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The Spirit Filled Church

Part 1

By Billy Holbrook

Oblong, Illinois

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

Introduction: We should be concerned as to whether or not we are a church that is filled with the Spirit. Our desire should be that each and every time we meet together God is filling the house with His Spirit. We need to ask ourselves first, "What is the house of God?" I Timothy 3:15 says that it is **"the church of the living God."** The church is not the building but it is the people. If the church is the people, then the people need to be filled with the Spirit because without the Spirit we cannot worship God. Many out there are trying to worship God and they have not the Spirit. As we get into the message I want us to consider that the



Billy Holbrook

services as we meet together and being filled with the Spirit is based a lot upon how we act and our attitude when we come to the house of God. Some may say, "The Spirit wasn't moving today." I must reply, "Did you bring Him with you?" For you cannot worship in the Spirit, if you are not filled with the Spirit.

WE ARE TOLD TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 5:17-18 says: **"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but**

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I Will Hasten To Him

By Doyal Thomas

Hartselle, Alabama

"Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication. Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise; Because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me. My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest" (Ps. 55:1-8).



Doyal Thomas

In this passage, David holds not back to express his personal sense of distress as events unfold before his troubled mind and human emotion. He is aware, at least partially, that deceit and treachery are evident, for from within his own family (Absalom) and from within his own government (Ahithophel, his trusted friend) he has those who hate him and his God, and seek his overthrow and destruction.

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The Seventh Commandment

By Milburn Cockrell

Mantachie, Mississippi



"Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14).

"Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Matt. 19:18; Rom. 13:9).

"Do not commit adultery" (Jas. 2:11).

This commandment speaks of the sin our modern world is afraid to mention. It is the Divine Lawgiver's ordinance guarding the chastity of marriage, the sanctity of the home, and the preservation of society. This command is a simple, unqualified, irrevocable negative. No argument is used and no reason is given by God. This is a sin so dangerous, destructive, and damning that it is in itself sufficient cause for this Divine

prohibition. The Seventh Commandment requires chastity and the preservation of the marriage state. It forbids all forms of sexual impurity

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The Revival at the Water Gate

By Milburn Cockrell

Mantachie, Mississippi

Read Nehemiah 8

Nehemiah had completed the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. The Israelites must be prepared for self-government. Traitors are still within the city. The nation must be restored morally and spiritually; otherwise, they will utterly fail. A solid foundation must be laid for the future. There must be a spiritual renewal, if they are to prosper as a nation. They need a new awareness of the

righteousness required of God.

THE TIME

Verse 2 gives the time as **"upon the first day of the seventh month."** This was the first day of Tishri (Sept.-Oct. on our calendar). This was New Year's Day, the commencement of the civil year, the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1). According to the law of Moses, this was to be a day of rest and worship. The Feast of

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Barren

By Gene Flynn

Tioga, West Virginia

As we all know barren means not producing, such as barren soil, that cannot produce crops, or barren trees have not brought forth fruit. We know the Bible teaches that the desert in

Israel will one day blossom as a rose Isaiah 35:1 says: **"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."**

In verse 6: **"Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing, for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."** But let us look at the word "barren." A woman who desperately wants a child, or children, and can't have them may have some medical reason, or just



Gene Flynn

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"THOU HAST GIVEN A BANNER TO THEM THAT FEAR THEE, THAT IT MAY BE DISPLAYED BECAUSE OF THE TRUTH" (PSALMS 60:4).



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Spirit Filled Church

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understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Each of us as individuals are to be concerned about being filled with the Spirit because we are told here that it is **"the will of the Lord."** If each of us as individuals is striving after being filled with the Spirit, then as we come together as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ we will be filled with the Spirit. For we all have to admit that we have seen times where that it didn't seem as if the Spirit of the Lord was filling the house. There are several reasons I believe for why that happens. For it depends a lot upon us and our attitude when we come together.

This same Spirit that we need to worship God can be grieved, and when He is we hinder the worship services. In Ephesians 4:29-32 it reads: **"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.**

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

I believe that this is not only referring to us as individuals but also as a church for this was written to the Church at Ephesus. It is certainly safe to say based upon this Scripture that when there is bitterness, anger, clamour, evil speaking and malice the Spirit of God is grieved. The word "grieve" means "to distress, to be sad." When a church has these things in their midst, then coming to the house of God will be a place of stress, sadness, and heaviness. However, when we follow the recipe given in verse 32 and be **"kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you,"** then coming to the house of God will be a place of joy. Psalms 16:11 says: **"Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."** So, if we don't have fullness of joy as we come together as a church then no doubt the Spirit must be grieved.

