

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

The Golden Age

By Arthur W. Pink (1886 - 1952)
& Luther C. Peak (1908 - 2004)

(Continued from last issue)

As we have said, the Scriptures which treat of the Millennium are very numerous, so much so that our chief difficulty is to classify them. For purpose of simplification we shall now consider the Millennium under seven heads, namely, The Millennium in relation to Satan, to Christ, to the Church, to Israel, to the World, to Creation, and to sin.

THE GOLDEN AGE IN RELATION TO SATAN

One of the greatest mysteries of all centers around the person and work of Satan. That there should be any evil in a world which has been created by the thrice Holy God, and over which He still rules in absolute dominion has furnished a problem which no human mind has ever fully solved. But that the Almighty God should have an Adversary, that He should suffer one of His creatures to openly defy Him, that He should allow him a protracted freedom, that He should permit the evil one to systematically and

continuously act in opposition to Him, that he should be the head of organized hosts of other fallen Spirits, that God should give His consent for Satan to go about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, tempting men, deceiving them, and leading them captive, at his will; and above all, that the old Serpent, the Devil, should have been given power to bruise the heel of the Christ of God is passing strange. And yet this is precisely what Scripture reveals about the arch-enemy of God and man. But the mystery deepens when we learn from the Word of God that there is a trinity of evil, three awful persons who will yet appear on the stage of human history in open revolt against the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, persons who, in the last book of the sacred canon, are denominated the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet.

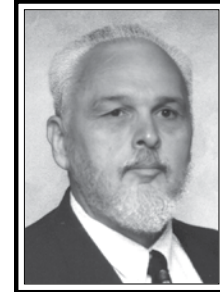
Into the origin of Satan we shall not now enter, and regarding the position he has occupied and the work in which he has

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Who Is Going to Be Like Jesus?

By Curtis Pugh
(1944 - 2018)

The Bible teaches that there are some people who will one day be like Jesus. Some people will in the future be conformed to the image of Christ. John, superintended in his writing by the Holy Spirit of God, wrote these words to those who had been born again: **"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet**



appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I

John 3:2). The Bible teaches that those who have had an experience of God's grace – those who have

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Sitting at the Feet of Jesus

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.



When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high?"

◊ *(Continued on page 10)*

The Only True Gospel

By Frank B. Beck
(1921 - 2007)

I Corinthians 15:1-4; 20-28

The word gospel comes to us from the Anglo-Saxon language and originally meant: God story, or good story, or good news. It is the glad tidings of our salvation through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the **"good tidings of great joy"**



that Christ the Lord has come to earth as our "Savior" (Luke 2:10-11), not merely as a Teacher and Example.

The importance of the Gospel is seen in that the Apostle Paul penned to the

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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.

The Golden Age

(Continued from page 1) ◊

been engaged during the past dispensations, we shall not here consider. But a few words will be in place touching his future activities. In the twelfth chapter of the Revelation we are told that shortly after the rapture of the saints, and a few years before the setting up of Christ's kingdom, the Dragon and his angels are cast out of heaven (v. 9). The reference, no doubt, being the second heaven where Satan as the "prince of the power of the air" now has his headquarters. On being cast out into the earth we read, "**The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time**" (12:12). The later chapters of the Apocalypse, together with certain prophetic portions in the Old Testament, make known to us the course Satan follows and how he employs the "short time" left him ere he is cast into the bottomless pit.

First we are told, "**And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child**" (Rev. 12:13). The "woman" here (see context) is the Nation of Israel and particularly the remnant in who are faithful to God, for even at that time the Lord will preserve to Himself a testimony in the earth. Ever since the days of the patriarchs, the Devil has waged relentless warfare against Abraham's seed. But following his ejection from heaven he makes his final attempt to blot out the name of Israel from under the sun, an attempt which will prove no more successful than his previous ones, God once more thwarting him by miraculously preserving a part at least, of Jacob's descendants.

The Beast or Antichrist

Next, we are told that the Dragon gives "**his power, and his seat, and great authority**" to the Beast (Rev. 13:2) who is the Antichrist, the second person in the Trinity of Evil. Many are the Scriptures which speak of this mysterious person, and here we can do little more than briefly refer to one or two of them. The Antichrist to whom Satan "gives" his "**power, and great authority,**" just as God "gave" to His Son "**all power...in heaven and in earth,**" (Matt. 28:18) is at every point the antithesis of the true Christ. He is denominated "the man of sin, the son of perdition" (II Thess. 2:3). Scripture contains hints which seem to show he will enter this world by supernatural generation - the Devil's parody of the Divine incarnation. This awful being, who will be a real man, yet also the "**seed**" of the Serpent (Gen. 3:15). The son of Perdition, will, at first claim to be the true Messiah of Israel, but later he will throw off his mask and will stand forth as the opponent and defier of the Lord Jesus. He will be the Antichrist. In him will be headed up all the forces of wickedness. He will be "**the man of sin.**" He will be the "lawless one," the personification of lawlessness, as the Lord Jesus was the "**Holy One of God,**" the personification of holiness. He will be the man of Satan's counsels, his final and most powerful instrument and agent.

The False Prophet

In addition to the Antichrist, there will appear on earth at the end time another mysterious person termed the "**false prophet**" (Rev. 19:20), the third person in the trinity of evil. He will be Satan's travesty of the Holy Spirit. Just as the third person in the Blessed and Holy Trinity ever delights

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The Golden Age

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in magnifying Christ, drawing out the hearts of the redeemed in worship of the Saviour, so will the third person in the trinity of evil cause men to yield submission to the Antichrist and to worship his image (Rev. 13:11-15). This false prophet will be endued with supernatural powers being able to do great wonders, making fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiving them by means of miracles which he will perform. Inseparably connected with the Antichrist and False Prophet will be the Devil himself, the first person in the trinity of evil.

The climax of evil and the climax in evil will be witnessed just before the Lord Jesus comes back to earth and sets up His kingdom. A determined attempt will be made to prevent His return to earth. This attempt will assume the form of a huge organized revolt against God and against His Christ. The first part of the second Psalm refers to this. The kings of the earth will assemble and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed One, and will say **"Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us"** (Ps. 2:3). But behind them inspiring, and over them leading, will be the whole trinity of evil. In Revelation 16:13-14 we read **"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."** This

will be the battle of Armageddon. It is described in particular in Revelation 19:19, **"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."** The One that **"sat on the horse"** is the Lord Jesus (Rev. 19:11), and those who accompany Him are the saints **"clothed in fine linen, white and clean"** (Rev. 19:14). The end of this revolt is not left in doubt. A short work will our Lord make of the proud rebels. As well might a worm seek to resist the tread of an elephant as the creature hope to succeed against the Almighty. As well attempt to roll back the ocean as aim to frustrate the counsels of the Most High: **"For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back"** (Isa. 14:27)? And thus we are told **"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh"** (Rev. 19:19-21). This disposes of the second and third persons of the evil trinity. But one still remains to be dealt with. Before the Messianic kingdom can be set up the great usurper must first be cast out.

There can be no thousand years

of righteousness and peace on earth while the great enemy of God and man is at large. As we have said before, post-millennialists who expect the kingdom to be brought in by the preaching of the Gospel plus the activities of the church, and peace idealists and social reformers who look for a Golden Age to be established by legislation and civilization all leave out of their account one dominating factor, namely, the Devil. Behind all antichristian systems, back of all the inveterate opposition to the Gospel, beneath the evil and wickedness which stalks rampant through the earth is that old Serpent the Devil. And nothing finite can remove him. None on earth can bind him. Man is incompetent to cope with his mighty adversary. Legislation cannot reach him, and the Church is powerless to rid the world of his awful presence. The only One who is mightier than he is God - the Almighty, and there can be no real and lasting blessing on earth until the Son of God Himself returns in person and removes and imprisons the arch-foe.

The removal of Satan from this earth is described in Revelation 20:1-3, **"And I saw an angel¹ come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled."** (¹We believe this "angel" to be the Lord Jesus Himself - the uncreated Angel of the Covenant (Mal. 3:1) If it should be asked, Why term Him an angel? the answer is, To connect Him with

Israel, the covenant and earthly people. See Gen. 22:15-16; 48:16; Ex. 3:2; and compare Rev. 7:2-3; 8:3; 10:1).

Satan will be **"bound"** which is the fulfillment of our Lord's word in Matthew 12:29, **"..How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house."** The **"strong man"** is our adversary, the Devil; his **"house"** is the children of this world, in contradistinction from the children of God who are the **"house"** of Christ (Heb. 3:6); the **"binding"** of the strong man is described in the passage quoted from Revelation 20; the **"spoiling of his house"** is the delivering of his captives (see Isaiah 42:7). Satan will be **"cast into the bottomless pit"** which is the fulfillment of Isaiah 14. **"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit"** (Isa. 14:12-15).

Satan will be shut up in the bottomless pit, and a **"seal"** shall be set upon him, which is God's answer to that of which we read in Matthew 27:66, **"So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."** What he has sown that shall he also reap. Thus will terminate that struggle which has lasted for six thousand years, a struggle which has been waged for the dominion of the earth.

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The Golden Age

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At last the **“roaring lion”** (I Peter 5:8) will have been overcome, overcome by the lion of the tribe of Judah. The Man with the bruised heel will have crushed the Serpent’s head, and the words spoken in Eden will then be fully accomplished. And who can describe or even imagine the blessed consequences! No more shall the brethren be accused before God (Rev. 12:10). No more shall the daughters of Abraham be **“bound, lo, these eighteen years”** (Luke 13:16). No more shall Satan tempt and try, harass and hinder the saints of God. For a thousand years the earth shall be rid of the Evil One, and his place there shall come **“times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.”** Then it shall be said: **“O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.... Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen; God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted”** (Ps. 47:1-2; 6-9).

THE GOLDEN AGE IN RELATION TO CHRIST

It has been divinely ordained that our Lord should fill three great offices, the prophetic, the priestly, and the kingly. As prophet, He acts as God’s spokesman: revealing God’s mind, communicating God’s will, unveiling God’s heart. As priest, He acts as mediator between God and men, and by

means of His atoning sacrifice He reconciles believers to God, represents His people’s interests before God, interceding for them and pleading their cause. As king, He will reign over men, enforcing God’s laws, and upholding on earth the claims of His throne. It is of Christ as King we shall now speak.

Toward the close of David’s reign, the word of the Lord came to Nathan, bidding him to go to the king, and among other things, tell him, **“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever”** (II Sam. 7:12-13). At a later date, in one of the great Messianic prophecies, it was announced concerning our Lord that **“...his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever...”** (Isa. 9:6-7). Hence, the very first verse of the New Testament reads, **“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, (thus linking Him with Israel’s throne) the son of Abraham,”** which connects Him with the land.

Just before our Lord was born an angel appeared unto Mary and said, **“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his**

father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:31-33).

Some time during our Lord’s infancy certain wise men, who were led by a star, came to Jerusalem (the royal city), asking, **“Where is he that is born King of the Jews?”** (Matt. 2:2). Our Lord, then, was born King of the Jews, but as the inspired Word informs us, **“He came unto his own, and his own received him not”** (John 1:11). Israel would not own Him; instead, they cried, **“We have no king but Caesar”** (John 19:15). And when Pilate wrote an inscription and placed it over the Cross, **“JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS,”** they desired him to alter it, and substitute **“he said, I am King of the Jews”** (John 19:21), which is further proof that the Jews had rejected Him as their King.

It was announced then, in Old Testament prophecy, and confirmed by the angel to Mary, that our Lord should occupy the throne of David. In order to the fulfillment of this, our Lord according to the flesh, sprang from one who was a lineal descendant of David, and therefore, He was born **“King of the Jews.”** But as we have seen, Israel rejected their King and crucified Him. And what we now desire to emphasize is, that, Jesus Christ has never yet assumed His kingship! On the contrary, He taught His disciples to pray **“Thy kingdom come.”** Furthermore, He said, **“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return... And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom”** etc. (Luke 19:12,15). Christ’s receiving of the Kingdom and His return synchronize (cf. II Tim. 4:1). Christ, then, is not King

today, for He has not yet received the kingdom, nor has He yet occupied the throne of His father David. Nowhere in the epistles do we find Him denominated “The King of the church.” Jesus Christ is Saviour of the church, Lord of the church, Head of the church, but He is not King of the church, for He has not yet entered upon His Kingly office, and He will not do so until the beginning of the Millennium. In the Millennium Christ will rule and reign over the earth, not only as King of the Jews, but as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is then that the prophecy of Zechariah shall be fulfilled - **“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day (a yet future day - see the context) shall there be one LORD, and his name one”** (Zech. 14:9). Our Lord’s kingship over all the earth leads us to the consideration of another important line of truth.

