bask in His grace and tell somebody else about it? Has He comforted you when you have been down? Has His Word filled your heart with joy? If the answer to any of the above is, YES!, then you are in the very best of circumstances indeed.

This month I am continuing my series on The Doctrines of Grace. We are at the "L," which stands for Limited Atonement, or as some call it, Particular Redemption because it is for a particular group of people---The Elect.

The doctrine of Limited Atonement tells us that Jesus Christ died only for the elect of God, and by His death redeemed all for whom He died.

"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:38-39).

As we learned last month, dear reader, the great I AM chose, elected, a certain number out of humanity by His sovereign choice to be saved and reconciled to Himself. Now, in the above Scripture our Lord is telling us that all of whom the Father elected, . . . all which he (God) hath given me

(The Lord). . . He will not lose any. Who else but the elect would the Father give to the Son?

"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2).

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine" (John 17:9).

From these Scriptures we can see that God the Father gave the elect to the Son, but for what purpose? Why, to atone for their sins, of course. So the purpose of the atonement was for the Son to redeem the elect for the Father. He did not redeem the whole human race because the Father did not give Him the whole human race.

Christ did not die for the sins of the "world" as some preach, for if He had then all would be saved and we know all are not saved, so this cannot be true.

Now let us look at the accomplishment of the atonement.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Pet. 2:24).

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28).

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:8-9).

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:33-34).

So we can see that the accomplishment of the atonement was for Christ to pay our sin debt, the sin debt of the elect. Jesus Christ **"appeared** (came into the world) **to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"** (Heb. 9:26).

I know, dear reader, that there are a few verses of Scripture that seem to say Jesus died for the "whole world," but we know some people are not saved and die in their sins and therefore have to answer for their sins on Judgment Day. If the atoning blood of our dear Lord paid the price for their sins too, then judging them for their sins would be unjust---something we know that our God cannot be, for He is **"a just God and a Saviour"** (Isa. 45:21).

Until next time, dear reader, let us **"joy in the God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement"** (Rom. 5:11).



Do You Feel at

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that claim to be churches – that claim to be followers of the Lamb? And do you abhor yourself? Do you **"hunger and thirst after righteousness"** (Matt. 5:6)? Or do you feel at home in this world? You must be one or the other. Are you "sick of love," i.e. lovesick for your Heavenly Bridegroom as was the Shulamite bride in Song of Solomon 5:8? Or are you in love with the things of this world: those

empty customs of the people and pleasures of sin which last only for a season (see Jeremiah 10:3; Hebrews 11:25). Can it be said of you that you are not only a citizen of another country, but that you are in love with the Heavenly Bridegroom who resides there? Peter wrote of Christ saying, **"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"** (I Pet. 1:8). The context indicates that the people to whom he wrote were in the midst of grievous trials. Their difficulties pressed sorely upon them. Yet, because of their love for Christ they were rejoicing with Heavenly and Heaven-sent indescribable joy! They loved the One they had never seen! Such love as this can only be found in a regenerated heart. Such love-sickness and longing after righteousness and the King of Righteousness Himself – our Melchizedek – cannot be produced either by or in a spiritually dead person. Let the Arminian preach of the need for loving God by natural ability. He thinks he can produce such love out of his own wicked heart. He knows nothing of the sovereign work of regeneration – of the Holy Spirit's work in the inner man. Paul wrote, **"..the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"** (Rom. 5:5). The love of a true child of God for Christ, for righteousness, for truth and for the glory of God is produced by God Himself!

And so it is we close with a warning and an exhortation. If you feel at home in this world then you are of this world and your citizenship is here, not in Heaven. If you are satisfied with

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the toys and treasures sought after and hoarded by the unsaved masses, you are one of them. You need regeneration. You need to be born again. Regardless of your baptism, your church membership, your false profession or your good works: these things count for nothing apart from a new birth – a heavenly birth of the Holy Spirit. If you are pleased with yourself and the world you have been deceived by your own wicked heart or by someone preaching a false gospel of free will. Cast yourself upon the Lord! **“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates”** (II Cor. 13:5)?



depending on the setting. One measures, one makes a difference.

Are you a thermostat or a thermometer? A lot of Christians are nothing more than a thermometer. They take on the temperature of their environment. At church, they are holy, kind, patient and considerate. Away from the church crowd, they are rude, crude, impatient and act like their worldly environment. They do nothing more than reflect and emulate their environment.

Thermostat Christians make a change in the temperature of their environment. When backbiting begins, they refrain and instead use edifying words. When confronted in anger, they answer softly and not in wrath for **“The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God,”** according to Brother James. They are not affected by the cold or the heat. They walk to the beat of the Holy Spirit, since they are filled with Him and they make a difference in their environment.

When Peter stood by the fire warming himself, as Jesus was being tried illegally, he took on the climate of the world. When confronted with his identity and association with Jesus, he lied, then swore. Peter reflected the temperature of the world. He was a thermometer.

When Demas forsook Paul and loved this present world, he was a thermometer and of no use to Paul or God. The Macedonian believers, however, became a thermostat and made a difference and along with Paul, became **“ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia”** (I Thess. 1:7) and they also became a thermometer as they took on the climate of Paul and God, **“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord...”** (I Thess. 1:6).

Three well known thermostats in the Bible were the Hebrews in Daniel who would not bow to the king. When everyone else was doing it, they absolutely refused to bow to a man made image. They were so locked in to God that they vowed to not bow whether God preserved them or not. The issue for them was not deliverance, but integrity.

Oh God give us some thermostat Christians who will stop reflecting the temperature of this world and its filth, and who are more concerned about pleasing the Holy God of the universe, as they set the temperature of Godliness in their family, church, work place and community.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



The Hands of the Mighty God of Jacob

In Genesis 49:24 it is written: **“But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:).”**

In this text the strength of Joseph is said to come from **“the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.”** The God who gave strength to Jacob against his enemies was with Jacob’s son, Joseph. His grace was sufficient to make Joseph’s weakness perfect. The Almighty would support Joseph in temptation and troubles as he had done in the case of his father Jacob. Here we learn that the spring and fountain of all physical and spiritual strength is the mighty God of Jacob.

The Bible discloses that God is an immaterial substance, invisible, uncompounded, and indestructible. He is not dependent upon matter. He is a pure Spirit. Nevertheless, my text ascribes the possession of hands to God. But such language is anthropomorphic or symbolic.

Hands in my text signifies God’s power and the exertion of it. With this thought in mind, let us consider the many things performed by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.

HAND IN CREATION

The unfailing hand of the mighty God of Jacob arched the world with its ceiling of blue: **“Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy HANDS*”** (Ps. 102:25). The writer of the Book of Hebrews applies these words to Christ in chapter 1, verses 10-12. Hence this Psalm means that the eternal Word made the world and all that therein exists. John wrote of Christ: **“All things were made by Him: and without him was not any thing made that was made”** (John 1:3).

The stars, the planets, the comets, the meteors, the sun, and the moon are His handiwork. **“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou**

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A Dose of Reality

“Common Sense
Comments”

by

Joseph Harris
of Laurel, Mississippi

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Are You A Thermostat or A Thermometer?

In almost every modern home, there is a little box on a wall called a thermostat. It controls the climate in the house. Also contained in that box is a thermometer, which measures the temperature inside the house. The thermostat responds to the temperature of the thermometer, based on its setting and will turn the heating/cooling unit on or off

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hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him” (Ps. 8:3-4)? He made these with great precision, like a fine piece of work which the artist makes with his fingers. His hand and His unassisted arm conducts these heavenly bodies and sustains them (Isa. 40:26). Truly, **“the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork”** (Ps. 19:1).

God’s mighty hand made the earth and man. The Lord spoke by the pen of Isaiah: **“I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my HANDS,* have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded”** (Isa. 45:12). The earth was made for man’s habitation (Ps. 115:16). Man did not evolve from a lower species, He was created by the hands of God. The Lord God said: **“Let us make man in our image”** (Gen. 1:26). Man was not made by the hand of God in the image of a brute, but in the image of God.

The inferior creatures were made by God. **“By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his HAND* hath formed the crooked serpent”** (Job 26:13). He made all the bees, bats, buffaloes, bulls, bears, baboons, badgers, beavers, bobcats, barnacles, beagles, bed bugs, birds, bloodhounds, boa constrictors, boars, bull dogs and butterflies. All the falcons, fishes, flees, flies, foxes, and frogs are His handiwork. He brought into being the cows, cats, crawfishes, coons, caribous, chimpanzees, chinchillas, chickens, chiggers, crows, cobras, copperheads, coyotes, cranes, crickets, crabs,

and crocodiles.

HAND IN PROVIDENCE

The Lord’s executive power---His hands of providence---preserves both man and beast. **“The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine HAND,* and satisfiest the desire of every living thing”** (Ps. 145:15-16). What innumerable wants throughout all animate nature in the earth, the air, and the waters! Who can supply their food? The hands of the mighty God of Jacob. All creatures look to the Lord to receive their food, and they discover He is punctual at meal-time. He has only to open up His hand and there is food enough and to spare.

Human life is sustained by the hand of Divine Providence. The Bible speaks of **“the God in whose HAND* thy breath is”** (Dan. 5:23). Man is a dependent creature. Without the Great Preserver and Benefactor, man would perish in a moment of time. Every living soul who breathes God’s air can truly say: **“My times are in thy HAND*”** (Ps. 31:15).

All the events of time are according to the will and wisdom of the Supreme Being. He predetermined all events between the two eternities, even the crucifixion of His Son. Peter said concerning the crucifiers of Christ: **“For to do whatsoever thy HAND* and thy counsel determined before to be done”** (Acts 4:28). Every thing which comes to pass was written in the book of God’s decrees: **“I will tell thee that which is ordained in the scripture of truth”** (Dan. 10:21 Sept. V.). Even our bitter experiences are ordained by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob: **“For thou writest bitter things against me”** (Job 13:26).

HAND IN THE SAFETY OF HIS PEOPLE

The saints of God are all in His hands to be covered and protected: **“Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy HAND*.”** (Deut. 33:3). The millions of saints can all fit into the hands of the One Who measures the seas of the earth. Well did the wise man write: **“The righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the HAND* of God”** (Eccl. 9:1). This verse reveals that even our works are all appointed, ordered, and directed by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.