Now before we move on to our next point I would like for you to consider this. If we must worship in the Spirit, then how can we worship if that Spirit is grieved by our unrepentant heart, and we are filled with bitterness, wrath, anger and other works of the flesh? Without a doubt God is not being worshipped when the church is filled with those things. Most of us have experienced it. We just wanted to get it out of the church so we could worship God.

A SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH WILL HAVE WORSHIP

We are told in our text that **"the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and truth."** Surely a place without worship is a place without the Spirit of God. God, no doubt is telling many today the same thing He told the woman in our text where He said, **"Ye worship ye know not what."** Many may have a spirit but it is not the Spirit of worship. Strong's concordance says that the word "worship" here means "to fawn or crouch, to prostrate oneself in homage, do reverence, to adore, to kiss like a dog licking his master's hand." Does this mean that we have to get on our knees in order to worship God? I do not think so; however, we could use it a whole lot more in our churches today. I guess we've gotten

too "spiritual" to get on our knees before God as a church. We need to realize that when we come to the house of God that it is to worship the true and living God. That we have come to show Him respect, reverence and give gratitude for what He has done for us. When people are coming to the house of God and they are not there to worship God, then we cannot expect God to fill the place with His Spirit. Let's take a look at the attitude of worship.

1. It is to be done with reverence and respect. Genesis 24:26 says: **"And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD."** Verse 48 says: **"And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD."** Exodus 4:31 says: **". . .then they bowed their heads and worshipped."** The thing that each time God was worshipped there was an outward show of respect and reverence. Not that all of worship is outward, but if you have that inward respect and honor for God, then it will be expressed outwardly in the way we come together at the house of God. With considering those few Scriptures mentioned (though there are many more), we should without a doubt come to the conclusion that in places in which people are running around hollering and screaming being indecent, they are not worshipping the God of the Scriptures no matter how much they say they have the Spirit.

2. This worship that is done with respect and reverence is to be directed towards God. There are a lot of places which are supposed to be houses of worship but their focus is not God. What do I mean? Many to go church for themselves to be seen rather than to see Jesus lifted up. Many go to be heard rather than to hear God. Many go for the kids to be entertained rather than to learn and focus on God. What an awful day it is today when many so-called churches have turned to gimmicks and games to get people to come to the house of God. If you get people to come for that stuff, you must keep that stuff. However, if people come because they want to worship God and love the truth, then you can keep them with that. Our goal when we come to the house of God is to focus upon Him and worship Him. The preacher is not to be exalted as he is in some places, but he is to exalt and uplift Christ for all to see, and he will, if he is filled with the Spirit. I Corinthians 1:29 says: **"That no flesh should glory in his presence."** We should have no desire for anyone to focus upon us, but that all hearts would be focused upon the Lord Jesus Christ. If God's Spirit is there, then no flesh will glory in his presence, but

rather Jesus will receive glory as that is the Spirit's job.

3. There should be an attitude of thanksgiving. Psalm 95:2 says: **"Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms."** I'm afraid many people go to church thinking that they're doing God a favor. One reason we should meet at God's house is because we are thankful for what He has done. When people have no desire to come to the house of God then they are showing that they are not thankful for what God has done. Colossians 3:15 says: **"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."** Surely when people get to mumbling and complaining the Spirit is grieved and we are not able to worship the Lord.

CONCLUSION

Is your church filled with the Spirit? Are the people of God practicing Ephesians 4:32? If people want to worship God, then they need to be sure they do not grieve the Spirit who enables them to worship the Lord. **"For he is thy LORD, and worship thou him."** So put away all the works of the flesh. We cannot be full of the Spirit of worship when we are full of anger, malice, wrath and not practicing forgiveness. So if a church wants to worship the Lord, then they need to put those things away.

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THE PURPOSE OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

VI. TO RECONCILE HIS PEOPLE TO GOD.

It is written in Romans 5:9-11: **"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."**

A. H. Strong says the Greek word (*katallasso*) translated "reconcile" means "to change mutually." Arminians and others deny that God needs to be reconciled to man. They say the enmity is alone on man's part, and man need only to be reconciled to God, not God to man. Such an idea ignores God's hatred for sin in sinners (Ps. 7:11; Matt. 3:7; Rom. 1:18). Romans 5:9 indicates there is wrath on the part of God against sin and the sinner. One could not be saved from wrath, if he were never an object of wrath. Romans 5:9 is also a problem to hyper-Calvinists who seem to forget that even the elect were once in a state of nature (Eph. 2:1-3).