When Adam was created God said, **“Let us make man in our image, ...and let them have dominion...”** At the beginning, earth’s scepter was committed into the hands of man (see Psalm 8:4-8). But right on the scene of his creation came one who disputed Adam’s right to earth’s sovereignty, and who succeeded in wresting the scepter from his hands. Satan brought to bear upon him a diabolical temptation: Adam succumbed, and falling, he forfeited his dominion over the earth. As the consequence, Satan became **“the prince of this world,”** and as such approached our Lord in the temptation, when he took Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and **“sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me”** (Matt.

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Little Hills

By Nathaniel Hille of
Plant City, Florida



Acquaint Now Thyself With Him #1

“Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee” (Job 22:21).

The time that you and I are living in are like none other before them. The Scripture tells us that before the Lord comes there will come a **“falling away”** (II Thess. 2:3). Our Lord proposed the question, stating, **“... Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth”** (Luke 18:8)? The Holy Spirit declared through the Apostle Paul **“...that in the last days perilous [dangerous] times shall come”** (II Tim. 3:1). Peter declared concerning the last days that **“...there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming...”** (II Peter 3:3). Yet, the Bible still declares, that even in these circumstances, **“Now the just shall live by faith...”** (Heb. 10:38). It has always been true that those who have been justified by the Lord are to live by faith. Our own study of Hebrews 11 has shown us that the just have always lived by faith regardless of the circumstances, which surround them.

Faith is defined by the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 11:1. The Amplified Bible reads: “Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title-deed) of the things [we] hope for, beign the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality—faith perceiving

as real fact what is not revealed to the senses.” Another said that “Faith is taking God at His word.” And so it is. We must realize, believe, accept that living by faith is more than mentally consenting unto doctrines found in Scripture. Rather, that these teachings govern our lives and how we conduct ourselves. Genuine faith is under assault today. Nominal Christians, people who have “faith” but no object to which their faith is in has heavily influenced God’s people today.

We must remember, that we cannot hold God to a promise He did not make. Many people are trusting God to do something He never said He would. Yet, those same people refuse to trust Him to do what He said He would. Why is this? Jesus stated to the Sadducees that they did **“...err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God”** (Matt. 22:29). This is still the cause of many errors today in practical faith. We fail to know the Scriptures, that is, what the Scriptures actually say; and we fail to know the power of God.

As we said earlier, we have seen the exploits of faith by the just in Hebrews 11. We will now embark on a study of the Lord that we, too, may have great exploits of faith. We will acquaint now ourselves with the Lord, as Job was instructed to do (Job 22:21).

HOW FAITH INCREASES

It is the desire of God that His children would **“...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...”** (II Peter 3:18). The Bible

describes God’s people as having been **“born again”** (John 3:3, 7). We often refer to this as “the new birth.” When an individual is born again, they are referred to as **“babes in Christ”** (I Cor. 3:1). Just as a newborn baby must grow physically, mentally, and emotionally, so, too, must **“babes in Christ”** grow spiritually. If a baby did not grow we would think that there is something wrong with it. If a new born babe in Christ is not growing then something is wrong. Many of God’s people remain in a state of infancy when it comes to their faith. Their faith is not increasing. The Bible records God’s people desiring their faith to increase: **“And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief”** (Mark 9:24); **“And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith”** (Luke 17:5).

How then shall our faith increase? The Holy Spirit gives us the answer, stating, **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Rom. 10:17), and **“As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”** (I Peter 2:2). Our faith increasing is dependent upon our hearing and desiring the word of God. There are two kinds of hearing. We hear it audibly and then we really hear God’s Word. Sadly, there are many who are like those in the days of Amos. The Scripture describes that time as a day in which there was a famine **“...of the hearing of the words of the LORD”** (Amos 8:11). We also live in a day when folks do not desire to hear God’s Word declared. Paul records **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they**

heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (II Tim. 4:3, 4).

Therefore, lest we be numbered among those with **“itching ears”** let us embark upon this study that our faith may be increased.

THE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH: THE LORD HIMSELF

Since the Lord is the object of our faith, it will behoove us to **“Acquaint now thyself with Him...”** (Job 22:21). Job was being interrogated by his three friends. Much of what they said concerning Job’s situation was faulty. Here we find Eliphaz offers Job excellent instruction, though misapplied to Job’s case **“acquaint now thyself with him...”** (Job 22:21). The word **“acquaint”** is defined as **“to be familiar with”** (Strong’s Concordance #H5532). There is an implication that this familiarity is found out by being **“serviceable to”** or **“minister to”** the one we need to acquaint ourselves with. Thus, Job is instructed to become familiar with the Lord by rendering service unto Him, ministering unto Him. How different is this from our way of thinking today! We want to see the Lord’s provision and plan all before we begin our service. Yet, the instruction is to become familiar to Him by ministering unto Him. Did not Paul and Barnabas find the Lord to be everything He said He would be when they were ministering unto Him? Acts 13:1-2 states **“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with**

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Little Hills

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Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Beloved, all the years that they went on ministering to the Lord they became familiar with the Lord. Paul wrote, **“That I may know him...”** (Phil. 3:10). Paul was not referring to “knowing” Christ as His Savior, but to know the Lord experimentally. Paul desired to **“know”** and experience God in all of His Person.

Beloved, you will experience God to be everything He says He is; everything He has revealed Himself to be when you are ministering unto Him, when you are engaged in the service and work of the Lord. Those who do nothing in the work of the Lord will never find the Lord alone to be sufficient for His people. But those who have labored in the Lord have found Him to be our all-sufficient, our El-Shaddai, (II Cor. 3:5; Gen. 17:1).

The Lord challenges His people to put Him to the test. In the times of the prophet Malachi God’s people had been robbing Him in tithes and offerings. No doubt there were many who said they could not afford to live if they gave unto the Lord as they ought to. Yet the Lord challenged them to see if He would be faithful unto His word, stating, **“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it”** (Mal.

3:10). The **“LORD of hosts”** issues a challenge to His people to trust Him by obeying what His word says. In this instance, it was to bring the tithes into the storehouse. What is it in your own life that you need to prove, to test, to examine, to try as a metal that the Lord has commanded you to do?

We are told that Sarah, Abraham’s wife, proved the Lord. You recall how that God had promised to give Abraham a son by Sarah? Recall, how that Sarah had laughed at first upon hearing God’s promise (Genesis 18:12, **“Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?”**). But something changed. We are told that **“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age...”** (Heb.11:11). What had changed? She believed God! How did she go from laughing and doubting to trusting the Lord? **“...she [Sara] judged him [the LORD] faithful who had promised”** (Heb. 11:11). The word **“judged”** literally means “to examine and decide.” Beloved, we must examine the Lord. We must look at the Lord critically, methodically. We must look at Him as He has revealed Himself according to the Scriptures. This is the study we are going to embark on that our faith in Him might increase. AMEN!



The Golden Age

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4:8-9). But on the cross, the Lord Jesus regained the scepter which Adam lost; and here is the key to Revelation 5.

In the 5th chapter of the

Apocalypse a remarkable scene is brought before us. The beloved apostle sees a book - **“written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals”** - in the right hand of Him which sat upon the Throne. Then he hears an angel saying, **“Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?”** Next we are told, **“And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.”** Many have been the conjectures concerning this mysterious **“book,”** but by comparing Scripture with Scripture we think there can be no doubt as to what is here in view. In Jeremiah 32:5-15 we read of a field being bought and the receipt (the “evidence”) of the purchase is termed a **“book,”** and this book was **“sealed.”** It is to a similar transaction that Revelation 5 refers. The book seen by the apostle contains the title deeds to this earth. These title deeds which Adam lost have been recovered by Christ. They have been recovered by “purchase,” and the price paid by the precious blood of the Lamb. In Matthew 13:44 we read of a Man who **“goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field,”** and in verse 38 of the same chapter we are told, **“The field is the world.”** Hence it is that the apostle was told, **“Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof”** (Rev. 5:5). What is seen in vision in Revelation 5 becomes actual fact when the Lord Jesus returns to this earth. It will be at that time that the “purchased possession” - the earth - is **“redeemed”** (Eph.

1:14). Hence, when He comes back, His first act will be to eject Satan from it, establish His kingdom upon it, and exercise “dominion” over it.

Another Scripture which throws light upon the Millennium in relation to Christ is I Peter 1:13. Here the second coming of our Lord (to the earth) is termed, **“the revelation of Jesus Christ.”** This is in contrast from the first advent. When He was here before, His divine glory was veiled, and much of His power and majesty were concealed. But when He comes back again, His divine glory shall be fully manifested. Instead of appearing as the gentle Lamb, He will come as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Instead of standing before human tribunals to be judged of men, He will summon all nations before Him and sit in judgment upon them. Instead of appearing in humiliation, weakness, and shame, He will be revealed in regal power and majesty. Instead of coming to be the victim, He will return as the Victor, to sit upon the throne of His glory. So, then, the Millennium is the time when our Lord enters into the exercise of His kingly office, when He will reign in power and exercise dominion over all the earth, and when His personal glory shall be fully manifested.

The full manifestation on earth of the personal glory of Christ in the Millennium was wondrously foreshadowed on **“the holy mount.”** Many who have written of the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus have quite missed the point of its meaning and teaching. The key to it is found in II Peter 1 where we have, in a brief word, God’s own interpretation. The apostle tells us, **“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known**

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unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory,... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (II Pet. 1:16-17). The transfiguration, then, was a visible though transitory showing forth of the glory of Christ in the Millennium. Further proof of this is contained in the Lord's own words to His disciples as recorded in Matthew 16:28, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." The fulfillment of Christ's promise is seen in the words which immediately follow - "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up in a high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them." According to the express declaration of our Lord, His transfiguration was the Son of Man "coming in his kingdom." That is to say, it was a foreshadowing of that glorious event: it was a visible setting forth of it. The details recorded of this blessed event all serve to confirm this conclusion.

The Transfiguration; A Type of the Kingdom

First we note that the transfiguration was a seventh day scene. Matthew says it occurred "after six days" (i.e. from the time Christ told His disciples they could see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom). Luke tells us it was "about an eight days after these sayings" (Luke 9:28). This seventh day carries us back to the seventh day of Gen. 2:2. The first Sabbath on which God "rested"

was, as said before, a type of the Millennial reign of Christ, which is the great Sabbatismos (Heb. 4:9), the Millennial rest.

"...And his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:2). During the days of Christ's humiliation when He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, we are told "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isa. 52: 14), but here on the Mount His face did shine as the sun. The disciples were favored with a glimpse of Him in His resurrection glory. It is thus the Lord Jesus now appears in heaven, which is evident from the blinding effects of His glory as manifested to Saul on the Damascus road. And it is thus He will appear when He shall return to this earth arising as "the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2).

"And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him" (v.3). From the fact that Moses (representative of the Law) and Elijah (standing for the Prophets) were with Christ at this time, we may learn that the Old Testament saints shall have their part and place with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom. There is also another feat revealed here - precious thought! - when our Lord returns to the earth He will be accompanied by two classes of saints, here represented by Moses and Elijah, namely, those who have passed through death and those who have been "changed" and raptured to heaven without seeing death. The three disciples Peter, James, and John may be regarded as representatives of the church, not, of course, the church in its divine unity, but in individual capacity.

"While he yet spake, behold,

a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (v. 5). The mention of the "bright cloud" here is deeply significant, the more so as it was out that the voice of God was heard speaking. This was the "Cloud" which had been withdrawn from Israel centuries before but which now suddenly appeared again. This was the "Cloud" in which Jehovah appeared of old - the Cloud of the Shekinah glory. It was the "Cloud" which filled the Tabernacle - "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Ex. 40:34). This was the "Cloud" which guided Israel throughout their wilderness wanderings - "And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up" (Ex. 40:36-37). This was the "Cloud" in which Jehovah appeared in the Holy of Holies upon the mercy-seat (Lev. 16:2). This was the "Cloud" which filled the Temple of Solomon (I Kings 8:10). Little wonder then that the disciples "fell on their faces, and were sore afraid" (v.7)! The appearing of the Shekinah "Cloud" on the mount of transfiguration was the intimation that it shall be visible again to Israel in the Millennial Kingdom. That it will be is further evident from the prophecy of Isaiah 4:5, "And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for above all the glory shall be a defence" - the context here shows this has reference to the Millennium, See

further Ezekiel 43.