Our God stretches forth His hand to shield His saints from evil---evil men and the Evil One. This guiding hand prevents our backsliding. The psalmist said: **“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his HAND*”** (Ps. 37:23-24). The hand of God keeps us from sinking beneath the waves of sorrow and suffering. It delivers us from the bondage of sin and Satan as it did Israel from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 13:14). That Divine hand will rest upon our shoulders to comfort us in the shadow of death.

There is an insurance company whose motto is: “You are in good hands with Allstate.” As to whether this is true of this insurance company or not, I cannot say, seeing I have never had any dealings with them. But there is one thing I know for certain: When you are in the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, you are in good hands indeed! No angel or demon can shake His hand loose from His sheep. Jesus said: **“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither**

shall any man pluck them out of my HAND*” (John 10:28).

The song writer has written:

*There is an unseen hand to me,
That leads thru ways I cannot see;
While going thru this world of woe,
This hand still leads me as I go.*

*His hand has led thru shadows drear,
And while it leads I have no fear,
I know ‘twill lead me to that home,
Where sin nor sorrow e’er can come.*

*I long to see my Saviour’s face
And sing the story “Saved by Grace”
And when upon that Golden Strand,
I’ll praise Him for His guiding hand.*

*I’m trusting to the unseen hand,
That guides me thru this weary land;
And some sweet day I’ll reach that strand,
Still guided by the unseen hand.*

HAND IN AFFLICTION

Some cannot conceive of a God Who appoints afflictions for His children. However, the Bible teaches He does appoint such things for His people (I Thess. 3:3). The psalmist said: **“Many are the afflictions of the righteous”** (Ps. 34:19). Naomi declared: **“The HAND* of the LORD is gone out against me”** (Ruth 1:13). How true this was of her! Her sons and husband were dead. She was penniless and friendless and far from home. It is regrettable that God’s afflicting hand has been raised up against some of the elect, and yet they do not see God in these afflictions.

The hand which appoints affliction does so to produce repentance and amendment of life. The hands of the mighty God of Jacob smite one man with sickness, another with poverty, and a third with shame to restore and to recover them to Himself.

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“For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, and as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows, Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble” (Ps. 66:10-14).

If a sheep goes astray from the flock, the shepherd sends his dogs after it, not to devour it, but to bring it in again. Even so, the Great Shepherd of the sheep sends His dogs after His sheep who stray and disobey. These dogs are not sent to hurt us, but to bring us back toward the Shepherd so as to consider our duty toward Him. God's dogs are affliction and suffering. **“Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word”** (Ps. 119:67).

HAND IN MAKING MINISTERS

God does not allow men to call His servants to preach the gospel. Anyone who tries to do this is usurping the place of God. Pastor-called and evangelist-called preachers are worthless. And so are seminary-called, self-called, and mama-called preachers. There is no place in the churches of Jesus Christ for professional preachers. God cannot be charged with their heresies and immoralities. The God of Jacob never laid His hand upon such characters. These professional preachers are running without being sent.

Calling men to preach the gospel

is the work of God's own hands. He will not trust the work with any other person. In his book, Ezekiel related his call to the prophetic office: **“The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the HAND* of the LORD was there upon him”** (Ezek. 1:3). Here we see the hand of the Lord goes along with the preaching of the Word of the Lord so as to make it effectual. In this verse I understand by the hand of the Lord the gift and Word of prophecy which came with power and efficacy.

Jeremiah gives his experience in somewhat the same manner: **“Then the LORD put forth his HAND,* and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold I have put my words in thy mouth”** (Jer. 1:9). The hands of the mighty God of Jacob touched his mouth so he could proclaim God's praise in the earth. This hand not only put knowledge in his head but words in his mouth. God gives to His ministers both wisdom and a mouth to speak (Matt. 10:19).

God's hand must not only be upon His ministers, but also upon their hearers. Many people hear the report of the gospel, but very few believe it. Today it is being proclaimed to every creature under Heaven. Nevertheless, none believe this message except those to whom the arm of the

Lord is revealed (Isa. 53:1). God must give the increase; He must bless the message of Christ which is preached or none will be saved. When the early Christians witnessed unto the Grecians, it is written: **“And the HAND* of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord”** (Acts 11:21).

The effectual working of the hands of the mighty God of Jacob alone can bring home to the hearts of men the spoken Word (Acts 16:14). He must make the gospel **“the power of God”** (Rom. 1:16). Ministers can preach to men's ears, but God can prick their hearts (Acts 2:37). Oh, as we preach to sinners may the Lord speak unto them **“with a strong HAND*”** (Isa. 8:11).

Ministers of the gospel have a special relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. He holds the saints in His hands, yet He is said to hold pastors in His right hand. Revelation 1:16 says Christ has **“in his right hand seven stars.”** Then Revelation 1:20 tells us: **“the seven stars are the angels (or pastors) of the seven churches.”** Before men lift up a hand against those in the right hand of Christ, they would do well to remember Christ's hand is larger and longer than their puny hands.

HAND IN SALVATION

Salvation is not in the hands of man. The teaching that God can not save a man unless the man lets Him save him is not from above.

It makes man greater than God. It makes man his own saviour. No man has ever been saved by his so-called free will. Men are saved by the free and sovereign grace of God. Jesus Christ alone is the Saviour of His people (Matt. 1:21). The whole Arminian scheme makes man his own redeemer and faith the meritorious cause of salvation. It causes the sinner to look to his own hands instead of the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.

In vain do men look to their own hands for any saving power. It would be just as sensible to look to a dead dog for life, or expect a stone to act and move. Salvation is not of man but of the Lord (Jonah 2:9; Ps. 3:8). This is illustrated in the case of Israel in Egypt. They were poor, helpless slaves of Pharaoh. For deliverance from Egyptian bondage they were shut up to Jehovah alone. The hands of the mighty God of Jacob must save them, or else they would remain slaves for ever. Concerning their deliverance the Israelites said: **“By strength of HAND* the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage”** (Ex. 13:14).

Like the Israelites, the lost sinner is a slave of sin and Satan. By his own hands he cannot deliver himself, for he is **“without strength”** (Rom. 5:6), and **“without God in the world”** (Eph. 2:12). The hands of the mighty God of Jacob must deliver him, or he will perish in his own iniquity. The gospel says to such a struggling, judgment-bound soul: **“Behold, the LORD'S HAND* is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear”** (Isa. 59:1). The Saviour can reach as far as ever down into the pits of sin and save

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Tune in to the Berea Baptist Broadcast

STATION	TIME	DIAL	WATTS
WCNA, Myrtle, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	95.9.....	3,000 FM
WCTT, Corbin, KY.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	680.....	5,000 AM
WFTA, Tupelo, MS.....	Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.....	101.9.....	3,000 FM
KARI, Blaine, WA.....	Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m....	550.....	5,000 AM
KPRV, Heavener, OK.....	Sunday 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.....	92.5.....	6,000 FM

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with as strong a hand as ever. Praise God that it is so!

The sinner's salvation comes from the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. Those hands never wax weak, nor are they shortened (Num. 11:23). No length of time, nor the strength of powerful enemies can lessen the power of God to save. In Isaiah 50:2 the Lord utters His voice in this fashion: **"Is my HAND* shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst."**

The gospel is today what it always has been. It is the power in God's hand. In Romans 1:16 Paul declared: **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."** To the Corinthians he wrote: **"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God"** (I Cor. 1:18). Without this power from God the gospel is a dead letter.

CONCLUSION

The God of the Bible is **"a God at HAND*"** and **"not a God afar off"** (Jer. 23:23). Our God is present all over the world at the same time. It is our nature to assume God is a long way off up in Heaven somewhere in the north sky. Some call Him "the man upstairs." But such is not the case at all. God is as much present in this lower world as the upper world. He is Emmanuel---God with us (Matt. 1:23).

Fallen man tends to "rejoice in the works of their own hands"

(Acts 7:41). They live in ignorance of the works which have been wrought by the hand of the mighty God of Jacob. **"Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief is in their hearts. Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert. Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his HANDS,* he shall destroy them, and not build them up"** (Ps. 28:3-5). Their stupid regardlessness of the works of God's hands will cause the Lord to reward them after the works of their own hands. It will cause their sin and ruin.

All events, times, and circumstances are in the hands of Jesus Christ. **"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his HANDS*"** (John 3:35). The work of creation, redemption, and providence are committed to the hands of Jesus Christ. The destiny of the world is not in the hands of puny men. It is in the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. He controls all things and disposes of them at His pleasure. Angels and all inferior creatures are His servants; demons are His captives. What a comfort to realize the Father has committed all things into the hands of our Mediator. We can sleep peacefully at night, knowing **"all things work together for"** our good because our Lord Jesus does **"all things well"** (Mark 7:37).

There is no escape from the vengeful hands of a righteous God. The Lord declares: **"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal:**

neither is there any that can deliver out of my HAND* For I lift up my HAND* to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine HAND* take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me" (Deut. 32:39-41). One day all impenitent sinners will discover that it **"is a fearful thing to fall into the HANDS* of the living God"** (Heb 10:31).

**(All emphasis in Scriptures by MRC.)*



GLEANINGS



The Difference Between Nature and Nurture

By Chad Johnson
of Auburn, Kentucky

"Amongwhom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others" (Eph. 2:3).

"And ye fathers, provoke not your children unto wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

I want to try to show the difference between who we are and what we are taught or trained to do.

The word nature means our natural birth or condition. Romans 5:14-21 tells us that we inherited this nature from Adam and it is a sinful,

depraved, fallen nature.

Before the law of God was given sin was not imputed or accounted unto men. Nevertheless men died from Adam unto Moses. Before the law was given to Moses, men died because of Adam's sin that was imputed unto them. Since the law has been given, men now die because of Adam's inherited sin and also our personal sin.

Since we are dead spiritually and by nature the children of wrath or sin, our only hope is for God to quicken us and make us alive by His grace.

It is impossible for a person to believe grace until we see ourselves as God does. Even when God saves a person the old nature is not gone, but we get a new nature that wars against the old one (Romans 7:14-25).