Romans 5:10 revealed the death of Christ removed the enmity of God toward the sinner for whom Christ died. The Father's wrath was appeased by the sufferings and death of our Lord. So far as God is concerned, reconciliation took place nearly 2,000 years ago at Calvary. At that time God laid aside His enmity toward the sinners for whom Christ died. Up until that time God was offended, and we were the offenders. God laid aside His hostility to us on account of the atonement of His Son, for His justice was satisfied and His

wrath was appeased. This all happened not when we believed, but while **"we were enemies."** The enemies of Romans 5:10 are the objects of wrath in Romans 5:9. When we were thus hated of God we were the objects of His displeasure on account of sin. **"We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."** But when Christ died for the covenant people, God gave up His hostility toward us and extended His favor and friendship to us.

The propitiatory death of Christ removed the enmity of God toward the sinners for whom He died, and their enmity toward God is removed as a consequence of this. While it is wrong to deny the Godward aspect of reconciliation, it is equally wrong to deny the manward aspect. When the sinner has revealed to him by the gospel what God has done for him, the sinner lays aside his hatred for God and comes into a friendly relationship with God. Thus the reconciliation is mutual.

The first step is with God, and the reconciliation which took place in the death of Christ could only be Godward reconciliation, since at that time we were still enemies and uninfluenced by His love. Reconciliation is brought about through the divine love which provided the propitiation. This is why Paul said: **"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."** "Atonement" (*katallage*) is a Greek word better rendered "reconciliation." The work of atonement is the offering of Christ on the cross as a sacrifice for sin to God. This cannot be received by man. What has been received is the reconciliation—the change of state from being enemies to being **"accepted in the beloved"** (Eph. 1:6). Reconciliation is the effect of Christ's atonement.

Reconciliation is something which comes from God and does not proceed from man. God made the reconciliation in the death of His Son, and then the fruit of it is imputed to the believing sinner. The believer receives the reconciliation in verse 11, and this follows the being reconciled in verse 10, showing that divine reconciliation is the basis of the human.

Jesus Christ died, not to try to reconcile a people to God, but His death actually appeased the wrath of God for a particular people. All that were reconciled to God by the death of God's Son will be brought to faith (Phil. 1:29; I Pet. 1:21). If just one for whom Christ died is not reconciled to God, then Jesus Christ did not accomplish what He set out to do.

Jesus Christ is not a failure. This cannot be for the old prophet said of our Lord: **"He shall not fail nor be discouraged"** (Isa. 42:4).

GLEANINGS FROM THE PSALMS

Those who study the Psalms in the Old Testament know many of these are prophetic and concern the millennial reign of the Messiah on earth. The Psalms often speak of God's government in the Third Heaven from His throne (Ps. 11:4; 103:19; 135:6; 145:13), and in this sense they present God as the everlasting King (Ps. 10:16; 29:10; 146:10).

Some brethren believe the translators of the KJV were inspired of God to correct errors in the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible. To my knowledge no such claim is made for any other translators of the Bible into English. Some even suggest that God made a mistake in originally putting His revelation into the Hebrew and Greek languages, and that He should have used "the superior English." I believe that God chose the Hebrew and Greek languages because they best expressed what He wanted us to know. Furthermore, I hold that God has preserved His Word in Hebrew and Greek until this very day, and that these should be carefully studied by those who believe in verbal inspiration. I firmly believe that the KJV is a faithful translation and the Word of God, but I do not hold that these Church of England scholars were inspired more than Paul and Peter. There were a few times in translating they favored their amillennial position.

This can be seen in some of the Psalms which surely refer to the millennial reign of Christ on earth as King of kings. In Psalm 93:1, Psalm 97:1, and Psalm 99:1 our version says: **"The LORD reigneth."** Most other modern translators, generally amillennialists, give it "Jehovah reigns" or "The LORD reigns." The Catholic Bible (Douay Version) renders it: "The Lord reigned." Joseph Bryant Rotherham gives the literal Hebrew in all three of these verses: **"Yahweh hath become King."** This clearly show in a sense *Yahweh* is not the King (He is not received as King by many nations on earth at present), but that He will become King on earth and the peoples of earth will recognize Him as such. The other verses in these Psalms are favorable to the millennial reign of Christ.

Then we come to Revelation 11:15

which reads: **"And the seventh angel sounded: and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."** This is clearly the time foretold in the Psalms.

Then the twenty-four elders say: **"We give thanks unto thee, O Lord God, the Almighty, who is and who was; because thou hast taken thy great power, and hast become king"** (Rev. 11:17 Rotherham's literal translation). The kingdoms of this world are to be ruled by Christ. This will happen when Christ takes to Himself His great power as the Son of man and becomes King of all the kingdoms on earth.