"And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only" (v. 8). This touch to the picture is a beautiful one. It tells us that in the Millennium our blessed Lord shall be exalted high above all, that He shall occupy the position of pre-eminence, that all human glory shall pale and disappear before His. As it is written, "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. 2:17).

The hour when the transfiguration occurred is significant, from Luke's account we gather that it happened at night, for, we read, "But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep" (Luke 9:32). Thus will it be at the close of the long dark night of Israel's dispersion, - they will look up and behold their Messiah returning in power and glory, accompanied by ten thousands of His saints who will be on such terms of holy familiarity with Him (compare "Moses and Elijah talking with Him") that the world shall marvel at that wondrous grace which made them "joint-heirs with Christ."

The transfiguration also revealed the blessedness of that time when Christ shall set up His Millennial Kingdom. "Lord it is good for us to be here" (v.4) was the exclamation that fell from the lips of the astonished Peter. Thus will it be in the Millennium. "Lord, it is good for us to be here" will well express the contentment and the joy of those who will be upon the earth in those days. Oh! what a time that will be. Satan removed, the Antichrist destroyed, and all that opposes

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the Gospel swept from the face of the earth. Israel penitent and restored, the heathen nations then completely evangelized, and creation itself delivered from its bondage of corruption. The saints "with Christ," wearing their glorified bodies, and participating in His reign over an earth full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Christ Himself on the throne, the Holy Spirit poured out upon all flesh, and outwardly God's will done upon the earth as it is in heaven. Yes, then indeed, shall it be said, "Lord, it is good to be here."

Striking indeed was the vision vouchsafed to the three favored disciples. Remarkably full was that manifestation of the glory of Messiah's coming kingdom. But, the sequel to the transfiguration was equally wonderful in its typical signification, and was needed to complete this spectacular setting forth of the Redeemer's return to the earth.

"And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is a lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water . . . and Jesus rebuked the devil: and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour" (vss. 14-15, 18). What a sight was this which confronted our Lord and His disciples as they came down from the "holy mount!" What a picture of Israel in particular and of the world in general! Thus will it be at the time of our Lord's return to this earth. The first thing which the Saviour did after He had given the disciples a vision of

His glory in the coming kingdom, was to cast out a demon; and the first thing He will do when He returns to the earth, will be cast out the Devil and secure him for a thousand years in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:2-3). God hasten that blessed day!

THE GOLDEN AGE IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH

At the first stage of Christ's second coming (which will be into the air) the Church is removed from the earth, being raptured miraculously like Enoch and Elijah. Hence, when the Saviour returns to the earth, the Church will accompany Him. This is clear from Colossians 3:4 and Jude 14 - **"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."**

Exactly what part the Church will play during the Millennium it is not easy to say. Few details are revealed. A moment's reflection will show why this is the case. It is in the Old Testament that the Millennium receives the fullest consideration, whereas the Church is a heavenly creation, and has a heavenly citizenship and destiny (see Phil. 3:20; I Peter 1:4). Nevertheless, one or two things are sure. The Church will be with Christ throughout the Millennium, and not only so, the saints will reign with Him. **"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall**

reign on (or "over") the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). And again we read, **"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years"** (Rev. 20:6). Who can picture the blessed accomplishment of this promise! For two thousand years the saints have (more or less) lived as strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Many of them have been maligned, ostracized, persecuted, and martyred. They went forth unto Christ **"without the camp, bearing His reproach"** (Heb. 13:13). But now shall they be richly rewarded. They suffered **"with Him"** and now shall they also be **"glorified together"** (Rom. 8:17). And then will it be fully manifested that **"the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"** (Rom. 8:18).

In the parable of the pounds we have a Scripture which sets forth one aspect of the reward which shall be enjoyed by the faithful in that day. **"And he (Christ) said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities"** (Luke 19:17). This Scripture seems to intimate that during the Millennium the saints will occupy a prominent part in the government of the world. Yea, it is written, **"Do ye not know that saints shall judge the world"** (I Cor. 6:2)? Ah! How different things will then be. The first shall be last, and the last first. Positions shall be completely reversed. Today the children of God (that is, those who really walk as such) are despised and hated by the world, but they shall be placed in authority over the world.

This is the promise of our Lord: **"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father"** (Rev. 2:26-27). Yes, Christ's position, Christ's power, Christ's prerogatives shall be shared by His people, for He and they are one.

Again; it is during the Millennium that the unity of the Church - in contradistinction from the innumerable sects in Christendom which now divide believers - will be fully manifested, and our Lord's prayer of John 17:22-23 fulfilled: **"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."** Not until the "Day of Christ" will the world "know" these things, for then it is that we shall all have come **"in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"** (Eph. 4:13). Yes, and then it is, also that Christ shall come **"to be glorified in his saints,"** and to be admired in all them that believe (II Thes. 1:10). In that day, the Church will be an object of beauty, wonderment and admiration to all the world. It will then be fully seen what great things the Lord hath done for His Church, in giving it a higher place - a place nearer to Himself than that which even the holy angels will occupy.

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Who Is Going to

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been born again – can know these two things: 1) that they are children of God and 2) that they will one day be like Jesus Christ. One day they will be free from sin and its effects and consequences. This is stated in no uncertain terms. This verse says, **“now are we the sons of God,”** and **“we know... we shall be like him.”** John also stated in no uncertain terms one of the reasons he wrote this letter. He wrote: **“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life”** (I John 5:13). It is possible for a believer in Christ to know that he or she has (right now possesses) eternal life!

The Bible also tells us exactly who it is that will one day be like Jesus. Speaking of God, the Bible says, **“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”** (Rom. 8:29). The word “foreknow” has to do with God’s pre-ordaining work. It does not mean just to know about someone or something. God knows everything and thus knows all about every person. But only certain people are spoken of in this verse: the **“whom”** that God **“did foreknow”** necessarily contrasts to those whom God did not foreknow. In addition to this fore-knowledge, the Bible plainly says that God did something else to these people. He **“did predestinate”** them **“to be conformed to the image of his Son.”** So here we have it in plain words. Those who will one day be like Jesus are those whom God **“did predestinate to be**

conformed to the image of his Son.” The purpose of their being predestinated was not stated as being to go to Heaven, but rather to be **“conformed to the image of his Son.”**

People react to this Bible teaching in different ways. Those who have properly learned Christ rejoice in knowing that God has them in His plan of salvation. Others may be honest and say that they do not understand this teaching. Still others may say that they do not believe in predestination. That means that they do not believe the Bible because the words “predestinate” and “predestinated” are in the Bible. If you believe the Bible you must believe in predestination. It is sad that there are other people who may hate the very idea of predestination. They think it takes away their freedom. They think that they have freedom, but their freedom is limited in many ways. They had no freedom as to where or when they were born naturally, but think they are in control of the new birth. People have no freedom to choose their nationality or ethnicity, but they think they can make themselves children of God if they chose to do so. They were not given the freedom to decide whether or not they were born into a wealthy family or a very poor one, but believe they can obtain the riches of Heaven by an act of their will. Most importantly, they do not have the freedom to cease from sinning. No man or woman has that freedom. All of us human beings sin in thought, word and deed – and even by not doing what is right when we know to do it. The Bible says, **“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”** (James 4:17). So regardless of what you want to believe about

your freedom, you cannot and will not live contrary to your nature. You are by nature a sinner and you do sin. God per-determined or predestinated things and you have no control over them. So tone down your empty rhetoric about your supposed “freedom” and “free will.” You cannot even stop sinning! Long ago in the Old Testament the prophet Jeremiah asked and answered his own question on this subject. In Jeremiah 13:23 he wrote, **“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”** So much for the so-called free-will of man!

It is just a matter of honesty for those who do not understand predestination to say that they do not. There is nothing wrong with being honest! However, if you willfully refuse to believe in the Bible teaching of predestination, you are rejecting God’s Word. We doubt there is any hope for a person who rejects the Word of God for we are mindful of the words of Christ in John 12:48 where He said, **“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”** Those who reject the Word of God only have judgment ahead of them. To hate the Bible doctrine of predestination is to hate God’s sovereign rule over you. It is rebellion against Him. One of the characteristics of people who will not be like Jesus is that they are **“haters of God”** (Rom. 1:30). If you hate what God has done, do you not hate God?

Be careful that you do not reject the revealed truth of God in His Word! The Bible plainly says that there are some people whom God **“did predestinate to be conformed to the image of**

his Son.” The verse that follows the verse where that phrase is found goes on to say, **“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,”** (Rom. 8:30). God not only predestinated those who shall be like Jesus, He also **“called”** them with His all-powerful call – one which causes them to answer. There is a general call of the gospel that goes to all who hear the gospel with natural ears. But this is a specific call which produces God’s desired effect in those who are called in this way. Jesus spoke of this work of the Father in some people when He said, **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day”** (John 6:44). There is a drawing that is effective: a calling that produces a proper response. This is a part of God’s working in His elect people. Their answer is repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ (see Acts 20:21). As the hymn writer wrote, “O love that wilt not let me go.” There is a God from whom you cannot escape if He has set His love upon you. The psalmist knew about this and wrote, **“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me... For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb”** (Ps. 139:7-10 & 13). “Oh!” The Bible-rejecting free-willer cries, “I will not believe that! I will not have

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it! If God worked in me and for me and upon me in my mother's womb, my free will is a farce. I can go away from God if I want to!"

Nevertheless, it remains a Bible truth: God not only predestinated, but He called, and, **"Those whom he called, He also justified"** or declared them to be righteous based upon the finished work of Christ on the tree. And the final and full salvation of these predestinated people is so sure and certain that the Bible says they are already **"glorified."** In the mind and purpose of Almighty God, although they have not experienced it yet, God's chosen people – those whom He **"did predestinate"** are viewed as having already received their glorified bodies and as being like Jesus. What God has determined to be done is that sure and certain. To believe otherwise is to say that God cannot do what He wants to do. It is to say that God's plan and purpose can be thwarted and blocked. But the Bible says these words regarding God and mankind: **"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou"** (Daniel 4:35)? Why will you yet resist God and rebel against Him? Hebrews 12:9 says, **"...shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"** Rebellion will get you nowhere except the lake that burns with fire and brimstone!

Rejoice that God has all things in His control. It is He that determines who will eventually be like Jesus: who will be conformed

to the image of His Son. Because of this His salvation is sure and certain! Men cannot attain to this. Human effort will not achieve it. Neither religion, education, good deeds, obedience to the law or any other works of an individual will cause him or her to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. But God is able to do for individuals and work within individuals in such a way as to bring them to Christ in a saving way. He is able to keep them through the faith which He gives them and continue that good work which He began in them. Paul wrote to the congregation in Philippi these words: **"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"** (Phil. 1:6). **"Salvation is of the LORD"** (Jonah 2:9). There is no hope for lost men in religion. There is no hope for lost men in reformation. There is no hope for lost men in good works. The only hope for lost men is Christ! If a man does not have an interest in the finished work of Christ on the tree, he places his faith in other things – none of which will finally conform him to the image of God's Son!

Those who reject the Biblical teaching on the subject of predestination and yet who claim to be the children of God are forced to base their "assurance of salvation" on works that they did. They cannot rest upon the Word of God which says that God's elect people were predestinated **"to be conformed to the image of his Son."** They may boast in their faith. They may rest in a decision they made or a prayer they prayed. They may rest in having been baptized. They may trust in their church or the rituals they have observed. They may trust in a multitude of such

things, but their trust is not in the God of the Bible nor in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shed His blood **"for many,"** according to His own words in Mark 14:24. The blood-bought children of Jehovah – those purchased by the blood of the Son of God – have a grand and glorious future ahead. They shall all one day be like Jesus! Having God's Word and Christ's Holy Spirit indwelling them, they soldier on. Their faith is not in themselves, their church, their baptism, their faith, their works, their decision – but is in the living Christ. On the other hand, those whom God has not predestinated to be like Jesus do not want to be like Him. They have no interest in righteousness: no concern for holiness. They do not hate their sin, but rejoice in it. They may not wish to go to the lake of fire, but they have no concern over their sins as an offense to God. They are not concerned with pleasing Him. And by their lack of concern for spiritual things they demonstrate that their wills are in rebellion against God.