The only thing that will destroy the old nature is death or the rapture. (I Corinthians 15:50-58)

The word nurture means the instruction of children. We as the people of God are told not to provoke our children to sin. Their nature does that, but we are to teach them God's Word in word as well as deed. We are also told to train them up in the way they should go.

This does not mean that we can train them into salvation. They must be born into it by the Spirit of God. What we are doing when we train our children is teaching them moral values. We try to teach them practical things from God's Word that they will keep with them all their life.

Even if God never saves them, these teachings will help them in this life.

So nurture cannot change nature. Only salvation can do that, and even then, it is after death of this body or putting on of immortality at the rapture.



How A Lost Sheep

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just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:1-10).

Let me speak to you for just a few moments on this subject, after reading these verses of Scripture from God's Word, on *How A Lost Sheep Got Home*.

First of all, I want you to notice that the shepherd found the sheep. And Jesus Christ is identified as the Good Shepherd. Now the question comes, "Who are the sheep?" Not just Israel, not all people, some saved sheep and some lost sheep. All the elect are called sheep in the Bible. Notice this great fact that Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd, not a goat herder.

Now the hundred that we read here represents the total number of God's people. A definite number, you cannot subtract or add to the number. God has all the children He wants and He wants all He has. The hundred represent the total number of God's people, a definite number. The "ninety and nine" represent those who have already been found. It began with finding Adam, on down through finding Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Matthew, the woman at the well, Zacchaeus, the Apostle Paul, and own down till the last one is

found.

Now the one represents the sheep that have not been found yet. And notice the great fact that the Shepherd goes out searching. What is the motive that causes the Shepherd to go out; the Shepherd's love. Nothing good in us, but the Shepherd's love sent the Shepherd out. The Shepherd's search caused the Shepherd to leave His home in glory. The Shepherd's love caused Him to pay the price of our redemption. He searches until He finds the lost sheep. How long does He search? Until He finds it, no failures. He brings all of His sheep in, and carries them home on His shoulders. What a Shepherd!

With those thoughts in mind, let us think about the search for this lost sheep. God does have a people, as we established, consisting of the saved sheep and lost sheep. All of these are His, they are His; first of all, by sovereign election. Listen to God's Word. **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"** (Eph. 1:4-5). **"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed"** (Acts 13:48). Now notice again II Timothy 2:10, **"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."** **"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God"** (I Thess. 1:4). Now I

believe that God's people are His by sovereign election. There is not a person in Christ that God ever chose on the basis of foreseen faith. That would make the actions of a sovereign God contingent upon the actions of depraved humanity, which is contrary to the Word of God. Faith is a gift of God.

Secondly, I believe that all these sheep saved and lost are His. Not only by sovereign election, but also by divine protection. **"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation"** (Heb. 1:14)? Then they are His not only by sovereign election, by divine protection, but one day, they will all be His by sudden collection. **"And he shall send in his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"** (Matt. 24:31). There is coming a day when the Lord Jesus, in almighty power through His angels, is going to suddenly collect His elect together, and for the first time all of them will be together. You talk about a hallelujah time on the hills of glory! God's people are going to have it when they are suddenly collected to the bosom of God and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are all His as saved sheep, and those who are lost sheep will be brought in. I tell you it is going to be a hallelujah time when all of them are brought in. Jesus Christ will not lose a one of them. Listen to what He said, **"all that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"** (John 6:37). All of them will be His.

He now is bringing in the lost

sheep. Let us see how He brings them in. All of the lost sheep have not been brought in yet, but they will be. How is God bringing them in? He is bringing them in by the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now there is no substitute for preaching the gospel of the Son of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. Oh, the power of the gospel, **"the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."** Oh, how I love to proclaim the gospel; how I love to proclaim the good news of how **"that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;"** how He was buried and on the third day arose again according to the Scriptures. Good news! The best news that we ever heard in all of our lives; how that Christ became our suffering substitute, paid all the debt that we owed. Oh, how I thank God for Jesus Christ. How I think God that He was wounded for my transgressions; bruised for my iniquities and the chastisement of my peace was upon him, and how through His stripes I am healed. Oh, the Bible tells us here in I Corinthians 1:18, **"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."** **"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"** (I Cor. 1:21). Then notice II Thessalonians 2:13-14, **"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and**

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belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Notice **“called us by the gospel.”** Oh, how we were brought to a saving knowledge through the power of the gospel. The preaching of the gospel, the Holy Spirit quickening, drawing us to the saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and causing us to be looking unto Him, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Because only Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Oh, I thank God for every true God-called preacher who is preaching the gospel of the Son of God, which still can break the hearts of lost humanity.

He is bringing in the lost through the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then not only through the preaching of the gospel, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. **“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged”** (John 16:7-11). Now that is what the Holy Spirit is doing today. He uses the Bible, the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, to convict sinners of sin. He convinces them of righteousness, not of

their own righteousness, but the righteousness of the Son of God. He shows the righteousness of Christ to lost humanity.

Then He also convinces men of judgment. Now the God of love is also a God of wrath. The God who loves people is also angry with people. Oh, the blessed work of the Holy Spirit. He quickeneth lost sinners, drawing them unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then not only through the preaching of the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit, all the lost sheep are being brought in through His providence. The providence of God enters the picture. God’s works are not being carried out behind time or ahead of time, but right on schedule. I believe that we ought to recognize the providence of God in every move that we make in this old sinful world. Oh,

the providence of God. By His providence, preaching the Word, the power of the Holy Spirit, He is bringing in all of His people.

Then thirdly, let me establish this, that all of God’s elect will be brought in. Every one of them. Not one shall perish. I do not believe for a moment that Jesus Christ died in vain. I believe that every person that Jesus Christ died for will ultimately be brought in. Everyone of them. It is impossible for one of the lost sheep, that He paid the price, to be eternally lost. God’s power can not be penetrated. Every one of them will be brought in. Why? Because God’s power can not be penetrated. **“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”** (I Peter 1:5). Now God’s power is unlimited. There is no power as great as the power of God. You

can talk about the atomic bomb, the hydrogen bomb, and all the nuclear bombs put together can not equal the power of God. Now, no one, no one, not even the devil can penetrate the power of God to break God’s circle of His elect.

He is going to bring every one of them in, first of all, by His power. This is wonderful! It is an occasion of rejoicing, in the heart of every person who has been born of the Spirit of God. You can not break down the power of God. Now Satan is mighty, but not almighty. Satan is powerful, but not all powerful. All the lost sheep will be brought in, all the elect will be brought in, first of all, because it is impossible to break God’s power, to penetrate His power.

And then all of them will be brought in because His will, and His compassion, and His mercy are sovereign and they can not be nullified. All of these are sovereign. His compassion, mercy, and His will are all sovereign and they can not be nullified. Nullified? Never! Listen to God’s Word, **“For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth”** (Rom. 9:15-16, 18). Again notice John 6:65-66, **“And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more**



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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Does a lost sinner have to hear the Word preached by a God called preacher in order to be saved, or can a saved person tell them enough so they can be saved? - Tennessee

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A growing number (a small number, praise the Lord) of Baptists are teaching and propagating the theory that the Bible teaches the priesthood of the Baptist preacher or preachers. For those who have not heard this term, it is the belief that the only way a person can be saved is by hearing the gospel from a Baptist, more specifically from a Baptist preacher. Of course I do not believe that at all. In my opinion it is a false doctrine and those that propagate such a doctrine are skating on thin ice and need to take a hard look at what they are trying to convince others of. Again in my opinion it is contrary to what I have been taught and learned over the past 35 years, and even more, what the Bible teaches!

In fact, if what they teach is true, I am not saved, which in turn disqualifies me as a Baptist preacher and, of course, I will not be going to Heaven. In fact, I would be willing to say there will be many like myself that are in the same boat. And I suppose this disqualifies me from answering this Forum Question because I can not possibly be led by the Spirit of God if I am not saved, and therefore I do not

know what I am talking about and my last 25 years as a Baptist preacher has been a waste of time and the gospel that I have preached has been in vain and my ordination is null and void, according to those who believe I did not hear the gospel from a Baptist preacher.

You might be asking how I heard the gospel. Well, my mother told it to me. Furthermore, I was raised a Lutheran for 11 years, and at the time the Lord saved me I was not going to church anywhere. But be assured I was saved at that appointed day, and I am still saved to this day, it was a life changing experience, **"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death"** (I John 3:14).

How many readers have heard the gospel from someone other than a Baptist or Baptist preacher? According to the priesthood of the Baptist preacher people, you are not saved either, if you did not hear it from a Baptist preacher. How does that make you feel? Personally, I think those who teach the priesthood of the Baptist preacher or preachers are very arrogant to even suggest such a thing. Room would not allow me to list the number of the beloved brethren I have met over the years that were saved outside a Baptist church, some who are now Baptists like me. I have met other Christian people that are far from being a Baptist

that would put most Baptists to shame with their dedication and love for the Lord. I guess they are wasting their time also. Dear reader, answer this question, and be careful how you answer. Do you really believe there are no other Christians than Baptists? If you do, then I feel very sorry for you! The sad thing is, though they believe in the priesthood theory, it has been my observation they make very little effort to present the gospel to the lost. If they are the only ones who can, then why are they not doing more street preaching?

One last thought on this subject and this makes me very angry when I think about it. Those of you that are priesthood believers, do you realize how many of our Baptist preachers that are now with the Lord were saved without hearing the gospel from a Baptist (preacher), great men in their day, how dare you limit the spreading of the gospel to only Baptists. I am a true Baptist in every sense of the word and you are wrong in your teaching and I pray God will bring you out of your error. I know without a doubt I am saved, that I will be with the Lord when I die and I have the hope of being one that is in the Bride as well. What you are saying (those who believe in the priesthood theory) is that I and others like me are condemned to Hell and I have not and cannot be saved until I hear the gospel from a Baptist (preacher).

There is always a need for "thus sayeth the Lord" and I would ask the questioner, and you dear reader, to examine these two portions of Scripture before you make any final conclusion (Luke 2:36-38). Look closely

at what verse 38 says, **"And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."** What, **"she spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."** Was Anna a Baptist or a Baptist preacher? One meaning of the word **"redemption"** is, deliverance from the sins of humanity by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross; oh my; a woman giving the gospel to the lost!!