The literal rendering of the original is important on two counts. First, these verses reveal there is a time when Christ will rule the nations on earth in a more direct sense. He will destroy the enemies of His people (Ps. 97:3-5, 7), deliver His people (Ps. 97:10), and there will be universal worship of Jehovah (Ps. 96:6-7, 9; 99:5-9). Second, the member of the Godhead to become King is called Jehovah or *Yahweh*. This proves Jesus Christ is Jehovah or *Yahweh* in the Old Testament in many verses. This is too much for liberals and cultists who deny the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren, there are many truths in the original languages of the Bible, but these are not for lazy preachers who do not read or study.

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I Will Hasten To Him

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David is deeply burdened at these events, and perhaps more so when he sees that the perpetrators of this traitorous attack upon his government are outwardly seen as being with him. From those in whom he had placed great confidence and human trust has arisen this awesomely fearful and calamitous plot to overthrow and eliminate his leadership.

Our purpose at this time is not to try to expound upon the vast array of truth that is contained in Psalm 55 (although I do urge that every reader be diligent in the study of the entire matter), but rather, to point out a few of the leading aspects of the psalm and ask God to allow us all to gather some valuable insights into the circumstances of what is presented to us in the passage. And, we ask that He allow us then to seek to apply them to our understanding of the events and potential outcomes that surfaced in our nation, and in the world on September 11, 2001.

To approach this matter, let us state the most probable human reaction that the vast majority of our culture felt on that fateful day. To do this, look at Psalm 55:8 and feel, as David felt, when speaking in the human, emotional realm. **"I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."**

Who among us would not agree that we would much prefer that we be freed from the anxieties and fears that engulfed us on that particular day? Who among us would prefer that these tragic events had not occurred? Or, that we could escape the horror that we felt and do feel? Or, that the world of so-called civilized mankind could be restored to the state that we imagined to exist prior to that date?

Surely, the windy storm and tempest are upon us, and evil has beset us, seemingly on every hand, personal and up close.

Surely, the enemies have not only encamped around us, they are in our very midst, and they seek to do us further harm. In fact, their announced aim is to destroy us and to remove all semblance of our ways from all men.

Surely, the world is in great conflict with confusion, distress, and madness on the horizon—AND VERY NEAR!

Surely, the fears from within trouble us as well, and we feel threatened. Not only from without, but even in ourselves as to how we should and will react, and go forward. Or, will we be paralyzed? How will we react to the present and future danger(s)? And how will those who identify as being "in our camp" react?

And what about the leaders of our own nation, and the leaders of other nations? How will they react? What will be their prayers, if any? And what will be their confession of sins, if any? And what will their acts of leadership be as they face the realities of what has happened? And why it happened? And what is to be done in the face of all these horrible realities?

As we contemplate the motives, reasons, plans, and actions of the present day enemies of the true God, we are drawn to the basic precepts that are expressed to us by God as He speaks to us in Psalm 55. Here, we see that in the time when David lived and penned this great Psalm, treachery was behind his enemies then, as is the case today. Then, as now, hatred of God and His ways are clearly the motives and plans that have brought those, and these present time vicious outpourings of malice and evil to the surface.

In Psalm 55, David is emotionally drawn into a state of fear, anxiety and doubt as he muses throughout the events that are spoken in verses 1-8. He is fearful and deeply disturbed when he considers what has and is happening all around him. Even to the point of longing for opportunity to just flee away from the danger and demands with which he is confronted. He laments and complains and longs for a return to a time of calm repose in the affairs of state and of those surrounding his home, family,

kingdom, and self.

In verses 9-15 however, a time of anger and boiling indignation against his enemies, their motives and actions surfaces. He now turns away from his personal anguish for the purpose of seeking, by prayer, their defeat and destruction. He does not relinquish his previous thoughts and feelings, nor does he renounce his emotions that had been called into view by the crushing sorrow that he felt at the events that had engulfed him and his kingdom.

It is perfectly clear here that David is brought to face the awful reality that all his subjects do not submit to his rule. More staggering perhaps is the realization that all his subjects, as well as men of other nations, do not submit to his God. These enemies may outwardly express some measure of allegiance to him and to his God, but their actions declare that they do not fear his God.

In this portion of the psalm, David's anger rises up and his indignation is of such magnitude and vehemence until he prays for the swift and utter destruction of those enemies. He petitions God to bring about His judgment and their end. He prays that God will intervene and deal with those who have acted against his kingdom and the kingdom of God. He prays that the plans and purposes of these traitors and enemies be cast into a state of confusion, as had been evidenced at Babel in the days of

Nimrod and his adherents in their prideful rebellion against the true God. Swift destruction is sought, and purpose to the end begins to unfold in his mind and in his activities.