But the gospel call still goes out to one and all! **"...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"** (Luke 13:5). Speaking to the saints in one of the New Testament congregations, Paul wrote, **"...how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God"** (I Thess. 1:9). While strictly speaking, an idol is a false god, it is possible to make a false god out of man's supposed free will. It is possible to make man and his supposed ability a false god. It is possible to make baptism or a church or denomination or even a system of doctrine a false god. It is possible to make baptism or the Lord's Supper a false god. If you, reader, have been trusting in a false god for salvation, repent! Turn to God

and trust no more in such fleshly things. Trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ. We preach as John the Baptist did, **"Behold the Lamb of God"** (John 1:36)! God's Lamb – God's sacrifice – His own Son the Lord Jesus finished all the work God gave Him to do! Do not think to add to what He did. **"...Repent ye, and believe the gospel"** (Mark 1:15). Where do you stand in relation to Christ and His finished work on Calvary? **"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:18).



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I beseech thee, torment me not. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and

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Sitting at the Feet of

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went and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again” (Luke 8:26-37).

In this passage which we have just read, we have the account of a man who was possessed with devils, being saved and delivered by the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now, whenever we come to this passage, we always like to be reminded of how this man is a most excellent picture of any lost man, that is saved by the grace of God. Surely, this is a picture of everyone of us, in our natural state.

Let us look at the condition of this man, after the Lord has come unto him. And, in examining the saved condition of this man, I want us to concentrate on this verse: **“Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid”** (Luke 8:35). Now, in our examination of the condition of this saved man, let us look at the description which is painted of him – and let us look at the description in reverse order; that is, I want us to notice how he was **“In His Right Mind;” “Clothed;”** and, **“Sitting at the Feet of Jesus.”**

IN HIS RIGHT MIND

As proof of the need for men and women to come to the right frame of mind (and the right condition before God), let me refer you to the Prodigal Son of Luke 15. We read about this young man in Luke 15:11-24, **“And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf,**

and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.” We read in verse 17 that this young man **“came to himself.”** There was a change in his mind. And not just in his mind, but in his attitude, understanding and even, we might say, a change in his heart. There is a necessary change that must take place in our lives, if we are ever to repent of our sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We read in Colossians 1:21-22, **“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight.”** The Holy Spirit comes upon us, and effects a change in our will and in our hearts. Our needs and our Saviour are revealed unto us, and we believe in the reconciliation that is accomplished in Christ.

Paul explains the need for a change this way: **“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Rom. 8:6-8). The demoniac there on the shores of the sea, was in a terrible condition. What a surprise when Jesus was revealed to him as his own Saviour! How wonderful it must have been, to have been relieved of those devils, and then to look at the Lord Jesus, and behold the Son of God the Saviour of men!

So, there must be a change of mind in order that one would believe on Jesus Christ, and follow Him. **“And be not conformed**

to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

CLOTHED

Let us return to our text verses and study them a little further. Notice that the man in our text passage, was found to be **“...sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind...”** (Luke 8:35). Not only was the man **“in his right mind,”** but, he was also **“clothed.”** I think that the clothing that this saved man was wearing is a picture of the garments of salvation.

Remember, before the Lord Jesus Christ came to him, this man was often times found naked. In fact, when the Lord Jesus Christ first appears in the presence of this man, he is naked, or scantily clad. This is a good picture of every man in his natural condition, as he might stand in the presence of Jesus Christ, God Almighty.

We read about how that the Lord has clothed His people Israel: **“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers’ skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead,**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. In Matthew 19:8 and Mark 10:5, Jesus speaks of the “hardness” of men’s hearts? What does he mean by “hardness” and is it the same type of hardness (“hardened”) that Pharaoh had in the book of Exodus?



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“He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so” (Matt. 19:8). No two ways about it! It is wrong but we do it anyway. That is the essential definition of hard hearts, is it not. Selah! Think about it!

David describes two different kinds of sins in Psalms 19:12-13, **“Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.”** First we have “secret faults” that we need to be made aware of and clean them out of our lives. If we stumble and fall into sin, we need to get back up and abstain from those trespasses with pure holy minds and hearts. The problem that David wanted most to avoid was the second kind of sin, presumptuous sins. They are not secret, because we know them for the sin that they are, but arrogantly commit them because our hearts have gotten hard and cold. The sins of a hard heart are presumptuous, pragmatic and conceited. David calls it the

“great transgression” when we have a hardening veneer over our devotion, obedience, and love for our Master and Lord. Selah! Think about it!

Our text verse says that divorce is not okay, and that from the beginning God made men and women to have a lifetime monogamous relationship. But yet with hardened hearts, men and women rationalize away God’s order and defy God’s commandments to love and cherish each other forever. It is a presumption upon God’s grace. By that, I mean, it is a sin that God will surely punish—to break the covenant of marriage—and the fact that He does not immediately judge that rebellious act, does not mean you are getting away with anything. God’s longsuffering is inscrutable at times, but be sure your sin will find you out. The cost of defying God’s order is destroying America one generation at a time.

The Bible (from the beginning) says no remarriage after a divorce, but yet we rationalize it, presume upon God’s grace, and harden our hearts. The Bible (from the beginning) says for us to cover and be modestly dressed (in our gender’s attire!), but yet we rationalize it, presume upon God’s grace and harden our hearts. The Bible (from the beginning) says no X-mas or Astarte celebrations, but yet we rationalize it, presume upon God’s grace and harden our hearts. The Bible (from the beginning) says wine in the Lord’s Supper, but yet we rationalize it,

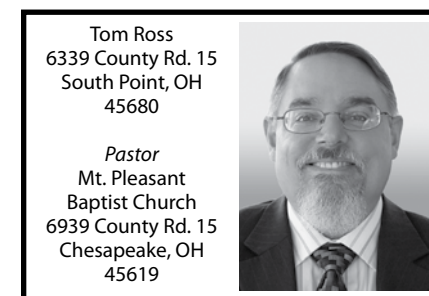
presume upon God’s grace and harden our hearts. The Bible (from the beginning) has a headcovering on our ladies in church, but yet we rationalize it, presume upon God’s grace and harden our hearts. The Bible (from the beginning) says there is but one ekklesia, but yet we rationalize it, presume upon God’s grace and harden our hearts. The Bible (from the beginning) proclaims a salvation only by sovereign grace, but yet we rationalize it, presume upon God’s grace and harden our hearts. Pragmatism means that we believe the ends justify the means. Not to God, they do not!

I think we should be concerned that our hearts do not become so hardened, as to warrant a comparison to Pharaoh in Egypt. Sixteen times his heart was hardened, by some of the same things that harden ours! Exodus 7:3, unwanted truth hardened Pharaoh’s heart; in 7:13-14, it was arrogance; 7:22, deceit; 8:15, respite; 8:19, denial; 8:32, God’s longsuffering and mercy hardened his heart; 9:7, it was hatred; in 9:12, stubbornness; 9:34-35, it was sin; 10:1, lack of reverence; 10:20, false hope; 10:27, black-hearted rage hardened his heart; in Ex.11:10, the disbelief of atheism hardened his heart, despite KNOWING that God was real and powerful; finally, even on the shores of the Red Sea, he hardened his heart because of frustration in Ex.14.4; for greed in 14:8; and lastly with a misplaced honor in 14:17, as he ordered the chariots of Egypt into Israel’s dry path across the Red Sea.

Do some of those thoughts, ideals and attributes characterize us from time to time? Then beware lest our hearts are becoming hardened. What we need is submission and loving obedience to God’s clear word to

soften our hearts. May the Lord grant us tenderness and humility in place of our callous and prideful hearts and trust Him to lead us in His paths of righteousness. Selah! Think about it!

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According to Strong’s Concordance the Greek word for “hardness” in Matthew and Mark is *sklerocardia* which means hardness of heart and destitute of spiritual perception. A different word *skleruno* is used in Romans 9:18 where it speaks of Pharaoh’s heart being hardened, which means harden or to render stubborn. It appears that both have the same general meaning.

The unsaved man has a hardened, stubborn heart that is void of spiritual perception. His heart is ignorant and blinded to spiritual truth. This may be said of everyone who is lost. It may also be said of all men before God changed their wicked heart, mind, and will. Only God can overcome and overpower the hardness of man’s heart by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. When God changes the stubborn heart of man He draws him out of darkness to light and out of deadness to life in Jesus Christ. The heart that was once stubbornly ignorant is now entirely compliant with the command to repent and believe the Gospel message. The regenerated heart is opened by God to gladly receive Christ Jesus the Lord.

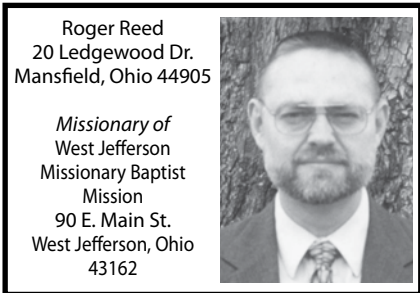
In Pharaoh’s case it appears

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What is meant by “**confess your faults one to another**” in James 5:16?



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The word “**faults**” in the Authorized Version gives the impression that a man’s deeds are not too evil; they were only faults. But it is the word *hamartia* that James used, and this word means “sin.” It is the same word used in James 1:15, where the subject is definitely sin.

The “confessing” that James wrote about is done among the saints. So, to whom do we confess our sins? The text says “to each other.” James does not specify the church or the elders; rather, he speaks of mutual confession on a one-to-one basis within a circle of believers. He does not rule out that members of the church ought to confide in the pastor and elders (v. 14). Some sins concern all believers in the church and thus these sins ought to be confessed publicly. Other sins are private and need not be made known except to persons who are directly involved. Discretion and limitation, therefore, must guide the sinner who wishes to confess his personal sins. Curtis Vaughan makes this telling observation: “But whereas the Roman Catholics have interpreted confession too narrowly, many of us may be tempted to interpret it too broadly. Confession of all our sins to all the brethren is not

necessarily enjoined by James’ statement. Confession is “the vomit of the soul” and can, if too generally and too indiscriminately made, do more harm than good.”

Also, we confess our sins first of all to the Lord, “**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**” (I John 1:9), but we must also confess them to those who have been affected by them. We must never confess sin beyond the circle of that sin’s influence. Private sin requires private confession; public sin requires public confession. It is wrong for Christians to “hang dirty wash in public,” for such “confessing” might do more harm than the original sin. Sins confessed in the church, stays in the church, it is not for others to know.

In the early church I am confident that being able to go to a brother or sister and confess faults one to another was a wonderful thing and many were healed because they would take it to the Lord together in private, but unfortunately that is not the case today. Even though gossiping is a sin, many today cannot help themselves to keep what they have heard to themselves.

Even among preaches you hear many times, so and so told me to keep this confidential so do not say anything to anyone! Well, so much for confidentiality. If you have a secret and tell one person, it is no longer a secret. That is what happened to Samson! Samson and God had a secret. The secret was Samson’s strength.

No one knew how Samson was so strong, until eventually he told Delilah, and no more secret! It cost Samson dearly.

Dear reader, do you have sins that only you and God know exist? You may have been able to talk to someone about them years ago, but I doubt that is the case today. Here is an example (and I have seen this happen), Sister A goes to Sister B, and confesses her deep dark sin or sins, and Sister B goes to Sister C and says, “Do you know what Sister A told me? Do you know what she has done?” Once again, “Confession is ‘the vomit of the soul’ and can, if too generally and too indiscriminately made, do more harm than good.”

You are better to keep your private sin between you and the Lord and confess and repent, and ask Him to help you stop doing whatever it is you are doing. But remember, public sin requires public confession. God Bless!

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The Greek word for “**faults**” here is “paraptoma” and it is also translated as trespasses or offenses elsewhere in Scripture. The thought James is pursuing is the same that Christ was teaching in Matthew 6:14-15, “**For if ye forgive men their trespasses (paraptoma), your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses (paraptoma), neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (paraptoma).**” Confess your “faults” your “offenses” to one another and seek forgiveness.