And what are we going to do about the woman of Samaria at the well (John 4:4-42)? Look at verse 39, **"And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did."** A Gentile woman telling others about Jesus Christ, what a terrible thing! Just what was it the Samaritans believed? Now look at verses 41-42, **"And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."** So if you want to believe the priesthood of the Baptist preacher or preachers theory those Samaritans in verse 39 were never saved, because they heard the Word from the Samaritan woman and the Samaritans in verses 41-42 were saved because they heard the Word from The Preacher. I do not know about you, dear reader, but it does seem to be a little silly does it not? That a Christian could not tell the gospel message to anyone seems very sad to me. God bless!

ROGER REED

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What practical applications can be gleaned from Ecclesiastes 4:9-12? - the Editor



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“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccl. 4:9-12).

The first principle to be learned from this passage is the unity of marriage. There is a clear reference to the marriage bed in verse 11, **“Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?”** God declared on the sixth day of creation **“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ...And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ...And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day”** (Gen. 2:18, 21-22; 1:31). Selah!

Think about it!

This principle of the unity and strength in the marriage relationship can carry over to business ventures, joint efforts, etc., in the community as well as the family. It will always be true, but only because it is based on this practical truth! I remember an old Sesame Street song that Ernie used to sing about this principle. I think the song went this way: “Oh, the number one is not my favorite number, cause one means only me and there is no you” How marvelous is the gift of human companionship! But how much more marvelous is the gift of communion with God! Even one that is leading a single life, whether unmarried, widowed or divorced, it is a life made so much better by the melding of a contiguous life with our heavenly Father and Saviour Jesus Christ!

To glean some practical applications from verse nine, we could meditate on what might be the “good reward” for a dual labor. The greatest reward of this twofold relationship is love. To experience love as the highest and noblest of human emotions. To be loved will perfect a broken life and will give meaning and purpose to the most estranged of men and women. And the only way to surpass this grand emotion in joy and fulfillment is to love another. Surely to be loved is awesome, but to be able to exercise this wondrous adoration and gift it to another is the ultimate experience in life! It will entwine and strengthen any relationship and enable the participants to

endure any hardship with joy and contentment. Certainly a “good reward!” Selah! Think about it!

A second aspect of this “good reward” is the communion of best friends. As we labor in this life, it is satisfying to spend quality time with loved ones. To trust in the actions and reactions of our fellow laborers and not worry about mental or emotional “friction” to break the harmony is beyond calculation. Whether the relationship is neighborly, familial or national, the principle applies on the grandest of scales.

In verse 10 it is taken for granted that, **“if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.”** The immediate picture here is of one of the entwined couple physically falling on the pathway. Surely, as the years go on, we need more and more physical help from our mates and our friends. But think a little deeper and make application on an emotional and spiritual level: **“if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow!”** How often will someone give us a word of comfort when we have fallen into some trial of life! Surely we can expect those that love us, to lift up our hearts and souls with an encouraging hand and word.

The last thought we want to leave the beloved reader with, is the final phrase of verse 12, **“and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”** Certainly, any multiplication of the twined love of any couple will strengthen the cord of love. A man and wife that has children are examples of a love that can only grow stronger as the children grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! But I believe the main thrust of this phrase is speaking again of the marriage union. Many is the

wedding that I have attended where the minister exhorts the bonding couple to strengthen their relationship by entwining their newly wedded lives with the love of God Almighty! It is verily nigh impossible for a strong threefold cord to be broken! May God help us to take advantage of the strength and help of both our darling spouse and our beloved God! Selah! Think about it!

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“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

It is interesting to note that soon after God created Adam the inspired record declares: **“And the LORD God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him”** (Gen. 2:18). God determined to make man a sociable being capable of sharing companionship, fellowship, friendship, conversation, cooperation, and love with others. This truth is clearly expressed in the passage under consideration.

Every aspect of human society and culture demonstrates the advantages stated in this

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Forum #1

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“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. ...More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward” (Ps. 19:7, 10-11). Mankind is hopeless without the gospel of Jesus Christ! The Bible claims over and over again, that Christ ALONE is our hope for salvation. Any doctrine or teaching that makes a mere man (ordained or not) the ONLY HOPE for salvation is heresy. If it were necessary for a MAN to preach the gospel of our salvation, then HE would be our saviour, as well as Christ... God forbid! Selah! Think about it!

Our text proves that, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.” Nothing more, nothing less! “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 3:15). If we start drawing lines and putting things (including God) into boxes, we would sure better have Scripture!

The Bible says that, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament

sheweth his handywork. ... There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard” (Ps. 19:1, 3). Creation itself is a witness to God that makes every person accountable! Follow that up with Romans 1:16-20, “For I am not ashamed of the GOSPEL of Christ: for it is the POWER of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For THEREIN is the righteousness of God revealed from FAITH to FAITH: ...Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (emphasis thru-out TMS).

I like that phrase, “revealed from faith to faith!” From one saved person to another! That truth is verified in Jeremiah 31:33-34, “..After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them...” Right now every neighbor and every brother has the RESPONSIBILITY to teach one another about Christ! There is coming a time when ALL will know Jesus as their Saviour, but for now, we have a limited opportunity to be found faithful! Selah! Think about it!

The absurdity that God requires a lost sinner to hear

the message of salvation from an “ordained preacher” is repudiated by none other than the Apostle Paul! “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice” (Phil. 1:15-18). The Apostle to the Gentiles says that even some lost and deceived folk might take it upon themselves to preach the gospel for every reason under the sun other than for the cause of truth: and that he would therein rejoice! Rejoice, not in their subterfuge, or in their blatant disregard of God’s order, but that Christ would be proclaimed as a Saviour!

I believe that this passage CLEARLY teaches that souls can be saved even in denominational Christianity, even by the preaching of lost folk. Beloved reader, it is the WORD of GOD that has the power to save! Not a man, not a system, not any priest here below! “..in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:12-13). Selah! Think about it!

Scripturally, there cannot be found any valid God-ordained men outside the true New Testament Baptist churches. So if these fellows come in teaching the heresy that lost sinners MUST at least at some point of their reprobate lives hear the gospel from a God-ordained man to be saved, then what they are building up in the sand is a

salvation that shall be limited to a priesthood of Baptists! Selah! Think about it! If no one can be saved except by the preaching of a Baptist preacher, then they are no different from the Catholics (southern, or otherwise) in insisting that the Word of grace is insufficient in itself!

Beloved, it does not matter WHO tells you the truth of the gospel! John the beloved found that out from the Master! “And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us” (Luke 9:49-50). They might not be a member of the church, but that does not mean they are not saved! They just need to be taught more truth!

“..for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. ... ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. ...I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 3:3-11).

MATTHEW STEPP

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Forum #1

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No, a lost sinner does not have to audibly hear the Word preached by a Baptist preacher in order to be saved. God the Holy Spirit regenerates the elect and then makes the Gospel effectual in conversion. Spiritual life is imparted in the new birth when the Spirit quickens the dead sinner (John 1:12-13; 3:6-8; 3:36; Eph. 2:1). Immediately the gifts of repentance and saving faith are given (Eph. 2:8-10; II Tim. 2:25-26), enabling the newly born again sinner to exercise these graces in response to the Word. It does not matter who shares the Word of God, it is the Spirit that quickens the dead sinner and makes the Word effectual. I Thessalonians 1:4-6 declares: **“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.”**

When Jesus saved the demoniac of the Gadarenes, the Saviour Himself told the newly converted child of God to go home and tell everybody he knew what great things the Lord had done for him. Mark 5:19-20 states: **“.. Go home to thy friends, and**

tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel” (cf. Luke 8:39-40). There is nothing in the inspired record to indicate that Christ called the newly converted demoniac to preach before He sent him back to his hometown to publish and share what the Lord had done. In fact, there is no record that the demoniac was baptized for that matter. He was one of God's elect sent by the Saviour to tell others what the Lord had done for him. Similar circumstances are recorded in John 4:26-42 when Jesus saved the woman at the well and she went and told the town folks what the Lord had done in her life. She was not called to preach but she had a salvation story to publish and share with others. A child of God does not have to be a Baptist preacher to publish and share what the Lord has done in their life. God used a meat cutter, not a Baptist preacher, to share the Gospel with me and was pleased to make the Word of His grace effectual in my heart in Bro. Greg's kitchen. That very day I went to Kevin Hamilton's house, a childhood friend, and told him what great things the Lord had done for me in saving my soul. I told him that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again for sinners and that he should trust Him as His Saviour. I was not called to preach. I was not even a Baptist yet, but I told Kevin the good news of God's saving grace. Kevin was saved many years later.

In Acts 8, the apostles (Baptist preachers) remained in Jerusalem (8:1). Acts 8:4 declares: **“Therefore they that were**

scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.” Who went every where preaching the Word? Not the preachers who remained in Jerusalem, but mere Baptist church members took the Gospel out wherever they were scattered preaching the Word! Anyone who has ever been saved has a message of grace to publish, share, proclaim, and preach to lost sinners!

I have a few questions I would like to ask those who believe in Baptist preacher only salvation. How were the elect saved in the Old Testament dispensation before there were any Baptist preachers? How was John the Baptist saved without the aid of a Baptist preacher? How are deaf people saved who cannot audibly hear the preaching of a Baptist preacher? Must they have an ordained Baptist preacher interpret via sign language?

TOM ROSS



Forum #2

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passage. The principle of companionship being better and more advantageous than a solitary existence is seen in every realm of civilization. The home, the workplace, the church, and all forms of human government function more efficiently and happily with two or more people.

What a blessing it is to have a wife to encourage her husband! What a blessed bond is shared by brothers and sisters within the family unit! What a joy it is to have a friend who can help you in times of trouble and distress! What an encouragement it is to work with someone to accomplish a worthy goal! What a joy it is to worship with the saints of God

and enjoy the warmth of Christian fellowship! If we are assaulted or attacked is it not better to have a friend and companion who can come to our aid? When we are spreading the Gospel message door to door in our communities it is a blessing to follow the model instituted by our Lord when He sent the seventy out two by two. Two are better than one!