Then, David is brought to a state of mind that directs him to feel an inward calm and an outward demeanor that now enables him to demonstrate true leadership. True leadership! Leadership that is rooted and grounded in the trust of God to a degree not evidenced in the time of emotional involvement such as was characterized by the fear and dread of verses 1-8, and then by the anger and righteous indignation shown in verses 9-15.

David's leadership was evident in those instances, for he still had a sense of knowing that whatever was thrust upon him and his subjects, God, his God, still ruled. He apparently took the lead in expression of fear and indignation that surely must have been felt also by those around him. He was not the only one who felt fear. He was not the only one who felt anger. These human emotions were surely felt by many, in fact, most of his citizens.

But now, his true character begins to shine through the gloom and doubt for now he is divinely enabled to stand tall and to stand firm as he begins to express how he is assured that all this would ultimately play itself out. Real leadership is on exhibition.

Verses 16-23 display his reflection upon the sure mercies of his God, his own Jehovah, and his faith in Him is renewed and now flourishes, even far above what may have been seen previously.

How does this come to David, and to all those who truly fear God and want to have His pleasing countenance in view? What does God instruct us to do in times of distress, as well as in time of exuberance and joy? Here's what David is led to say, and ourselves as well in our times of difficulty: **"As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me. God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn**

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Funnybone

"... A time to laugh..." (Eccl. 3:4).

Deacon Jones asked Bill Tightwad, "Do you believe that marriages are made in Heaven?"

Bill answered, "Yes, I guess they are. Mine has certainly had much thunder and lightning in it."

Bill Tightwad was convinced from a sermon by Pastor Brown he ought to do something to show his love to his wife of 20 years. So he bought her twelve roses, hoping to express his love and kindness to her. When he got home he gave them to his wife.

She dropped her head and in tears said, "This has been a terrible day. The kids have been wild. The pump in the well went out. I have had a terrible pain in my back, and now you have come home drunk."

Sadie Smith went with her son to a Jehovah's Witness church service. The leader of the meeting asked the congregation, "How many of you folks here are Jehovah's Witnesses?"

Everybody raised their hand, except Sadie Smith.

After the service, while the leader was shaking hands, he said, "Ma'am, I noticed you didn't raise your hand. Does that mean you're not a Jehovah's Witness? Would you mind telling me what you are?"

Sadie said, "Well, I'm a Baptist."

Some of the people standing around didn't seem to appreciate her answer. So he asked her, "Ma'am, would you mind telling me why you're a Baptist?"

She said, "I really don't know, except my mother and father were Baptists as well as my grandmother and grandfather."

He said, "Ma'am, that's really not a good reason to be a Baptist. Suppose your mother and father as well as your grandmother and grandfather had been morons, what would have been?"

Without batting an eye, Sadie said, "I guess I'd have been a Jehovah's Witness."

I Will Hasten To Him

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swords. Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee” (Ps. 55:16-23).

Oh, what peace and joy now fills David’s soul, and how it should also abound to each and every child of God today, and every day. Even in the days of our present trouble and distress, as well as in the days of uncertainty that will continue to prevail among men and nations in the age in which we live. Trouble will abound, and fears will be felt, and doubt will be common among us. But, this one thing we can be sure of as was David, God will not fail, nor will He permit His enemies to fail to be ultimately and utterly brought down into the pit of destruction. Take courage, dear child of God. God is not, nor will He be mocked. He will prevail.

David is led, and each of God’s people should be led to demonstrate what is laid before us in verse 16: **“As for me. . . .”** And then in verse 17: **“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”** In verse 18: **“He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me.”** In verse 19: **“God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.”**

Now, look joyfully at the closing of Psalm 55:22-23: **“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.”**

Now, I would invite you to read, examine, meditate upon, and seek to apply what is said to all who would hear what God declares in II Chronicles 7:12-14. **“And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble**

themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

What a challenge! And what a promise! **“If MY people—which are called by MY name—shall HUMBLE themselves—AND pray, AND seek MY face—AND TURN from their wicked way; THEN will I hear from heaven, AND will forgive their SIN—AND will heal their land.”**

I am now burdened to ask each of you to consider the events recorded for our learning and currently needed instruction of II Kings, chapters 18 and 19. Please turn to these chapters and read carefully and prayerfully as God unfolds before us a time of conflict between His enemies and His people, When you have done so, ask yourself: **“Do these events here recorded have application to our present day, 2001 A.D. conflicts? Are there lessons to be learned, devotions to be considered, and actions to be taken?”**

Sennacherib, a wicked king of Assyria, had been permitted to fight victoriously against many surrounding kingdoms and to subdue them. He, in prideful contempt for the people of Israel and the God of Israel, dispatched by messenger, a letter to Hezekiah, then king of Judah, in which he threatened that kingdom to a similar state of conflict and defeat as had been experienced by other neighboring kingdoms.