Selah! Think about it!

I have often told the congregation here at Big Creek Baptist that forgiveness is the most divine attribute, and that it does not come naturally to the human race. The context of the passage is important to understand. “**Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much**” (James 5:16). The end goal is the healing, or being “made whole.” That only comes when forgiveness and love reign in our relationships. If there are unconfessed offenses, we will never be restored to the close, happy relationship of brethren, will we? James is encouraging his readers to 1) Confess to each other; 2) Pray for each other; 3) Be healed.

The Apostle Paul brings out the same thought, with further implications that we are only hurting and hindering ourselves if we neglect this necessary resolution through forgiveness. “**Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault (paraptoma), ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted**” (Gal. 6:1).

That forgiveness comes less easily to us, as we find in the Lord’s parable in Matthew 18:21-35, “**Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed**

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Forum #1

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that the natural depravity of his heart was hardened even more by an act of God to reveal the stubbornness of the wicked ruler and God's power to judge the reprobate. Romans 9:17-18 states this truth in the following way: **"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."**

I have often wondered why God's children are sometimes hardhearted and stubborn when it comes to receiving, obeying, and applying the truth of the Word. We still have a fleshly nature that is prone to wander and rebel. The terrifying thing about rebellion and stubbornness is that it reveals an agreement with our old nature with the world of the reprobate and their attitude towards God's truth. Oh, that my heart would be completely surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ so that I may run in the way of His commandments! May God give us all grace to heed the admonition of Psalm 95:6-11: **"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he is our God: and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto**

whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."

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Before I can answer this question, we need to have a better understanding of what Scripture has to say about the heart. I would encourage the reader to study further than what I present to you here.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezk. 36:25-27).

The above Scriptures show what was figuratively described in (v. 25) is explained as literal in (vv. 26-27). The gift of the **"new heart"** signifies the new birth, which is regeneration by the Holy Spirit as seen in Ezekiel 11:18-20. I would hope that you, dear reader, will go back and look at those verses and compare them with (vv. 26-27).

The **"heart"** stands for the whole nature. The **"spirit"** indicates the governing power of the mind which directs thought and conduct. A **"stony heart"** is stubborn and self-willed. A **"heart of flesh"** is pliable and responsive. The evil inclination

is removed and a new nature replaces it. This I believe is the New Covenant as recorded in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

We must understand that only God is able to take the **"stony heart"** by the works of the Holy Spirit and make it pliable for His use.

So, as for the hardness of man's heart it is hard because of his iniquity that he has from birth and the only thing that can change that, is the **"New Birth"** that Jesus explained to Nicodemus in John 3:1-21, **"Ye must be born again."**

I believe that Matthew 19:8 is concerning the question dealing with divorce, but more on the subject of sexual immorality. Jesus' use of the words **"because of the hardness of your hearts"** shows that the phrase underscores the truth that divorce is only a last-resort response to hard-hearted sexual immorality. In other words the Pharisees wanted to have their cake and eat it too; much like the world is today. They were trying to trick Christ to get His approval and okay for getting a divorce and commit sexual immorality, using Moses as their **"scape goat"** by saying he permitted it.

Also the phrase **"hardness of their hearts"** refers to an inability to understand because of a rebellious attitude (Psa. 95:8; Heb. 3:8, 15). The Pharisees' hearts were becoming more and more obstinate and unresponsive to the truth (Rom. 9:18). To me this just proves that not all are God's elect.

Before I go to Pharaoh, let me just comment on Mark 10:5 since it is part of the question. It really is not too much different than what has been said about Matthew 19:8. **"The hardness of your hearts"** here in Mark refers to the flagrant, unrepentant pursuit of sexual immorality also. Divorce was to be the last resort in dealing

with such hard-heartedness. The Pharisees mistook God's gracious provision in permitting divorce (under certain circumstances) for His ordaining of it. Just because God gave provisions for it does not mean He was giving His approval for it. Once again it was because of the hardness of their hearts! They would rather have enjoyed the pleasure of sin (and there is pleasure in sin, but for a season) than to embrace Jesus as Saviour. Hebrews 11 sums it up nicely. **"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward"** (Heb. 11:24-26).

Now as far as Pharaoh's heart being hardened, it says in Exodus 9:12 **"And the Lord hardened..."** For the first time, apart from words to Moses before the plagues began (Exodus 4:21; 7:3), the statement is made that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. In the other instances, the record observes that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Each instance records **"as the Lord commanded,"** so what happened did so from two closely related perspectives: 1) God was carrying out His purpose through Pharaoh, and 2) Pharaoh was personally responsible for his actions as the command of v. 13 implies. This is where I would suggest that you, dear reader, would find and read **"Sovereign Grace And Man's Responsibility"** by C. H. Spurgeon.

I have had many heated discussions on whether or not God hardened Pharaoh's heart

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Forum #1

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or did Pharaoh harden his own heart? That is why I started out with Ezekiel 36:25-27. Pharaoh's heart was already in that condition at his birth...hard! And though it may not be popular, Pharaoh's heart would never be softened and God would continue to keep it hard for His glorious purpose. Proving once again, **"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth"** (Rom. 9:18). Moses was God's elect; Pharaoh was not, nor would or could he be. I would encourage the reading of Romans 9.

As far as the **"hardness"** of man's heart being the same in Exodus, and Matthew and Mark, I would have to answer yes. Both were rebellious, Pharaoh and the Pharisees, they wanted things their own way. One thing people forget, God is the Creator not man. **"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ"** (Eph. 1:11-12). God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ♦

him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord

of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Selah! Think about it!

I realize that some splinters of so-called Christianity might take this verse to justify "confessions" made to other men, but that is just heresy. **"Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only"** (Mark 2:7)? After David had sinned against Uriah the Hittite, Uriah's wife, and all the servants (including Joab) that he had implicated in his petty conspiracies to commit adultery and ultimately murder, he prayed, **"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee,**

thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight..." (Ps. 51:3-4).

Human forgiveness can never duplicate divine atonement and reconciliation of grace. But it is a necessary action to restore relationships. Forgive, but never forget? In a way, that is how it must be with us sons of Adam, but with God, divine forgiveness is eternal! **"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us"** (Ps. 103:12). Praise God! Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



The broader context of this verse indicates that this command is included in exhortations to fervent prayer within a church body where the elders of the church are called upon to pray for the sick. Confess your faults simply means to openly acknowledge and confess your sins and trespasses before the Lord and His people when necessary. This is especially true when a brother or sister has brought public reproach upon the Lord's church. There should be a measure of public confession, sorrow for sin, and repentance. There are also times when personal offenses arise within a church body. In such cases we are called upon to confess our faults, our wrongdoing, our offenses against another believer or the body at large. It can be as simple as acknowledging that we are wrong and asking for forgiveness from the offended brother or the

body at large. Confession of this sort promotes healing among brothers and sisters in Christ. Without it, hard feelings and bad attitudes may infect a church body, hindering its ability to carry out the Great Commission. It appears from the context in James chapter five that fervent, effectual prayer is closely related to heartfelt and genuine confession of sin. Psalm 66:18-20 declares: **"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me: But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."** May God give us grace to walk humbly before the Lord and our brothers and sisters in Christ, acknowledging that there are times when we must "confess our faults one to another."

I like the comment of Elder John Gill:

"Which must be understood of sins committed against one another; which should be acknowledged, and repentance for them declared, in order to mutual forgiveness and reconciliation; and this is necessary at all times, and especially on beds of affliction, and when death and eternity seem near approaching: wherefore this makes nothing for auricular confession, used by the Papists; which is of all sins, whereas this is only of such by which men offend one another; that is made to priests, but this is made by the saints to one another, by the offending party to him that is offended for reconciliation, whereby a good end is answered..." (Gill's Expositor, Vol. 9, p. 523).

TOM ROSS



Sitting at the Feet of

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and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezek. 16:8-14). Not only is there a transformation in the mind of the demoniac, but there is a transformation in his appearance.

Remember, when the father of the prodigal, received his son unto himself again, he said, "**But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet**" (Luke 15:22). I believe this is similar to what God said about the high priest Joshua, during the time of the return of the captivity unto Jerusalem: "**And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with**

change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by" (Zech. 3:1-5). The demon-possessed man of our text had a habit of running around naked, or without appropriate clothing. He was not presentable, in his previous condition, to be tolerated in the presence of Jesus the Christ. And yet, we notice that when the townsfolk come out to see Jesus, they discover that the demon-possessed man is not only in his right mind, but he is also wearing appropriate clothing in the presence of Jesus the Christ. In the Old Testament passage which I have just referred you to, I want you to notice that even the best of us (Joshua the high priest would be an example of this) are found wanting, and dirty, and filthy, in the sight of God Almighty. And yet, our God is willing to clothe us, and to dress us in the garments of salvation.

We read in Isaiah 61:10, "**I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.**" These are the garments that I desire, and that I know will cover me in the sight of our Holy and Just God.

Remember when Adam and Eve had sinned in the Garden of Eden? Do you remember how they immediately knew that they were naked? Well, I believe that after they had sinned, they were immediately aware of their own sinful condition, and how their sinful condition could not be tolerated in the presence of God.

Therefore, they sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness. And yet, they knew that even this was not enough. Therefore, when they heard the voice of the Lord God in the Garden of Eden, they hid themselves in the thickest part of the foliage – hoping that, somehow, they could be hidden from the eyes of the Holy God and Creator. And yet, they could not be hidden – nor could they cover their own sins.

Surely, this maniac, demon-possessed man, is a good example of a man that was naked, and then was clothed. He is a good example of one that could not cover his own sinfulness, but still, by the grace and power of God, he could be clothed upon with salvation.

SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS

I believe that the True Disciple will always be found **sitting at the feet of Jesus**. Remember, when the folks of the town came out to see what had happened with the man that had been possessed with the devils, they found him "**...sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid**" (Luke 8:35).

Once we have been brought to our senses; and once we have been clothed with the garments of salvation; what else can we do? or, where else would we go? The person and the place that we want to be is to be with Jesus Christ. Not only is there a transformation in the heart and mind of this demoniac; there is also a transformation in the appearance (clothing) of the demoniac. And, in addition, there is even a transformation in the attitude of this man. All of this is representative of the changes which must take place in the lives of those that the Lord Jesus Christ comes to, and they are saved by the good grace of God.

When the Lord left this man,

we find out that the man wanted to go with Jesus Christ, but Jesus sent him to be a witness in his community. "**Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him"** (Luke 8:38-39). This man, who wanted to be with Jesus found that the Lord wanted him to tell others about the change that had taken place in his life. Now, he must go and tell others about the new mind that he had, the salvation that he was made a part of, and the Christ, at Whose feet he had so recently sat! This demoniac became a good witness for Jesus Christ. He is also an example of how to serve and testify of the One Who can change us, clothe us, and bring us to God.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, this is our duty as well. Has your mind been changed? Have you been converted from your former depraved will and purpose, and have you been given the holy will and purpose of the child of God? And, have you had your filthy garments changed for the pure and righteous garments that are washed in the blood of Christ? Do you desire to sit at the feet of the Lord and Master? Well, if you have experienced these things, and if you have these desires, then why do you not go and tell others about Jesus Christ. Surely, this man was a good witness.

However, if you have not known the Lord Jesus Christ; and if your mind is not presently disposed towards the things of God; then, I beg of you, consider your own vile condition! Consider, that, even

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Sitting at the Feet of

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now, you are dressed in filthy garments – or, perhaps you are standing naked before God. How will you justify yourself before the Holy God of Heaven and Earth?

CONCLUSION

We notice in our text verse that when the people of the surrounding area saw what Jesus had done, and when they saw what condition the newly converted man was in, that **“they were afraid.”** Is it not the usual reaction of the world, that they will fear what they do not understand? And is it not the usual reaction of the world that they will fear those things that are clearly of a Spiritual and Godly nature?