I offer some gems written by Charles Bridges in his commentary upon this passage:

“..In a variety of instances we shall readily admit Solomon's judgment--Two are better than one--more happy jointly, than either of them could be separately. The pleasure and advantage of holy love will be an abundant recompense for all the work and labor of love. They have a good reward for their labor. For have they not richer enjoyment of the common good in the mutual effort to promote it?

...The most sober principle of interpretation will admit a reference to all that glowing contact of united hearts, where each has a part and responsibility in helping and comforting the other...Love sweetens toil, soothes the sting of trouble, and gives a Christian zest of enjoyment to every course of daily life. The mutual exercises of sympathy give energy to prayer, and furnish large materials for confidence and praise.

...The Primitive Church--so far as circumstances permitted--acted under Divine direction upon this rule of mutual helpfulness. We need scarcely remark, how clearly the principle of membership is here involved. The live coal left alone soon loses its vital heat. But heap the coals around it, and we have a genial

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Forum #2

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atmosphere. The most lively professor left alone is in danger of waxing cold in selfishness. But the precious communion of saints warms the Christian from the very center...Each of us has something to impart, to prevent discouragement--to receive, to teach us humility. The receiver is united to the giver by gratitude--the giver to the receiver by tender compassion.

...Oh! Let us ponder well the deep responsibility of our social obligations. Are we discharging them as unto the Lord--for the honor of His name, and for the edifying and increase of His Church? Did we but pray for each other as we ought, what a brotherhood would the family of man be! The time is short. Opportunities are passing away. Happy those, who have been fellow-helpers upon earth! They shall rejoice before their gracious Lord with joy unspeakable--uninterrupted--without abatement--without end." (Ecclesiastes by Charles Bridges, pp. 89-92).

TOM ROSS

her parents living through the depression and all. But anyway all jokes aside, I do not know about cheaper but I can not imagine not having my wife as my companion. She has been strong where I have been weak and vice versa. There is more joy and satisfaction than if I lived alone.

Also being around other people who care about each other is a great asset when one is in need of help, whether it is in work or pleasure a second person is always a great help.

The question is, "What practical application can be gleaned from Ecclesiastes 4:9-12?" Not being alone probably is the most practical applications that I gleaned from these verses. For years I have been alone in the place where I live, spiritual speaking, I would have to drive a great distance to have fellowship with those of the same faith. Many do not realize the blessings they have with sister churches and fellow brothers and sisters to fellowship with close at hand.

We can not tell you; for words can not describe the joy we have on Sunday morning to be around God fearing men and women at the mission. Those who have the area fellowships are blessed as well. We all sin and it is a blessing as well to have those who care enough to help us through the difficult times, "**Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted**" (Gal. 6:1).

Also we have just gone through some very cold temperatures and having my wife next to me makes all the difference in the world. I remember when I was in the Boy Scouts (before it became corrupt) when we had a weekend camping

trip and it was in the fall of the year and it rained all night and all we had was these little old 2 man pup tents. We had 3 in our tent and one was a tenderfoot (first time camper) and he thought it was neat to touch the top of the tent and see the water run in. I had an air mattress I slept on and before the night was up it was floating inside the tent and we were soaked and chilled to the bone. A couple of the older scouts had the only dry tent that night and by morning we had 8-10 kids in this 2 man pup tent but we were all dry and warm so I have experienced verse 11 more ways than one, "**Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone**" (Eccl. 4:11)?

Also the greatest practical application that can be gleaned from Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 is verse 12, I suppose; and that is "**a threefold cord is not quickly broken.**" We Baptist need to stay and stick together; Satan is bombarding us with all kinds of filth and lawlessness today. We should not be divided today, you know the old saying "United we stand, divided we fall." "Patrick Henry used the phrase in his last public speech, given in March 1799, in which he denounced The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions. Clasp his hands and swaying unsteadily, Henry declaimed, 'Let us trust God, and our better judgment to set us right hereafter. United we stand, divided we fall. Let us not split into factions which must destroy that union upon which our existence hangs.' At the end of his oration, Henry fell into the arms of bystanders and was carried almost lifeless into a nearby tavern. Two months afterward, he died." The phrase also appears

in the New Testament, albeit in slightly different language. "**A house divided against itself cannot stand**" (Mark 3:25). It has been used many times in our history.

So I will leave you with this Baptist brothers and sisters "**a threefold cord is not quickly broken.**" And as a nation "United we stand, divided we fall." Stand together, Selah. God Bless!

ROGER REED



How A Lost Sheep

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with him." Oh, I will tell you, I believe in a sovereign God. His mercy, His compassion, and His will are sovereign, and nothing can nullify them. So therefore, all of the elect shall be brought in.

Fourthly, all of the elect will be brought in because He hath given His people a will, a promise that can never be denied. He made a promise and all of His promises are kept. He has never broken a promise. Notice John 6:37 as I quoted earlier in the message. "**All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**" His promises can never be denied. They are not like man's promises. Politicians make promises to get into office and break them immediately, but God has never broken a promise. Jesus Christ has never broken a promise. Oh, listen to this promise, how sweet it is. "**All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out**" (John 6:37). And then listen again to the sweet words of the Lord Jesus. "**And I give unto**

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I once worked with a man who had the philosophy that two can live cheaper than one, apparently he never met my wife, no just kidding. If anyone spends more money at our house it is me, I have more toys than she. My wife was raised in a very frugal family,

How A Lost Sheep

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them eternal life; and they shall never perish..." (John 10:28). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life..." (John 3:36). Then notice John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." All the elect will be brought in because His promises can never be denied; never can be broken. I am glad, in the midst of all the unfaithfulness and short comings that we have, there is a God who will never turn His back on His people. He has promised to keep us forever. His promises are tried and proven. What can separate us from the love of God? How secure is a saved sheep? I will tell you, he is mighty secure. Because nothing shall separate us from the love of God. He names all the agencies known to mankind, then He says none of these things "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39). Are you not glad that His promises are tried and proven? All the saved sheep and the lost sheep all together representing the total of them all will be brought in to the hill sides of glory.

And then finally, all the saved sheep and the lost sheep will be brought in because His purpose, being eternal, can not change. Now we make plans and sometimes God over rules our plans, but not one purpose of God has ever had to change. God is a God that never changes. He is "the same yesterday, today,

and for ever more" (Heb. 13:8). All the sheep will be brought in because of His purpose, being eternal, can not change. Notice 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." Then Romans 8:29-30, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Oh, this is God's eternal purpose. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." Foreordination, predestination, He called His predestinated ones. He justified the called ones and He is going to glorify all of the justified ones.

Five chains here. This chain began in eternity past and links together with eternity to come. And one of these days all the links are coming together. Oh, when He forms His chain not one link will ever be broken. We have not received our glorified bodies yet, but He speaks of it so sure to happen in the Scriptures as if it has already happened. It is so sure to happen. My, we are going to get a glorified body like the glorified body of the Son of God.

How A Lost Sheep Got Home, all through the Scriptures we get this great truth that salvation is of the Lord from the start to the finish. All glory and praise shall be given to Him.



THE

BIBLE NEWSPAPER

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

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

AMARILLO COLLEGE NIXES INTELLIGENT DESIGN CLASS

(WNS)--Is intelligent design too controversial to teach at a public college? It is, apparently, in Amarillo, Texas. In fall 2013, Amarillo College planned to offer a class entitled "Evolution vs. Intelligent Design" as one of its continuing education courses. The class was not part of the school's degree programs, but a not-for-credit elective course. It was advertised under the heading of "Philosophy." Dozens of eager students signed up. Yet when the president of an Amarillo-based group of atheists and agnostics complained, the college reversed course. Top school officials canceled "Evolution vs. Intelligent Design," saying the topic was too "emotionally charged" and could invite a "disruption" in the classroom.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD ABORTIONIST GETS "SLAP ON THE WRIST" FOR NEGLIGENCE

(WNS)--The state of Delaware in early January issued a reprimand and a \$1,500 fine for a Planned Parenthood abortionist whom the state attorney's office last year called "a clear and immediate danger to the public." Timothy Liveright, who worked at a Planned Parenthood center in Wilmington, Del., reached an agreement with state officials in November to avoid a hearing before the Board of Medical Licensure

and Discipline. The agreement details became public this week when the board voted to accept the deal. Jayne Mitchell-Werbrich, one of the nurses who testified before state lawmakers last May, told The News Journal of Delaware this week's punishment is a "slap on the wrist." Another former Planned Parenthood nurse, Joyce Vasikonis, who attended this week's hearing, told The News Journal she was disappointed in the decision and said the result may discourage other nurses from coming forward to report abuses. "I have lost much more than \$1,500," she said. "I'm not working as a nurse. I have applied for positions and not been hired."

FRIENDS WITH PARENTAL BENEFITS

(WNS)--Unmarried friends can legally adopt and co-parent, according to an unprecedented ruling by a New York judge last month. Judge Rita Mella of New York County's Surrogate Court named "two loving adults" in a "solid, decade-plus friendship" the legal parents of a toddler adopted from Ethiopia. The parents, referenced in the case as KAL and LEL, met and became friends in 2000. They worked together but never had a romantic relationship or lived together. According to the court's decision, KAL lives in a house in Brooklyn with a "housemate" and LEL lives in an apartment in Manhattan with a domestic partner. "I'm disturbed

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by this decision because I think it takes us further away from the original purpose of adoption," said Peter Sprigg, senior fellow for policy studies at the Family Research Council. "Adoption exists not to provide children for adults who want them, but to provide a home for children that resembles as much as possible a natural family."

HOUSTON GETS "FIRST LADY" IN SAME-SEX CEREMONY

(WNS)--Houston Mayor Annise Parker and Kathy Hubbard participated in a same-sex marriage ceremony in California on Thursday. In a statement released today, the mayor's office back in Texas referred to Hubbard as the city's "first lady." Parker did not make an issue of her homosexuality when she ran for mayor in 2010. But in December she announced the city would start offering benefits to city workers' same-sex partners, as long as they had a valid marriage certificate from another state. Texas does not recognize same-sex marriage. Parker is now in her third and final term in office.