Hezekiah, upon human appraisal, came to the conclusion that his enemy was indeed capable of inflicting such a defeat upon him and upon his kingdom. Much as was the case of David that we have been speaking of, Hezekiah surely must have felt fear, and doubt, and anxiety as he was confronted with the ultimatum that came to him from the enemy.

Hezekiah’s reactions are recorded for our learning, and are described in II Kings 19:14-19: **“And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house**

of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cheribums, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.”

As you read further, you will find that God did hear Hezekiah and He sent word of promise, assurance and comfort to him through Isaiah the prophet as to the outcome of Sennacherib’s terror campaign, and even of Sennacherib himself, before the events occurred. God told the outcome, BEFORE the battle. God does hear when His people are brought to humbleness of spirit and utter dependence upon Him for their deliverance.

fe:Now, as Hezekiah did then, I will hasten to Him, and by His divine enablement will seek His outcome to the present difficulties that I face, as an individual, and that our nation faces. And I urge each of you who know the LORD to join with me and that together, we then urge our leaders, at all levels of society to do as God has spoken in II Chronicles 7:14.

Please note again in II Chron. 7:14 that God clearly states the matter, and promises that when His prescription is applied, that He will bring about a forgiving of the confessed sins of His people, and that He will heal their land.

With this command and promise

before me, and by His enabling grace, I will hasten to Him for the healing of the many and grievous conflicts in my own life. But, this must be done in accordance with His stated prescription. I may not disregard His prescription and expect the remedy that He has promised.

I must humble myself under His mighty hand, and pray, and seek His face, and turn from my wicked ways before I can expect Him to hear from Heaven, and forgive my sins, and heal my distresses. All of God’s people are instructed to follow the same formula, and when having done so, to expect His announced outcome. It is our God who has made this assignment, and it is God who must be obeyed if we are to be given that calmness of spirit and determination of purpose to face and to be victorious over our enemies, even those from within our depraved and sinful natures. May God grant us sufficient grace to do so.

With this command and promise before me, and by His enabling grace, I will offer such leadership as He supplies, so that I teach my church to hasten to Him also. Hasten to Him for the needs of each member, and for the church as a body, in unity and harmony with His precepts, so that together, we may apply the remedy that He has prescribed, and then to trust Him to meet our needs, just as He has promised. We must submit before we can expect Him to intervene and heal.

With this command and promise before me, and by His enabling grace, I will hasten to Him in behalf of His people who dwell in our nation, and in other nations, and pray that they too, at all levels of leadership and of citizenship will hasten to Him also. That we will indeed recognize His permissive Hand in our distresses, and beseech Him to intervene, as He has promised to do—WHEN His prescription is seen, sought, and applied.

Have we, as individuals, as churches, as nations met that prescription? I greatly fear that we have come far short of it. I greatly fear that we, as individuals, as churches, as nations, are so engrossed in our fears, anxieties, and delusions that we have utterly failed to see the path that is laid before us for our protection and deliverance.

I have heard from many, via the media of various sorts, semblances of prayer and of general comment, even from the multitudes who have before September 11, 2001 highly disdained and held in utter contempt any mention of the Lord, His ways, His Word, and His judgments. Even to the point of ridicule and imagined

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Berea Baptist Broadcast

| STATION | TIME | DIAL | WATTS |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|
| WFTA, Tupelo, MS | Sunday 9:30 - 10:00 a.m. | 101.9 | 3,000 FM |
| WJOR, Saint Joseph, TN | Sunday 1:00 - 1:30 p.m. | 101.5 | 1,000 FM |
| WVSA, Vernon, AL | Sunday 7:00 - 7:30 a.m. | 1380 | 1,000 AM |
| WLZA, Starkville, MS | Sunday 1:00 - 1:30 p.m. | 710 | 2,500 AM |
| WCNA, Myrtle, MS | Sunday 12:30 - 1:00 p.m. | 95.9 | 3,000 FM |
| WCTT, Corbin, KY | Sunday 9:00 - 9:30 a.m. | 680 | 5,000 AM |
| KARI, Blaine, WA | Saturday 10:30 - 11:00 a.m. | 550 | 5,000 AM |
| KORE, Springfield, OR | Sunday 8:00 - 8:30 a.m. | 1050 | 5,000 AM |
| DXRA, Davao City, Philippines | Sunday 8:15 - 8:45 a.m. | 783 Khz | 10,000 AM |
| DWSS, Manila, Philippines | Sunday 5:30 - 6:00 p.m. | 1494 | 16,000 AM |

I Will Hasten To Him

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superiority of intellect as they cast the impression that any who speak of God and of His ways are somehow mentally incompetent as they flaunt their atheistic philosophies in the very face of God and God fearing people everywhere. I have heard their present feeble attempts now to present themselves as part of society that loves, worships, and praises God for ALL His works.