Well, whatever might be the reaction of the world, I hope and pray that the Lord will find each of us in such a condition as the man in our text – that is, **“sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind.”**

Let me close by referring you to the time when the Lord was transfigured on the mountain, in the presence of Peter, James, and John. In Matthew’s account of that transfiguration, after Moses and Elijah had appeared, and after the Lord had spoken to them, and after the voice of the Father had been heard from Heaven, we find that the disciples were very afraid. But, then, we read this: **“And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid”** (Matt. 17:7). Jesus Christ will always come to those that are His. And, in the case of the maniac which we read about in our text, we know that Jesus came unto him and saved his soul, and gave his life meaning. Well, the same is true of us all. If we return to the Mount of Transfiguration, we read the response of

Peter, James, and John in the next verse: **“And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only”** (Matt. 17:7-8). I hope this will be the response of us all – that we, too, will mimic the possessed man of Gadara, and be eager to sit at the feet of Jesus. And, just as Peter, James, and John, when we look up, and when we behold the world and what it is that we should be doing, we will see **“Jesus only.”**



The Only True

(Continued from page 1) ♦

Corinthian Church: **“I delivered (this Gospel) unto you first of all”** (I Cor. 15:3, or “as of first importance”; or, “before all else” (Weymouth).

The inspiration of this Gospel shows its importance. Paul proclaims: **“I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received”** (v. 3). Paul did not receive this Gospel, nor was he taught this Gospel by man, **“but by the revelation of Jesus Christ”** (Gal. 1:11-12). Much less did he make it up himself. He **“received”** it from outside of himself, from God (I Cor. 4:7).

Then this Gospel should be related, so that every preacher is responsible to say: **“I declare unto you the Gospel”** (v. 1). **“Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel”** (I Cor. 9:16). Yet we wonder if Professor David A. MacLennan (of Yale University Divinity School) is not correct when he comments: “We have good reason to suspect that there is not enough of the Gospel in many popular sermons to save the soul of a humming bird, if that tiny creature has a soul” (*Pronouns for Preachers*, p. 58, The Pulpit Press).

The Gospel is to be related in

such a manner that it is to be revealed by plain speech (the Greek is, “I make known unto you,” so I Corinthians 14:8-9). Certainly it is to be received by the hearers (**“which also ye have received,”** v. 1). And it is to be retained, we are to stand in it (v. 1), remember it (v. 2).

I. The Person In The Gospel

The Gospel centers around a Person. That Person is Jesus Christ. **“How that Christ died for our sins...was buried...and...rose again”** (vv. 3-4). Christ means “anointed.” As in the Old Testament, prophets, priests and kings were anointed (I Kings 19:16; Lev. 8:12), so Christ is --- Our Prophet, **“the Truth,”** (John 14:6), hear Him!

Our Priest (and Sacrifice, too), **“the Way”** to God (John 14:6), Trust in Him! (John 1:29).

He is our Potentate, or King (I Tim. 1:17); be His slave, follow Him! (Luke 9:23).

This is the Christian Gospel--the only true Gospel: Jesus Christ. When a Hindu professor of philosophy asked the Christian Sadhu, “What have you found in Christianity which you did not find in the religions of India?” the simple response was, “I have found Jesus Christ.” (Report of the Jerusalem Mtg, of International Missionary Council, Vol. 1, p. 441.)

From this holy Gospel of God (Rom. 1:1) we learn that Christ has become human, for He dies in behalf of our sins (Mark 10:45); that He is also and always heavenly, for His death does what no other death can do, redeems His brethren, and gives to God a ransom for all of them (Psalm 49:7; Heb. 2:8-18).

The Gospel exists because of the person---Christ!

II. The Passion In The Gospel

Christ’s sacred, yet passionate love for us, drove Him to the

cross that He might have us for Himself for ever. **“Christ died for our sins”** (v. 3). How and why did He die? Christ died surely (actually, not just symbolically). Untrue and unbelieving is the statement in the Christian Science handbook: “They saw Him after His crucifixion and learned that He had not “died” (*Science and Health*, p. 46).

Christ died sensitively (physically as well as spiritually). Who can read Psalm 22 and not see that? **“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree”** (I Pet. 2:24).

Still, the Saviour died just as much soulfully on Calvary. Who can read Isaiah 53 and not see that (especially verses 10-12)?

And He died substitutionally, **“for our sins!”** (and **“for us!”** Rom.5:8); and savingly. His shed blood cleanses us from all sin (I John 1:7) and makes us right with God (Rom. 5:9). Norman Nagel was right when he said: “The test of any Christology (teaching about Christ) is the cross” (*Concordia Theol. Monthly*, May, 1955, p. 413).

III. The Purpose In The Gospel

“Christ died,” why? **“For our sins.”** Does this mean that He died for only some of our sins, or all of them? All of them! Whether they be classed as original sin, actual sin, venial sins, or mortal sins; whether they be past, present, or future sins. Christ died for all of them. Jesus Christ **“loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood”** (Rev. 1:5).

Whatever one may think of E. Stanley Jones, he was at least right when he wrote: “Sinful men need not merely the Gospel of Example, but the Gospel of Expiation” (*The Christ of Every Road*, p. 74, The Abingdom Press). And God put Jesus Christ forward as an

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expiation by His blood, to be received by faith (Rom. 3:25). That is, by Christ's shed blood on the cross (Heb. 9:22).

Of course, he who rejects sin as real, rejects the atoning death of Christ. If there is no sin, Christ died for nothing. Also, he who regards Christ's death as only partly purging our sins away (despite Hebrews 1:3), has only (in his thinking) a partial salvation. What good is it? Confessing ourselves to be sinners, let us believe that Christ died for all of our sins, and saved us from sin's guilt for ever!

IV. The Proof In The Gospel

God proved He loves us in Christ dying for us! (I John 3:16). Christ proved to be dead in that **"He was buried"** (v. 4). He could not be buried until the Roman governor was convinced of His death, and he would not be satisfied until the centurion (captain) in charge at the place of execution was positive that death had come (Mark 15:42-46), and he would not be sure if the soldiers under him were not (but they were) therefore did not break Christ's legs to hasten His death, (John 19:31-33). Besides that the Jewish authorities had to be assured (Matt. 27:62-64). All of these severe judges were completely satisfied that Christ had died, and therefore He was buried.

In Christ's burial, however, we have a unity and a diversity. Unity, in that He died, Death is common to all men (Heb. 9:27). It is not common to Christ, for **"in Him is no sin"** (I John 3:5). But He so entered into our manhood that He became subject to death, and He made our death His death (II Cor. 5:21); Heb. 2:14), that His

death might be our death (Gal. 2:20; Romans 6).

There is also a diversity in Christ's death and ours. There was no decay to His entombed body (Acts 2:31). Unless this text means there was not lengthened or final corruption to His flesh.

V. The Power In The Gospel
"He arose again the third day,"
believe it **"to the saving of the soul"** (Heb. 10:39).

When Alexander camped before a city, he used to set up a light to give notice to those within, that if they came forth to him while that light lasted they

should have mercy. Once the light had burned out, no mercy was to be expected! Oh, while the Gospel-light is still shining for you, surrender to the Saviour and begin to confess before men that Christ's death and resurrection, yea Christ Himself is your salvation. Hasten, while the light still shines for you! Amen.

*"Today! the Saviour calls---
Oh, hear Him now.
Before the judgment falls,
To Jesus bow."*



THE

BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

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

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

PLANNED PARENTHOOD REPORTS MORE MONEY, FEWER SERVICES

(WNS)--Abortion giant Planned Parenthood raised more money in 2016 but provided fewer services, including abortions, according to the annual report it released in early January. The report struck a tone of defiance against recent pro-life efforts but offered no explanation for the drop in assistance for women not seeking abortions, services political activists claim are vital to the organization's mission. Students for Life of America president Kristan Hawkins likened the report to "crocodile tears," saying in a statement that Planned Parenthood leaders "claim to be under attack, but their profits from the rising number of abortions and from the hard-working taxpayers are up again. Making money from ending lives is big business at Planned Parenthood."

MISSISSIPPI RELIGIOUS LIBERTY LAW GETS HIGH COURT REPRIEVE

(WNS)--The U.S. Supreme Court opted Jan. 8 not to weigh in on a case challenging a new Mississippi law that provides a defense against adverse government action and private lawsuits over religious convictions about marriage, sexuality, and gender identity. The law went into effect in October after the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court's injunction and dismissed the lawsuit for lack of standing. The plaintiffs—a group including same-sex couples, the Campaign for Southern Equality, and a church—argued the law sent a "clear message" that is "hostile" to LGBT Mississippians and that it endorsed a specific religious belief in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment

of the U.S. Constitution. But a three-judge appeals court panel unanimously ruled the plaintiffs failed to show the law had harmed them. "Future injuries can provide the basis for standing, but they 'must be certainly impending to constitute injury in fact,'" Judge Jerry Smith wrote, citing legal precedent. "Allegations of possible future injury are not sufficient." The U.S. Supreme Court did not state why it declined to hear the case, as is customary.

OVERLAP ON PERSECUTION LISTS REVEALS DANGER FOR CHRISTIANS

(WNS)--The week after the U.S. State Department redesignated 10 nations as countries of particular concern (CPCs) over "systemic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations," the Christian group Open Doors USA released its annual World Watch List of the 50 most dangerous countries for Christians. Both lists include Myanmar (also known as Burma), China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, with Open Doors noting all 10 countries had extreme, very high, or high levels of persecution against Christians. Totalitarian North Korea created the most danger, followed closely by Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan and Pakistan, according to Open Doors' analysis. India jumped from 15 to 11 on the list due to Hindu nationalists' increased persecution and the growing power of the nationalist political party. Overall, 215 million Christians around the world face threats due to their faith. Open Doors called Islamic extremism the "dominant" driver of persecution against Christians in 35 of the 50 countries listed. That included attacks by Islamic extremist groups like the Taliban in Afghanistan, al-

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Shabaab in Somalia, and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

UNIQUE IN THE UNIVERSE

(WNS)--A new study in The Astronomical Journal, shows our solar system may be one of a kind in the universe. And the very properties that make our planetary arrangement unique are also the elements that make Earth habitable, Jay Richards, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute and co-author of The Privileged Planet, told me. Astrophysicists at the Université de Montréal studied 909 planets and 355 stars and discovered that, unlike our solar system, planets in other systems are similar in size with regular spacing between their orbits, “like peas in a pod,” lead researcher Lauren Weiss said in a statement. In our solar system, Jupiter, the biggest planet, is 28.5 times larger in diameter than the smallest planet, Mercury, and the inner planets have surprisingly large spaces between their orbits. The researchers noted that the variations could suggest our solar system formed differently than others in the universe. Weiss said these disparities “would not occur if the planet sizes or spacings were drawn at random.” The researchers attributed the distinct properties of our planets to disruptions caused by the sizes of Jupiter and Saturn. Of course, they entertained no notions that the unusual drawing of our planetary bodies shows the artistry of our Creator. Richards noted the study certainly shows something highly unusual about our planetary arrangement: Our oddball solar system, made up of a few rocky planets in the inner part, with one right in the habitable zone, and a couple of big gas giants in the outer part protecting the rocky planets, is exactly what life requires. “If you are

trying to build a habitable system it needs to look very, very much like the one we have here,” he said.

DENVER PROGRAM SHOWS BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES WORK

(WNS)--The Denver Day Works program provides employment for homeless people with a difficult history and a chance for them to build a new one. In November 2016, Denver Mayor Michael Hancock introduced a plan to put homeless people into menial day jobs with no regard for their resumes, experience, or criminal background. Anyone could participate, and those who worked hard were invited to work another day. Success in small, temporary jobs set the stage for easing into more permanent work. Being faithful with little earned workers the reward of being able to show they could be faithful with a little more: A year later, 110 participants have moved on to full-time work. And about half of them were still employed after 90 days.

PRESCRIBING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN HEALTHCARE

(WNS)--The Health and Human Services Department (HHS) unveiled a new division Jan. 18 to help ensure healthcare workers can do their jobs without being forced to violate their faith. The new Conscience and Religious Freedom Division falls under the Office for Civil Rights. Federal statutes protect freedom of conscience and religion but have lacked enforcement over the years. This new wing of HHS seeks to preserve the rights of Americans who do not want to participate in abortion, assisted suicide, or other practices that violate their religious convictions. “Laws protecting religious freedom and conscience rights are just empty words on paper if they aren’t enforced,” said Office for Civil Rights director Roger Severino. “No one should be forced to choose

between helping sick people and living by one’s deepest moral or religious convictions, and the new division will help guarantee that victims of unlawful discrimination find justice,” he added.