CHRISTIANITY'S WORST ENEMIES

(WNS)--A U.S.-based group tracking persecution around the globe has named North Korea the worst country in the world for Christians. Open Doors USA on Jan. 8 gave the hermetic country the dubious designation for the 12th straight year—as many years as it has compiled the annual World Watch List of top 50 offenders. The organization estimates North Korea's communist regime has between 50,000 and 70,000 Christians imprisoned in labor camps for their faith. Open Doors unveiled its

World Watch List (WWL) during a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The group measures how much Christians are able to live out their faith to determine what countries land on the list. It considers spheres of private, family, community, national, and church life, plus a sixth sphere counting violent incidents.

DIGITAL TATOO OR MARK OF THE BEAST

Motorola recently revealed the company's been tinkering with digital tattoos. The tattoo has been described as perfect for a wearables market turning the body into a walking authentication token. The tattoos are "epidermal electronics" or technology that is temporarily bonded to their skin. It also has another advantage, since it is attached to the wearer's skin it can be used to collect health data. The tattoo is made up of various sensors and gages, such as for tracking strain in multiple directions (how the user is flexing), EEG and EMG (electrical impulses in the skeletal structure or nerves), ECG (heart activity), and temperature, as well as light and other factors. It is referred to as a mini-lab for your body. These skin tattoos receive their power via wireless power coil. They are incredibly resilient. Even if the tattoo is stretched or twisted it won't break. It's also waterproof, which means that even if you're swimming or in the shower, the tattoo won't be affected.

What was most interesting about this is the photos that accompanied the news release. One showing the tattoo applied to the wrist the other applied to the temple area of the head. "...and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand" (Rev. 14:9).



Three Precious Things

By Christopher W. Burke, Sr.
of Catlettsburg, Kentucky

We want to notice three precious things, that are found in the books of First and Second Peter. But first we want to discuss what the word precious means. No doubt most of us have a pretty good idea what the word "precious" means. But to help us more fully understand what it means, let us notice some synonyms for the word "precious."

These synonyms include: valuable, costly, rare, prized, splendid, glorious, weighty, and influential. The word precious means all of these things in the Scriptures. We want to evaluate the three precious things in I & II Peter in light of these synonyms.

I. THE FIRST PRECIOUS THING ACCORDING TO PETER, IS JESUS.

First, we want to read I Peter 2:4-7, **"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner."** Here in this passage Jesus is likened to a precious stone. Next, we want to read 1 Peter 1:18-19, **"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with**



corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious

blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." In this passage we learn that the blood of Jesus is precious.

Now let us evaluate the preciousness of Jesus using our synonyms for the word precious.

1. First, we want to consider the value and costliness of Jesus. Jesus is more valuable and costly than silver and gold. His worth is far greater than all earthly treasures put together. And the price that was paid for our redemption is more costly than all the silver and gold of a thousand worlds, because the price of our redemption was His own blood. I feel safe to say that one drop of the sinless blood of Jesus is worth far more than all the wealth of the universe, and yet it took every drop of His precious blood to make the a sinner clean and fit for Heaven. So we can see just how filthy and vile we were in our sinful state!

2. Secondly, let us consider how that Jesus is rare and prized. Beloved, Jesus is rare. There are many "gods" in the world, but there is only one Jesus. Yes, there are many "Jesuses" being preached in the world, but there is only one true Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came to **"save His people from their sins."** In all of Heaven there was only one Jesus Christ, who was able to be the Lamb of

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Three Precious

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God and take away the sins of His chosen people. There was not another man or angel in all Heaven, who was in the least wise qualified to be our redeemer. Yes beloved, Jesus is rare- He is the only Savior; the only door and the only way into Heaven; the only hope of salvation. His Name is the only Name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12)!

And because Jesus is so rare, He is prized by all of the elect of God who believe He is precious! How about us? Do we count Jesus to be the greatest prize of all, even greater than the rarest of earthly treasures? May God help us to see He is precious!

3. Thirdly, let us consider how that Jesus is splendid and glorious. The word "splendid" means superb, marvelous, wonderful, and super. Truly Jesus is all of these things and more. He far excels all of His creation for holiness, and power, and wisdom, and beauty. Yes, beloved, Jesus is the "chiefest of ten thousand," "the altogether lovely one." He is perfect in every way. There is not the least flaw in His person, or in all of His marvelous works. In fact, Jesus is the standard of excellence and splendor in all of Heaven and earth.

And Jesus is most glorious. The brightness of His glory is above the brightness of the sun when shining in His strength (Acts 26:13). His glory lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9). His glorious gospel shines into the hearts of His elect people (II Cor. 4:4), and enlightens them to the way of repentance, and faith in His work of redemption. And His glory will lighten New Jerusalem

in the eternal age (Rev. 21:23), so that there shall be no need for the light of the sun! Yes, beloved, Jesus is splendid, and He is most glorious.

4. Finally, we want to consider some ways that Jesus is weighty and influential. Jesus is weighty because the entire universe is dependant upon Him. Beloved, by Him all things consist, or are held together (Col. 1:17). The whole universe would otherwise fly apart into oblivion, if not for the power of Christ that holds it together. Jesus is weighty unto His elect people, for by His work of redemption on the cross of Calvary we are saved. Yes, beloved, Jesus is weighty in the salvation of our souls. It is only by Jesus and His death, burial and resurrection for our sins that we are saved.

And Jesus is weighty to rebellious sinners who will die in their sins. Every lost soul shall stand before Jesus, and give an account of their sins, and shall be judged for their sins (Rev. 20). And who will be their judge? It is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing (II Timothy 4:1).

Next we see that Jesus is influential. Beloved, there has never been a man that has influenced more people, and more nations, throughout the past 2,000 years than the Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus is the most influential man ever born into this old world. He has touched the lives of millions, and brought millions of men and women, and boys and girls, out of their bondage of sin and death, and has given them forgiveness of their sins, and new lives of true holiness, and true happiness and joy. And more importantly, He gave them eternal life with Him in glory! Yes, beloved, He is

influential in the salvation of all of His people.

Thus we see that Jesus is precious. He is most valuable and costly. He is the rarest prize of all to be sought by sinful men. Jesus is splendid and glorious above the brightness of a thousand suns. His glory shall shine in that glorious City of God, New Jerusalem, for all eternity. And, beloved, Jesus is weighty and influential. He has influenced the good of mankind far more than all of men or angels put together, for only Jesus has power to redeem man's soul from sin, and give him life eternal.

II. THE SECOND PRECIOUS THING ACCORDING TO PETER IS FAITH.

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:7). In this verse Peter is saying that our faith is much more precious than gold that perishes. Like gold, our faith is tried in God's refining fire, to the intent that in the end, it might be found unto praise, honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. But unlike gold, true faith is eternal and therefore shall never perish. Beloved, this speaks of our eternal security. Because our faith shall not perish, we likewise shall not perish, but live forever.

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:1). In this verse, Peter tells us that we have obtained like precious faith. In other words, saving faith is not something that we were born with. It was not natural to us, but it was

supernaturally imputed by the Holy Spirit of God in conversion. And not only this, there is only one kind of true saving faith. Peter referred to it as **"like precious faith."** There are many types of faith being preached today. There is the faith of the cults, who do not even believe in the deity of Christ. This is no faith at all. Men will go to hell with this kind of faith. There is the faith of the Catholics and protestants, which includes baptism, or some other kind of works for salvation. Beloved, this is no faith at all. Men will go to hell with this kind of faith also. But there is only one kind of true saving faith, and that is faith in the only true gospel of Jesus! Now lets notice some of the ways that our faith is precious in light of the synonyms for the word precious.

First, our faith is valuable. Peter said it is more valuable than gold. Why is it so valuable? We already said that faith does not perish, but is eternal. Not only this, but true faith lays hold upon the object of faith, which is Jesus Christ. Now all of the things that we already said about Jesus and why He is precious, are realized and obtained through saving faith. You see, it is wonderful to know that Jesus is all of these things, but these things mean nothing to us apart from saving faith. Therefore, saving faith is immensely valuable, because it is by faith that we experience and partake of our precious Saviour.

Faith is also costly. Now beloved, we did not pay a red cent for saving faith. Faith, we are told in Ephesians 2:8, is a free gift of God. We could not buy it, and we could not work for it. But beloved, Jesus paid the price for our faith with His precious blood. And there was no greater price that could

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have been paid for our faith, thus our faith was most costly.

True saving faith is most rare, and a great prize to be sought for by sinful men. The Bible tells us in II Thessalonians 3:2 that, **“all men have not faith.”** The fact is, when we consider the great masses of humanity throughout the ages of time, relatively few people have been given saving faith. Do you have saving faith? If so, you have a rare and precious prize. You have something that is most valuable, which comparatively few people have. May God help us to be thankful for the gift of saving faith!

Next, true saving faith is splendid and glorious. First, saving faith is glorious because it glorifies all that receive it. Without saving faith we are nothing but ugly and wretched in our sins. But by faith we are beautified. Our souls are cleansed from all our ugly sins before God. Not only that, but our lives are beautified by the power of God through faith that works in us, and transforms us into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Now, I may not look very beautiful, but you did not know me before I was saved! And because of saving faith we shall one day be glorified into the very likeness of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:2). And because of saving faith, one day all of His glorified saints shall dwell eternally in the light of His glory in the eternal state. Yes, saving faith is truly splendid and glorious!

Saving faith is also weighty and influential. No other faith, or no other system of belief, whether it be faith in the idol “gods” of man’s making, or faith in the false world view of evolution, or even faith in another Jesus, which we know

there is no other; beloved no other system of belief has made such an impact upon the human race than true saving faith in Jesus Christ.

And nothing has so influenced and affected the lives and culture of humanity, than genuine saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The western world as we know it, with its freedom and liberty of conscience, is owing to the faith of Christ. The Constitution of the United States, and the freedom we enjoy in this country, to a large extent is owing to the faith of our Baptist fathers, who greatly influenced the framers of the constitution and of our government.

And so beloved, our **“like precious faith”** is valuable and costly; it is rare and to be prized by all who have obtained it; it is splendid and glorious; and it is weighty and influential.