But, I have heard little, from any, of the sins that we have committed, or of any suggestion of direction for our citizens, our leaders, and our nation to turn from their many sins. There has been little, if any renouncing of our evil and wicked ways, or even of the admission that we, as a people and as a nation could possibly be guilty of sin.

How can we expect God to hear from Heaven and deliver when we, in outward piety, but inwardly still harboring our sins, unconfessed, and surely not repented of, as we just continue on in our rebellions and sins. We go on, as we did before, as if we had obeyed His directions. How? How? How can we expect God to heal our land when we continue to defy Him and His ways?

Even the suspected perpetrators of the horror that society particularly in our nation, our beloved America, tell us openly and freely that their intent is to destroy us as a people and as a nation. Yet, they do so in the name of their god. They hate our God, and they hate all who worship Him, yet they too, are devoted to a god.

I ask you now to pray for me. Pray for my church. Pray for my nation. Pray for all who would march under His banner become obedient to Him and obedient to His ways. Pray even for those who hate us, because the only way that the hatred can be halted and turned to love and compassion is that a work of Divine Intervention toward them become reality. Pray for the salvation of lost souls, knowing that the Lord will redeem all whom He has chosen.

I close this discourse by looking back to Psalm 55, where we began. There, after the period of anxious fear, and the great anger that followed, there is a promise held high in remembrance. David's fear, his anger, AND his increasing TRUST IN GOD is before us.

David indeed feared greatly. He indeed was vehemently angry. But, in the face of these two emotional tidal waves that seemed to overwhelm him came the assurance that he so desperately needed. God showed him

the need to trust Him more, and in the face of all that would have overcome him is the fact that DUTY rises above fear, and anger, and all other human emotions.

Therefore, dear reader, our DUTY is greater than all our failures. Stand! Stand! and having done all, STAND THEREFORE!

Barren

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barren.

We see women on TV and hear of them saying they would give anything to have a baby. To hold the little one in her arms to love, the joy of seeing her baby grow up, saying their first words, and to hear them say, "Mom" and "Dad." What could be more beautiful? But the word "barren" means they can't have any children. What is a home without children?

Now you say adopt a little baby, but to be a mother is to carry the little baby nine months and bring forth through suffering and pain, then comes the joy of being a mother. John 16:21 says: "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."

Today we hear so many women and men saying we don't want any children. We both work. We don't have time, or we just don't want any children. There is selfishness and greed in the world today. Proverbs 31:28-30 says: "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her, Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD she shall be praised."

Let us look at five women that were barren, and God opened up their wombs and gave them children and the lives of their children.

SARAI

In the book of Genesis 11:30: "But Sarai was barren, she had no child." Now look what happened when Sarai wanted another woman to have her child in Genesis 16:1-4: "Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abam, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abam's wife took

Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes."

Now it was a big mistake of Sarai trying to obtain children through Hagar and all the heartaches that followed. You know it sounds like the surrogate mothers of today.

I'm glad we have a God that sees all, hears all, and can do all things. Look at Genesis 17:15-19: "And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her: and give thee a son also of her: and she shall be a mother of nations, kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee, And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; And thou shalt call his name Isaac: And I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." Look at verse 21: "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at the set time in the next year."

God is always faithful in his promises, for He had told Abraham at the set time Sarah would have a son. In chapter 21:1-3: "And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

We see Isaac, a type of Christ obedient unto death. Look at Philippians 2:8: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

In Genesis 22 God spoke to Abraham to take thy son to Mount Moriah and to offer him there for a burnt offering. One can imagine the things that went through Abraham's mind. Oh, the heartfelt pain he suffered. But we see Abraham as a type of the Father and Isaac as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also we see our blessed Lord Jesus as He died on Calvary, the suffering pain, and the

blood that cleanses us from all sin. We see Sarah barren and God opened her womb and brought forth Isaac the promised seed.

REBEKAH

Let us look at another one of the great women in the Bible that was barren. Did you know that Rebekah was barren? But the great God of Heaven answered prayer and gave her Esau and Jacob. In Genesis 24, we have the beautiful story of Abraham as a type of God the Father and his servant as the type of the Holy Spirit. It is written in Genesis 24:3-4: "And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac."