SWIMMING BACTERIA DEFY DARWIN

(WNS)--Tiny biological motors that give bacteria the power to swim possess a complexity that baffles scientists and undercuts Darwin’s theory of evolution. A recent study in Scientific Reports claims the existence of the motors shows evolution produces inevitable and creative ideas, terminology that sounds more like the work of God than of natural selection. “Natural selection is supposed to be blind, random, and uncaring, but not here,” Discovery Institute experts wrote on the organization’s blog. Each of the proteins involved in the bacterial motor’s function is essential. The motors could not have worked before all the right accidental mutations required by natural selection took place, but with no survival benefit, natural selection would not choose them.

ALABAMA LAWMAKERS MOVE TO ELIMINATE MARRIAGE LICENSES

Fox News recently reported that Alabama lawmakers may be waving the white flag in the culture wars by advancing a bill that would eliminate marriage licenses entirely. The legislation, which was approved by Alabama’s Senate on Jan. 16, would end the practice of probate judges issuing marriage licenses to anyone. The bill now heads to the House, where it is being considered in committee. The bill does not stop the state from recognizing marriages, whether it be straight or gay couples. Marriages would still be recorded by the state when couples file an affidavit with a judge.

FACEBOOK SLAMMED BY EXPERTS AS BEING ‘NO PLACE’ FOR YOUNG KIDS

Fox News recently reported that Facebook is getting slammed by child-health advocates who have written a letter urging the company to discontinue its recently released Messenger Kids app, saying it will “undermine children’s healthy development.” Over 100 advocates, including Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, ACLU of Massachusetts and Centre for Child Honouring have signed the letter, addressed to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg. They note that children under the age of 13 are not ready to have social media accounts, despite the precautions Facebook has taken with the app. The authors also noted that young children “are not old enough to navigate the complexities of online relationships, which often lead to misunderstandings and conflicts even among more mature users.” The letter comes at a time when there is intense scrutiny, from investors, health advocacy experts and former Facebook employees about the effect social media and Facebook as its largest player are having on the health of society.

PRO-LIFE ADVOCATES WIN COURT VICTORY IN FREE SPEECH CASE

(Thomas Moore Society)--On January 29, 2018, a federal judge told participants in a lawsuit forcing pro-life sidewalk counselors to defend themselves against harassment charges, that leafletting is a “form of really protected speech,” and that sidewalks are recognized as the “quintessential public forum.” The words from the bench underscored the arguments of Special Counsel Martin Cannon. Cannon is defending a group of pro-life advocates who are being charged by New York Attorney

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General Eric T. Schneiderman in a federal lawsuit that accuses them of threats and violence against abortion clinic patients. The judge took issue with the prosecution's reference to what they labeled as "annoying behavior." U.S. District Judge Carol Bagley Amon commented that if harassment charges could be brought for being annoying, "I could sue all of you here today." "These pro-life advocates are life-affirming Christians who peacefully counsel women considering abortion. They conduct themselves reasonably and compassionately and offer information about alternatives to those willing to listen," stated Cannon.

TRANSGENDER TEEN STATS INCREASE: HOW DO YOU RECONCILE SCRIPTURE AND SOCIETY?

(Christian Headlines)--More teenagers are classifying themselves with nontraditional gender labels such as transgender or gender-fluid, according to a new study published in *Pediatrics*, the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the research showed that almost 3% of Minnesota teens did not identify with traditional gender labels such as "boy" or "girl." The purpose of the study was to examine mental and physical health characteristics and care utilization between youth who identify as transgender and gender-nonconforming (TGNC) and cisgender (a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person had at birth). The study found that students who are TGNC reported significantly poorer health, lower rates of preventive health checkups, and more nurse office visits than cisgender youth. While the number of transgender teens was higher than researchers expected,

the new statistics underscore how teenagers embrace relativism much like the rest of our culture.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS ISRAEL MOVES TO STRENGTHEN CONTROL OF JERUSALEM

(WNS)--The Israeli parliament recently passed a law that will require a supermajority vote to cede control over any part of Jerusalem. The move is Israel's latest attempt to exert full control over Jerusalem since U.S. President Donald Trump recognized

it as the Israeli capital. The new law shows how far away peace between Israel and Palestine remains. The amendment to the Jerusalem Law requires approval from at least 80 of the 120 members of the Israeli parliament, or Knesset, to relinquish Israel's control over any part of the city. The law also allows the government to remove Palestinian territories from Jerusalem and turn them instead into separate municipalities under Israeli control.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



"If Ye Shall Ask...I Will Do It"

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14).

Having just assured His disciples they should perform marvelous achievements in the power of the Holy Spirit, transcending even His own deeds (John 14:12), our Lord proceeds to explain how the disciples would be able to perform such effective service. Prayer would be offered in the name of Christ for the power and efficiency needed.

PRAYER DEFINED

What is prayer? Years ago John Bunyan (1628-1688) well said: "Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Spirit, for such things as God has promised." It would very hard to improve upon this definition of prayer as given by Elder John Bunyan.

First, prayer is worship and adoration of the God of Heaven.

Jesus Christ taught: **"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. . ."** (Matt. 6:9-10). The first thing in the example prayer is to respect God's name, His kingdom, and His will. Let us begin every prayer with praise for God in all His attributes. What we ask for in prayer must be according to His will and for His glory (John 14:13)..

Second, prayer is calling upon God. **"I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised. . ."** (Ps. 18:3). **"The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth"** (Ps. 145:18). It is not calling upon men or Mary; it is not calling upon armies or angels; it is calling upon Almighty God.

Prayer is asking for an audience with the sovereign God of Heaven and earth. As Christians, we have constant needs on earth, and this should drive us to constant calling upon God for help.

Third, it is taking hold on God. When Israel was in a back-slidden condition the Prophet Isaiah complained: **"And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee. . ."** (Isa. 64:7). Prayer is the wing wherewith the soul flies to Heaven and the hand that lays hold on the arm of Omnipotence. The man who entreats God takes hold of the promises of God's good will toward him and pleads them with Him. It is to take hold of God as did Jacob that we may prevail in prayer. Jesus said: **"If ye shall ask. . .I will do it."**

Fourth, it is to make known our requests to God: **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"** (Phil. 4:6). **"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him"** (I John 5:14-15). We are to make known our desires to God, not that He is ignorant of them, for He knows them better than we do (Matt. 6:8). God wants to hear them from us and to see our dependence on Him. It is His revealed will that we ask for what we need.

THE TOPIC OF PRAYER

Mark carefully the words **"anything"** and **"Whatsoever ye shall ask."** The topics of prayer are limited only by the needs of the soul. **"Whatever"** and **"anything"** include far more than

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“If Ye Shall Ask...

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our spiritual needs. It includes daily forgiveness of sin and daily bread. These words would include all kinds of problems at home, at school, on the job, at play, etc. Little problems and big problems that we have concern God. There is nothing which is a source of doubt or difficulty that He is not only willing to hear, but what He also desires we should tell Him. There is no thought, feeling, yearning, or desire, however low or trifling, we may not lay before God and be sure of His sympathy.

“**Whatsoever**” and “**anything**” must not be pressed to the point of a blank check, for God is not man’s servant. But we can ask for anything good and proper, anything we really need in our walk for Christ, anything which is for our good and God’s glory. God has reserved to Himself the right of hearing prayers and answering prayers, just like He distributes the gifts of the Spirit, dividing “**to every man severally as he will**” (I Cor. 12:11). As great as the power of prayer is, it is a mistake to suppose that a praying saint will get anything he chooses to ask for. No man knows better than God or wishes his ignorance may overrule God’s wisdom.

Many verses seem to indicate our asking God is unconditional. “**Whatsoever ye shall ask. . .**” (John 14:13). “**Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened**” (Matt. 7:7-8). “**And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive**” (Matt. 21:22).

But other Scriptures set forth

some conditions. “**If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us**” (I John 5:14). In the text Christ said: “**Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name. . .**” (John 14:13). A true supplicant realizes his own limitations, his lack of wisdom, his want of true foresight. Therefore, he comes to God convinced of His unerring wisdom, His absolute knowledge, and His almighty power to bestow the gifts he seeks. He approaches as a rebel his offended Sovereign, mindful that every blessing he asks for and may receive, is from the free favor of his reconciled King.

PRAYER IN THE NAME OF JESUS

“**Whatsoever ye shall ask IN MY NAME**” (John 14:13) and “**If ye shall ask any thing in MY NAME. . .**” (John 14:14). “. . . **that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father IN MY NAME, he may give it you**” (John 15:16). “**Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father IN MY NAME, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing IN MY NAME: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full**” (John 16:23-24). “**At that day ye shall ask IN MY NAME: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you**” (John 16:26).

Some make “**in the name of Jesus**” to mean “in union with Him.” Certainly asking in the name of Jesus presupposes our union with Him. A praying soul should be joined ethically, spiritually, and organically to Christ by faith, but I do not think “**in the name**” has that meaning in John 14:13-14. By examining other Scriptures where this expression occurs (John 14:26; Mark 9:38; 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 4:10), it does not seem to have the meaning of union with Christ.

First, to pray in the name of

Jesus means to depend upon Jesus in connection with the thing for which we ask. We approach God conscious of unworthiness in ourselves and relying alone on the grace and mercy of Him to whose throne we come with our entreaties. We must ask for nothing which is not according to His will and the interest of His kingdom. To pray in His name implies self-surrender and involves a request that our prayers only be answered for Jesus’ sake. To ask for something contrary to the will of our Savior is not prayer, but rebellion.

Second, to pray in the name of Jesus is to pray to God as the representatives of Jesus Christ, and, in some sort, His mouth. We are His laborers; we are His soldiers. “**We are ambassadors for Christ**” (II Cor. 5:20). Ephesians 5:30 says: “**For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.**” We are in close and intimate fellowship with our Lord and Master.

Third, it suggests we come before the throne of grace on the basis of Christ’s mediation. We must take Christ with us and feel that He presents our feeble petitions to the Father. We must believe the Father will grant our requests because He is glorified by the Son’s mediation: “**And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son**” (John 14:13). Christ and the Father are one (John 10:30). Whatever is asked in the name of Jesus will be done as by Jesus Himself.

THE ANSWER PROMISED

“**I will do it,**” said our Master. In making this declaration our Lord asserts His own deity, making Himself equal with God, Who alone hears and answers prayer. The very thing we desire

Christ promises to give. He tells us that of all who ask of Him, not one shall be denied or turned away. Many and gracious are the promises which God gives to the believer. “**If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him**” (Matt. 7:11)? “**Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them**” (Mark 11:24).

Presuming that the child of God is asking in Jesus’ name and according to His will, the wondrous statement is twice made in the text that, not only as we pray does God give, but that as we pray God works. “**And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.**” Think about this promise! The eternal God of the universe stands, and says, “If you my child, will only pray, I will work. If you will be busy with the asking, I will see to the doing.”

When we enter the prayer chamber nothing should so stir us to mighty intercession as to remember that while we pray God is actually doing the things we are asking for. As we pray that the gospel be sent to sin-darkened lands, God baffles the powers of evil and sends missionaries to the regions beyond. As we pray, God moves the hearts of kings and breaks down the barriers to evangelization, loosens the bands of superstition, and opens up the pathway to forbidden lands. As we kneel before the throne of grace, God opens the purse of His children and thrusts forth laborers into the fields which are white unto harvest.

What a tremendous responsibility is ours! What a

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“If Ye Shall Ask...