III. THE THIRD PRECIOUS THING ACCORDING TO PETER IS GOD’S PROMISES.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (II Pet. 1:4).

When I think of the **“precious promises”** of God, I think of the Christian hope. I think of those blessed benefits that are yet future, that God has laid up in store for His people. Peter did not just call them **“precious promises,”** but to make the point as powerful as he could, he called them **“exceeding great and precious promises.”** For time’s sake, let us just briefly consider a few of “precious promises” that constitute our hope.

One thing Peter mentioned in the verse we just read, is that

we **“might be partakers of the divine nature.”** Now beloved, that is a sermon in itself. We, who were created with a human nature, which not only is not divine, but is even lower than the angels. And not only that, but our human nature is a fallen nature because of sin. Therefore our nature is a depraved human nature, with nothing good about it whatsoever. It is corrupt from head to toe. It is vile and sinful inside and out.

But in salvation beloved, we received a new, divine nature, which is created in righteousness and true holiness, and therefore it cannot sin. While this is true, we are still plagued with the old Adamic nature, and we cannot fully appreciate the divine nature that we received in salvation. But one day, and I believe that day will be soon, we will be free from this old sinful nature, and we will know only the divine nature. Sin will be forever gone and eradicated from our being, and we shall be perfectly whole, and perfectly holy, and separate from sin, just like our precious Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We could mention the promise of our new body, which as we already said, will be fashioned like unto His glorious body. It will be a spiritual body. As a spiritual body it will be incorruptible, and immortal, and eternal. It will not be subject to sickness, pain or death. It will never experience disease. It will not grow weary and tired. It will never grow old, but it will remain forever new, with vitality and endurance like we have never known in these old earthly bodies.

We could mention our inheritance, which Peter described in 1 Peter 1:4 as **“incorruptible, and undefiled,**

and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you...” There are those mansions that Jesus went away to prepare. There is the glory and splendor of New Jerusalem. There are all the wonders of the New Heaven and the New Earth, that will be far more glorious than the Garden of Eden and of this first creation. Most precious of all will be the glorified Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ, Who shall reign upon His Throne, with God the Father upon His Throne in New Jerusalem.

Yes, beloved, we have been given **“exceeding great and precious promises.”** His promises to His children are most valuable and costly, they are rare and prized, they are splendid and glorious, and weighty and influential.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, is Jesus precious to us? If our answer is yes, then how do we show that He is precious to us by our lives. Beloved, if Jesus is precious to us, it is because we have been given like precious faith. And beloved, true saving faith will manifest itself in our lives that He is precious to us. How does our life show forth to others that we believe He is precious? Are we a member of one of His churches? If so, are we faithful to His church? How precious is Jesus to us? Are we faithful to reading and studying His Word? How precious is Jesus to us? Are we faithful in prayer and in witnessing for the Lord? How precious is Jesus to us? I pray that God will make Jesus precious to you if He is not precious to you now. If He is precious to us, I pray God will make Jesus even more precious to us.



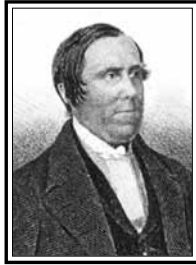
The Book That Will Suit You;

Or,
A Word for Every One

By James Smith
(1802 - 1862)

A MISTAKE CORRECTED

"It is time to seek the LORD"
(Hosea 10:12).



It is generally admitted, that the Lord should be sought; but it is as generally considered that it should be at some future period. Any time but the present, is the general idea. But this is a mistake, ---a gross mistake, ---a very dangerous mistake; for the opposite is the fact, and no time is like the present. The Lord should be sought, and sought at once; and be sought by you, whose eye is now passing over this page. Consider, He is the author of your being---the source of happiness---the center of holiness---the giver of grace---and the judge of all. You are at a distance from Him; you are in a state of estrangement; but it is quite possible for you to find Him. He is not far from you. He has revealed Himself in Jesus. You may find Him on the throne of grace. You will be admitted into His presence, if you go in the name, and plead the blood of Jesus. But seeking requires attention; it must be in faith, by prayer, with diligence. Unless you think, you will not feel; unless you feel, you will not desire; unless you desire; you will not seek. Without faith you will not find Him, for **"he that cometh to God, must believe that he is; and that he is the rewarder of them**

that diligently seek him."

It is time to seek the Lord, for none can seek Him too early. Youth has the greatest encouragement, for to such He says, **"I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me."** The young meet with the fewest obstacles. Many have delayed too long; the foolish virgins did: and multitudes, on their death-beds, have confessed and deplored this. Therefore, seek the Lord now, at once; before "the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, wherein ye shall say, I have no pleasure in them." Seek now, while God invites you---while Jesus calls you---while ministers exhort and warn you---while the Spirit is promised you---and while space for repentance is given you. Soon the door may be shut. Soon the Lord may swear, **"They shall not enter into my rest."** Soon the Eternal may say, **"Let him alone. 'Israel would none of me, so I gave them up.'"**

Do you ask why we are so earnest with you, so anxious for you? Because we wish you to be wise---to be safe---to be holy---to be honourable---to be happy: and this can never be the case, unless you **"seek the Lord."** We consider God's right. He has a right to your heart, your love, and your service; but these He will not have, except you **"seek the Lord."** We are acquainted with your need; you need the blood of Jesus to pardon you, the Spirit of God to sanctify you, the presence of God to cheer you, and the promises of God to support you; but these you will never enjoy, except you **"seek the Lord."** We know the enmity, practice, and wicked design of Satan, that he is aiming to secure your damnation; and this he will effect, except you **"seek the Lord."** We know the influence of

the world, and the force of habit; and enter into the meaning of the prophet, "Let the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots; then may they also do good who are accustomed to do evil." ---Therefore, we urge you, at once, to **"seek the Lord."** We sympathize with you, we feel love to you, we are deeply concerned for your salvation; and, therefore, we plead with you, to **"seek the Lord."** "It is time to seek the Lord," for sickness may seize you; sin may harden you; Satan may blind you; error may deceive you; the world may bewitch you; death may arrest you; or God may give you up. Not one moment beyond the present is secured to you. **"Now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation."** Therefore, "seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." Say not, **"Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season, I will send for thee."** No time is like the present. If present impressions are allowed to die away, they may never be revived; if this warning be slighted, another may not be sent; if this invitation be rejected, you may be given up to blindness and hardness of heart; and this testimony may witness against you at the last day.

*"Sinner, obey the gospel word,
Haste to the supper of your Lord:
Be wise to know your gracious day;
All things are ready, come away.*

*Ready the Father is to own
And kiss His late-returning son;
Ready the loving Saviour stands,
And spreads for you His bleeding hands.*

*Ready the Spirit to impart,
His gracious influence to your heart:
T' apply and witness with the blood,*

And seal you of the sons of God.

*Ready for you the angels wait,
To triumph in your blest estate;
Tuning their harps, they long to praise
The windows of redeeming grace.*

*Come then, O sinner to your Lord,
To happiness in Christ restored;
His proffer'd benefits embrace,
And test the fulness of His grace."*

TRUE WISDOM AND ITS RESULT

"If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself" (Prov. 9:12).

The address of Scripture is frequently direct; it comes up to the man and speaks to his face, like Ehud to Eglon, **"I have a message from God unto thee."** Or, like Nathan to David, **"Thou art the man."** So the passage before us, **"If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself."** True wisdom cometh down from above, and **"is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."** It is of the greatest importance; therefore Solomon says, **"Get wisdom, get understanding. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding."** It may be obtained, and you may obtain it; for the Apostle says, **"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."** Wisdom is religion, and real religion is true wisdom. The wise man is the holy man; and the sinner is the fool.

Wisdom, consists in admitting God's authority; in reverencing God's Word; and in aiming to please God in all things. The truly wise man cordially believes all

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that God has said, and because God has said it; he fears, because God threatens; comes to Jesus, because God invites him; prays in faith, because God bids him; rests alone for acceptance on the perfect work of Jesus, because God directs him; expects the greatest blessings, because God promises them; and obeys the precepts of the Word, because they are God's commands. He derives all his knowledge of divine things from the Bible, and learns to think as God thinks, and to speak as God speaks. He habitually prefers spiritual things to temporal; the smile of God to the applause of mortals; and the heavenly inheritance to this barren wilderness. The will of God is his rule, and the glory of God is his aim. He becomes deeply acquainted with God, and is at peace, and thereby good comes to him.

He is wise for himself, he reaps all the benefit of his wisdom. He pleases God, but cannot profit Him. Hence the question, "**Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise is profitable unto himself?**" And again, "**If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him? Or what receiveth he of thine hand.**" His wisdom will benefit his fellow-men, but the profit will be principally his own. Being wise, he will escape the snares, dangers, and temptations, into which others fall; he will secure to himself many great and invaluable blessings; he will obtain a good report in the church of God; and be prepared for all the changes to which he may be exposed. Wisdom may not preserve him from trouble, but it will help him in trouble, and

secure his speedy and honourable deliverance out of it. And at last, "**They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.**"

Reader, are you wise? Wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus? Are you wise enough to discover the nature of sin, and hate it? The guilt of sin, and obtain the pardon of it? The consequence of sin, and escape from it? Are you wise enough to flee to Jesus, and make Him your refuge from the wrath to come? Beware, lest carnal wisdom deceive you, and you be found a fool at the judgment-seat of Christ. Remember the foolish virgins, and let their mistake warn you, and their doom make you cautious; they had much, but they had not the one thing needful. Be sure you have what will be required of you at death, at the judgment; a title to Heaven, founded in the perfect work of Jesus; and a meetness for Heaven, "**by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.**" Make sure work for eternity; dig deep, and lay your foundation on the rock; "**Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**" If in Christ, you are safe; if like Christ, you are meet for Heaven.

CONTEMPT OF GOD, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

"**If thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it**" (Prov. 9:12).