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unique privilege is given to them that believe. Oh, my brother, all the power of an omnipotent God is ready and waiting to be put into triumphant, irresistible action at the prayer of one of the least of the saints. Oh, the shame of our cowardness and faltering in the face of difficulties when God has said: **“If ye shall ask. . . I will do it.”**

Who is it that speaks in my text? Who offers to do for us if we will but ask Him? It is no untried apprentice, no bungling worker accustomed to failure, but it is the God of Heaven and earth Himself who makes this wonderful promise. Our sovereign God has unrivaled wisdom, boundless skill, limitless power, infinite resources. This is the God who says: **“If ye shall ask. . . I will do it.”**

The God of the Bible, who shrouded the land of Egypt in awful darkness, tells us to pray. The God, who turned Egypt's streams of water into streams of blood and broke the will of her stubborn king commands us to bring our prayers before the throne of grace. The God, who led Israel out of bondage into liberty and light and divided the Red Sea to allow Israel to pass over dry-shod, tells us to inquire of Him. When the Israelites cried for water He sweetened the bitter wells to quench their thirst, and when they hungered He gave them bread from Heaven. When the Israelites marched in self-helplessness around the walls of Jericho, He leveled its walls by the word of His power. This great God says to us: **“If ye shall ask. . . I will do it.”**

Our sovereign Lord, who stilled the tempest, walked on the sea, cast out demons, healed the living,

and raised the dead, promised to answer the prayers of the saints. The God, who holds the sea in His hands and the winds in His fists, has made this sweet promise to His people: **“If ye shall ask. . . I will do it.”** The mighty God, who swings this ponderous globe on its orbit, who marshals the stars and guides the planets in their paths with undeviating accuracy, tells us to bring our petitions to Him. The God of Sinai and Horeb says: **“If ye shall ask. . . I will do it.”**

God hears and answers the prayers of His believing children. Abraham's servant prays, and Rebekah appears. Jacob wrestles and prays, and he prevails with Christ. Moses prays, and Amalek is discomfited. Joshua prays, and Achan is discovered. Hannah prays, and Samuel is born. David prays, and Ahithophel hangs himself. Isaiah and Hezekiah prays, and 185,000 Assyrians are dead in twelve hours. Daniel prays, and the lions are muzzled and the seventy weeks are revealed. Elijah prays, and there is a three-year drought. He prays again, and the rain comes pouring down. Elisha prays, and Jordan is divided and a child's soul comes back. The early church prays, and Peter is delivered by an angel. Why is all of this so? Because God says: **“If ye shall ask. . . I will do it.”**

FAILURE TO PRAY IS A SIN

Some say God has foreordained all things which come to pass, and it is not possible that our prayers could alter His sovereign purpose, it is said God is too great to be moved---too high to be reached---too firm to be influenced by our poor petitions. Those who reason this way restrain prayer, and they generally sink into prayerlessness. This is a sin. Samuel told Israel: **“God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you. . .”** (I Sam. 12:23). In

Isaiah's day the Lord complained: **“But thou has not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou has been weary of me, O Israel”** (Isa. 43:22).

Failure to pray is a sin because God commanded us to pray: **“Pray without ceasing”** (I Thess. 5:17). The moment a person begins to discuss the possibilities of prayer, that moment he does not feel his deep needs as he should. All the objections to prayer are upset by the words of Christ when He said: **“If ye shall ask. . . I will do it.”**

We are to pray as an act of obedience to God's commandment. While our feeble cries do not change God's all-wise decrees, our prayers do make a change in us. Prayer is not for God's information, but for man's submission. We pray to get God's permission. God's decrees do not exclude the duty of prayer and the work of second causes. **“Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them. . .”** (Ezek. 36:37). **“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you”** (Jer. 29:11-12). Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold on His highest willingness.

James declared: **“. . . ye have not, because ye ask not”** (James 4:2). **“Ask”** is in the present tense and points to our repeated failure to ask. Jesus promised to give us our needs by earnest prayer: **“If ye shall ask. . . I will do it.”** Most Christians to some extent shrink from prayer for material necessities. We do often carry our spiritual needs to the throne of grace, but our carefully devised plans to obtain worldly things

we seldom lay before God. How strange we depend on God for our everlasting life and not for the cares of this life! The reason we all lack many worldly things is because we do not ask God for them, or we engage in a pseudo-asking for selfish reasons (James 4:3), which evokes no reply from Heaven. Instead of wrestling with God in prayer, we had rather wrangle bitterly with men (James 4:1-2).

CONCLUSION

1. A Christian cannot always hear preaching, or always read the Bible, or always be witnessing for Christ, but he may pray continually. No place, no company, no circumstance, can deprive a believer of the privilege of prayer. If he is on the housetop with Peter, he may pray. If he is in the bottom of the ocean with Jonah, he may pray. If he is walking with Isaac in the field, he may pray when no eye sees him. If he is waiting on the king's table with Nehemiah, he may pray when no ear hears him. If he is in the mountain like his Lord, he may pray. If he is in jail like Paul and Peter, he may pray. Wherever he is, he may pray for grace and mercy to help in time of need. Every house is a house of prayer, and every place an altar where he may offer the sacrifice of prayer.

2. Adoniram Judson (1788 - 1850) said: “I never was deeply interested in any subject, I never prayed sincerely for any thing, but it came. At some time, no matter at how distant a day, some how, in some shape---probably the last I should devise---it came.”

3. True prayer is not a plaintive cry to an empty echo, that can send back nothing but another echo. Prayer is a living heart that speaks in the ear of the living God. Our God says: **“If ye shall ask. . . I**

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“If Ye Shall Ask...

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will do it.”

4. Prayer is an untapped source of spiritual power. It sets omnipotency to work. It can loosen iron chains (Acts 16:25-26), and it can open iron gates (Acts 12:5, 10). The prayers of a righteous man can open the windows of Heaven (I Kings 18:41) and break the bars of death (John 11:40-43). Satan cannot stand before prayer. When a praying saint takes hold on almighty God by intercession Satan runs away like a coward.

(All emphasis in quoted Scripture by MRC)



Should One Tell A Sinner to “Give God Your Heart?”

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

One of the stock instructions given to lost people is “GIVE GOD YOUR HEART.” Often this is meant well, but it positively is NOT the Bible way of salvation. What, then, is the matter with the expression?



1. *It makes the sinner the giver and not the receiver.* It salves human pride for the sinner to be able to GIVE God something. The truth is, the sinner is not on the giving end. He is, in God’s sight, totally bankrupt. He does not have anything fit for God to accept, for everything about him is vitiated by sin, and he is totally depraved.

2. *It reverses the instructions of Scripture.* God’s Word says (John 1:12), “**But as many as RECEIVED him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.**” There is an immense difference between giving and receiving. Yes, and there is a world of difference between “giving God your heart” and in your “receiving God’s Son.”

3. *It takes a command given to a child of God and applies it to a child of the Devil.* Proverbs 23:26 says, “**MY SON, give me thine heart.**” God requires the heart---the affections, in other words--- of His children. He cannot have the affections of the children of the Devil, for they do not and cannot love God until they have received God’s Son and have been born again. Many of the Scriptures given to God’s people are taken and indiscriminately flung to the unsaved. This does violence to them and distorts their meaning.

4. *The expression “give God your heart” is a sentimentality that muddles the water and befuddles the lost.* In a practical sense, it ignores the atoning death of Christ. If one can be saved by “giving” God something, then why did Christ die? The whole plan of salvation, as God gives it, is left out. One is saved by receiving what Christ did in dying sacrificially.

“He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5).

“Our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity” (Titus 2:14).

“**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ** (literal “lean upon”), **and thou shalt be saved.**”

Nothing is said about giving God something. “...**God so loved the world, THAT HE GAVE**

his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Who gave? God --- not man. How Satan must be pleased, when he can reverse instructions concerning the most important thing that concerns a soul!

It is tragic that preachers fail to get straight on the most fundamental matters, and instead pick up a lot of ministerialisms. The expression, “Come down front and give me your hand and God your heart,” is one of these sentimental expressions. It is akin to the expression, “Join the church of your choice,” and is about as asinine. When it comes to the salvation of one’s soul, instructions cannot be too clear and plain. Paul and Silas, when appealed to by the Philippian jailer (Acts 16), who asked “**What must I do to be saved?**” did not suggest “giving God his heart.” They likewise said nothing about signing a card or “praying through” or any of the things that one often hears around a revival. They were definite and plain: “**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.**” No doubt about it.

One great trouble is that people do not want to put themselves in the position of helpless, hell-bound and hell-deserving sinners. So many will hold out that they “are not so bad.” “I have not done anything very bad. I pay my honest debts, and try to do the best I know how.”

No salvation for people like that until they are convicted of their sins. A person of that kind might very readily respond to the invitation, “Give God your heart.”

“Yes, I will patronize God a little bit---if I have something He wants real, real, bad, I will condescend to give Him my heart.”

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BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

Financial Report

1-1-2018 to 1-31-2018

Beginning Balance	\$2,000.93
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	100.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	25.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea B. C. Bookstore (MS sales tax)	114.01
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Carol Willet, Edgewater, FL	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Eldon Joslin, Birmingham, AL	600.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Grace B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
Jo Ann Mills, Barboursville, KY	25.00
The Lord’s Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Eagle, AK	11.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	184.00
Anonymous	715.00
Dividing checks	0.00
Sub Total	\$3,591.51
TOTAL	\$5,592.44
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	490.00
Postage	583.43
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.90
MS State Sales Tax (bookstore)	114.01
Bank Charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,676.34
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,916.10



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST

Financial Report

1-1-2018 to 1-31-2018

Beginning Balance	\$1,389.01
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA	200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	200.00
.....	625.00
TOTAL	2,014.01
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	901.99
Bank charge	10.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	911.99
.....	1,102.02
Interest	+01
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,102.03

Should One Tell

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I often remember the old man I visited in the hospital. He had expressed a desire to see me, and his first words upon entering were these, "Bro. Mason, I am just an old low-down sinner."

My response was, "Thank the Lord--I have good news for you!" I did not thank the Lord that he was so "low-down," but for the fact that he had come to realize it. He readily received the good news that there is a Savior for low-down sinners, and was soon rejoicing in a newborn Savior.

Yes, many mean well when they instruct, "Give God your heart." A father meant well when he got up in the night and gave his sick daughter a dose of medicine, but unfortunately he got the wrong bottle and gave her poison and she died. One can dispense spiritual poison in a well meaning and ignorant way, and it can mean ruin to the sinner.

(All Scripture emphasis by RM).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

On February 8, 2018, Elder Curtis Pugh departed this life to forever be with his Saviour.

Elder Curtis was born in a small home in Heavener, Oklahoma on November 27, 1944. He was an accomplished author and writer. He wrote many gospel tracts and articles many which have been published in the pages of the *Banner*. His most noted work is the book *Three Witness for the Baptists*.

Brother Curtis had a love and a burden for Romanian people. He and his wife, Janet, moved to Romania in 1999 to establish a mission work. In 2010, the Pughs returned home from the mission

field, but before their departure the Sovereign Grace Baptist Assembly of Bosca was organized in 2009.

The following statements are from Elder Raul Enyedi: "It is impossible to estimate at this point of time the full impact of Bro. Curtis coming to this former Communist country to do mission work. The entire printing work that we do now (almost one million booklets and books printed and sent all over the world), hundreds of mission trips, the church that was organized, people all over Romania being brought together and advancing the work of the kingdom throughout Europe, the relationship we have with sister churches throughout the world - all these are direct effects of Bro. Curtis obeying the calling of the Lord and moving to an afar and strange country. This is how God works. His plan is marvelously complex and intertwined, making one action to have million of effects down the road. There are no coincidences in this world. There was no accident that Bro. Curtis moved from across the ocean to the very area where I lived. Much of who I am as a person today is due to him. He first taught me the truth, he baptized me, he trained me and guided me."

Please remember the family in your prayers.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,

which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:7-8).

On January 30, 2018 Elder Jerry B. Asberry departed this life to forever be with his Saviour. Bro. Jerry had a passion for serving the Lord and the people of his church. He pastored churches in Missouri, North Carolina and for 18 years was the pastor of Faith Missionary Baptist Church in Paducah, KY. Most recently he was the pastor of Zoar Baptist Church in Cunningham, KY.

Please remember the family in your prayers.

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

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will have their Spring Fellowship meeting Saturday, April 21st.

Lord willing Elders Matthew Stepp and Doyal Thomas will be speaking.

Service time is 10:00 a.m. All are invited to attend. The church will provide a noon meal after the service.

ATTENTION: If your church has a radio broadcast please send us the program name, station info and time for inclusion in a future listing

in the *Banner*.

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Denham Springs is in search of a pastor.

For a statement of faith you can visit the church website at <http://GraceBibleBaptist.webhop.org> or <http://gracebbc.dyndns.org:81/>.

You may contact any of the following for more information: Keith Laurence (225) 664-3557, Lucien LeSage (225) 803-9710, Charlie Andrews (225) 200-1171, or Joey Newell (225) 772-9158.

The Grace Missionary Baptist Church of Marion, IL is seeking a pastor. Please contact Gary Ratley at (618) 841-0228 for more information.

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

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

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

The 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.

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