To scorn, is to treat with contempt; thus they laughed Jesus to scorn, they treated Him contemptuously. This, unbelief always does; and every unconverted sinner is treating God with contempt. If God ask his heart, and speak in the kindest terms and most winning

accents, saying, "**My son, give me thine heart,**" He is treated with contempt; many never give the request any serious consideration at all, but pass it by, as though not addressed to them, or as beneath their notice; while others admit its propriety, but never practically attend to it. If He offer a free and full pardon of all sin, to every one who, laying down the weapons of rebellion, will seek it in the name of Jesus; it is treated with contempt. The sinner knows he must be pardoned, or he is lost for ever; he hears the gracious message of a kind, forgiving God, but it has no effect upon him; he passes it by as though it were unworthy of his regard. If He send the good news of a complete salvation, "**without money and without price;**" if He say, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take freely," the sinner puts it from him, and judges himself unworthy of everlasting life. Without the least show of reason, he neglects the great salvation, and despises the riches of the goodness and grace of God. In a word, every unconverted sinner scorns the authority of God in the law, and the grace of God in the gospel; he will not bow to a command, nor accept of a free salvation. He is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; but he is also proud, obstinate, perverse, scornful, and unwise.

Reader, is this your case? If so, God says, "**Thou alone shalt bear it.**" Bear what? Thy scorning. What of the scorning? The blame and the punishment. The whole blame of thy damnation will lie upon thyself. Thou hast procured it unto thyself. It is the fruit of thy scorning, the consequence of thy thus treating God with contempt. The blame is entirely thine own; it cannot be charged upon God:

He did not decree thy damnation; He warned thee, He expostulated with thee, He invited thee, He presented a full salvation unto thee, He offered thee pardon on the easiest terms; but you treated the whole with contempt. Neither can it be charged upon the ministers of the gospel; if faithful, they told thee, from the mouth of God, thy state, thy danger, and urged thee to flee for refuge to Jesus; they were earnest, affectionate, importunate; but you treated them with contempt. Nor can you lay the blame on Satan: true, he tempted, but he could not force you; he allured, but he could not compel. You preferred his counsel to that of your best friends, yea, to the counsel of the Lord and Saviour Himself; you yielded to him, while you rejected your God. the blame will be upon yourself exclusively and eternally; and so the punishment, "**Thou alone shalt bear it.**" Thou shalt bear the horrors of a guilty conscience, and the wrath of God, "**where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;**" in a word, all the consequences of treating God with contempt. Thou shalt bear it alone, without help, without sympathy, without mitigation, and without the most distant prospect of deliverance.

Let me beseech you now to examine yourself. Are you wise? Or are you a scorner? One or the other you must be, for the whole world is divided into these two classes; and soon, very soon you will find, that "if you are wise, you are wise for yourself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." If you are not decided, may I ask you, with the Psalmist, "**When will you be wise?**" Or, with Solomon, "How long will you love simplicity, and delight in your

♦ (Continued on page 43)

The Book That Will

(Continued from page 42) ♦

scorning, and hate knowledge?" Or with Paul, "How will you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?" Or with Jesus, "What will it profit you, if you should gain the whole world, and lose your own soul? or what will you give in exchange for the soul?"

THE DISTINGUISHING PRAYER

"Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation" (Ps. 35:3).

Salvation is deliverance from evil or danger. The salvation of the gospel is deliverance from sin, condemnation, and the wrath of God. Sin procures condemnation, and condemnation is introductory to punishment. The Lord saves His people from their sins. He removes the guilt of sin by the blood of Jesus; He destroys the power of sin by His Holy Spirit; and He purges out the love of sin by His sanctifying grace. He becomes their DELIVERER: and saves them with an everlasting salvation. But He not only saves them, but gives them the knowledge of salvation, so that they can rejoice in it. They know Him as their salvation, personally, experimentally, and satisfactorily: and they are happy in their God. His love and power remove their fears; His word and veracity disperse their doubts; and His faithfulness and immutability produce confidence. When He lifts up the light of His countenance, or sheds upon them the rays of His love, they exult, and say, **"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation."**

When persons become really

concerned for the salvation of their souls, they hear of this; and it appears to them to be the most desirable blessing; therefore, they begin to seek it, and in earnestness of soul, with importunity and anxiety, they cry, **"Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."** Oh, how they long for this favour! How they pant for this privilege! They feel as if they could renounce every thing else, if they may but be favoured with this. And this distinguishes those who are taught by the Holy Spirit, from all others: ---they are serious, they are in earnest, they cannot be satisfied with slight evidences. They wish to feel that they are upon the rock, that God is their refuge and strength. They sigh after the sealing of the Holy Spirit, to enjoy His witness in their hearts. In His Holy Word, the Lord tells us "whom" He will save, and "how" He will save; and by His Spirit in the heart, He assures us that He will save us. This is done by opening up and applying His Word, which scatters our doubts, and spreads a sweet and holy peace through the soul: by shedding abroad His love in our hearts, and then we feel that we love Him; and have an inward consciousness that there is nothing between God and our souls but love. We are persuaded that God is reconciled to us, and at peace with us, through the blood of His dear Son; we feel a hatred to all sin spring up; we are careful to flee from temptation; we cleave to Jesus; and dread the thought of losing the sweet presence of our God. We now possess courage, and can say, **"The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?"** (Ps. 27:1): we enjoy confidence, and exclaim, **"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help**

in trouble. Therefore will we not fear" (Ps. 46:1-2): we are full of praise, and sing, **"Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee"** (Ps. 118:28). Dear reader, has this prayer been yours? Know you any thing of deliverance from sin? Have you enjoyed the testimony of the Holy Spirit in your heart? It is heaven begun in the soul, it is true happiness. O seek it, seek it at once; and rest not until you enjoy it.

*"Come, Holy Ghost, my heart inspire!
Attest that I am born again;
Come, and baptize me now with fire
Nor let thy former gifts be vain;
I cannot rest in sins forgiven---
Where is the earnest of my heaven?"*

*Where is the indubitable seal,
That ascertains the kingdom mine?
The powerful stamp I long to feel,
The signature of love divine!
Oh, shed it in my heart abroad,
Fulness of love, of heaven, of God!"*



Berea Baptist Banner Financial Report 11-1-2013 to 11-30-2013

Beginning Balance	\$2,541.58
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	25.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Elton Dunbar, Pelion, SC	25.00
Eve Knowles, Scarborough, ME	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
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
Leonard Meador, Madison Heights, VA ..	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	50.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	500.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Pumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	84.00
Anonymous	730.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,392.45

TOTAL	\$5,934.03
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	535.00
Postage	785.78
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Supplies	107.23
Total Expenditures	\$4,053.97
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,880.06

Berea Baptist Broadcast Financial Report 11-1-2013 to 11-30-2013

Beginning Balance	\$6,788.33
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Everson, WA	200.00
.....	525.00
TOTAL	7,313.33
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	203.98
Tape Production	195.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$398.98
.....	\$6,914.35
October interest06
.....	6,914.41
November interest05
ENDING BALANCE	6,914.46

Berea Baptist Banner Financial Report 12-1-2013 to 12-31-2013

Beginning Balance	\$1,880.06
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	50.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	25.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	313.45
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	150.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Graque B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
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
James & Phyllis Kitchens, Mantachie, MS ..	25.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Pumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	179.00
Anonymous	1,225.00
Dividing checks	150.00
Sub Total	\$3,549.95
TOTAL	\$5,430.01
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	535.00
Postage	925.86
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	150.00
Total Expenditures	\$4,086.82
.....	1,343.19
Bank charge	13.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,330.19

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The New Testament Baptist Church of 865 Bethel Road in Bristol, TN has extended a call to Elder Gene Kiger and he has accepted the call. Please be in prayer for this body of Christ and her pastor as they labor together to serve our great God in the area where He has placed them. The new contact information for correspondence to church or Elder Kiger is 104 Hickory Lane Bristol, TN 37620, home (423) 574-1678, cell (336) 377-9808.

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 jamijoe@wowway.com.

The Glade Creek Baptist Church, Summersville, WV, is in need of a pastor. This church believes and preaches the doctrines of grace and church truth. Any interested Elder should call Bro. Rodney Perkins at (304) 742-3050 or Bro. Allen Frame at (304) 742-5775.

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

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

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

The Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church of Hamilton, OH is prayerfully seeking a pastor. Organized in 1938, the church holds to historic Baptist truths, including the Doctrines of Grace. Please visit the church's website at <http://twinbrook.net> to view the Church Constitution and other items that describe our beliefs and show what the church is doing today. Please contact Bro. Chris Willis at Elohimfirst@gmail.com for more information.



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

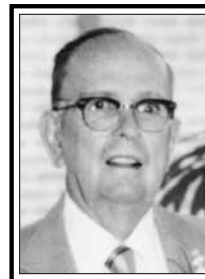
12-1-2013 to 12-31-2013

Beginning Balance	\$6,914.46
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
.....	525.00
TOTAL	7,439.46
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	363.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$363.98
.....	7,075.48
interest06
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,075.54

If Christ Should Come Tonight

By E. G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)

If Christ should come tonight, would you be ready for His coming? As it is written, **“one shall be taken, and the other left”**



(Matt. 24:40-41; Luke 17: 34-36). Which one would you be?

You may say, I don't know. In that case Romans 3:23 says, **“all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,”** and Isaiah 53:6 says, **“all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way.”** Isaiah 55:8 tells us that our way is not God's way. So, we see that everyone of us has sinned, and Ezekiel 18:4 says, **“the soul that sinneth, it shall die”** because **“the wages of sin is death”** (Rom. 6:23). This death is not just a natural death, but rather an eternal death in a raging and burning hell.

There is, however, a way out because **“God so loved the world**

that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John. 3:16). For **“he that believeth on the Son hath ever lasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”** (John 3:36). For **“verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me (that is, on Christ) hath everlasting life”** (John 6:47). Therefore, **“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31).

But one may say, what must I believe? For the answer to that question we turn to I Corinthians 15:1-4 where we learn what the gospel is, **“how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”** For the Son of man must be lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:14).

Then how must one believe? To answer that we turn to Romans 10:10 where we read that **“with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”** Decisions are made with the mind, but trusting and believing comes from the heart. So let us be safe by believing on Christ with all our heart, because he that believeth not is condemned already, because **“he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”** (John. 3:18).

Those who die condemned will suffer and beg for water in that raging, burning hell while the ceaseless ages of eternity roll on and on and on and on forever and ever.



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