Isaac is a type of Jesus Christ, and Rebekah is the type of the bride. In verse 67, look what it says: "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." Oh, dear people, as Isaac's love for Rebekah, how much the Lord Jesus Christ loves the Church and gave His life for His Bride—the Baptist Period. I am glad the Lord led me to be a Baptist and not a Protestant. Aren't you?

Now in Chapter 25, look at verse 21: "And Isaac entreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: And the LORD was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived." When Isaac took Rebekah to be his wife, he was forty years old. God blessed them twenty years later and gave them Esau and Jacob.

RACHEL

Let us go on to another one of the great women of the Bible that was barren. In Genesis 29:18: "And Jacob loved Rachel." Here is a beautiful love story of Jacob's love for Rachel, and how Jacob worked seven years for her. But after the seven long years had ended, Jacob wanted Rachel for his wife. But Rachel's dad, Laban, gave Leah to Jacob to be his wife, and you can imagine what went through Jacob's mind. His love was for Rachel and he got Leah. That was Rachel's older sister. But it didn't end there. Jacob loved Rachel, and he worked another seven years for her, and the time went so fast. Let us see what happened in verse 31: "But Rachel was barren." In Chapter 30:1: "And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied

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Barren

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her sister; and said unto Jacob, give me children, or else I die.” Verse 2: “And Jacob’s anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God’s stead, who had withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?”

Here we see the sovereignty of God. For in verses 22-24: **“And God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach: And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.”** We can see the love Jacob had for Rachel. But also the greater love God has for His children. I am glad I serve a great sovereign God of all power, and Who can do all things according to His sovereign will. Aren’t you?

Rachel did have another son in Chapter 35:17: **“And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also, And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way of Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.”**

Rachel was buried in Bethlehem, but it brings great joy to a child of God, for Bethlehem means “the house of bread.” Jesus said in John 6:48: **“I am that bread of life.”** In Luke 2:11 look what it says: **“For unto us is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”**

HANNAH

Let us now look at another one of the women of the Bible that was barren. This is another beautiful love story of a man and his wife that could not have children, and God answered her prayer. Let us look at I Samuel, Chapter 1 about a man named Elkanah. Now Elkanah had two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah had given Elkanah children, but Hannah was barren and she wanted so much to have children. Let us look at verses 5-6: **“But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.”** Look at verse 10: **“And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.”** Here was Hannah pouring her heart out unto the Lord to give her

children. Eli thought she had consumed too much wine. **“How long wilt thou be drunken?”** (I Sam. 1:14).

But in verse 15: **“And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord., I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.”** Look at verses 19 and 20: **“And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her, Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.”**

Does God answer prayer? Hannah says I have asked him of the Lord. God so blessed Hannah with a son. Look at Chapter 3:20: **“And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.”** Oh, dear people, did you know that this baby Hannah prayed for was to be a prophet of God? And this prophet was to anoint David king, and this kingship came up to our blessed Lord.

ELISABETH

Let us look at one more of the great women of the Bible that was barren. As we look in the New Testament, we go to Luke 1:5-7: **“There was in the days of Herod, the King of Judea a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.”**

Let us go back now. We have talked about four barren women of the Bible and Elisabeth is the fifth and the children the Lord gave them. Oh, the blessings that flow from God through these barren women whom God opened up their wombs, and gave them children. Abraham and Sarah had Isaac. Hebrews 11:17-19 says: **“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”**

As we look at Isaac and Rebeah, how God blessed them, and their

sons, Esau and Jacob. And Jacob, Leah and Rachel and the twelve tribes of Israel, and the tribe of Judah. In Revelation 5:4-5: **“And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders said unto me, 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.”** This ought to make a Baptist shout and praise the Lord. And how God blessed Elkanah and Hannah, and gave them Samuel the prophet that anointed David king. You know God so loved Elkanah and Hannah that He gave them more children.

In I Samuel chapter 2, verse 21: **“And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.”**

Let us look now to Zacharias and Elisabeth. They were in old age, and God blessed these dear people. Elisabeth was barren and saddened, for she knew she would never have children. But our ways are not the ways of God. In Luke 1:37: **“For with God nothing shall be impossible.”** Verse 13: **“But the angel said unto him, Fear not Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.”** Let me say some things here, the angel said to Zacharias, thy prayer is heard. Are we to give up praying for loved ones and lost souls? You know Isaac entreated the Lord for twenty years for Rebekah. Isaac took Rebekah to wife when he was forty years old, and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them sons. Threescore years means Isaac was sixty years old, so he prayed twenty years for his sons. The Bible says Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife. Entreated means to plead or beg, and Isaac pled and begged to God twenty years. Are we to give up on loved ones? No, No, a thousand times No, entreat the Lord, plead and beg for loved ones and lost souls.

Here the angel said to Zacharias, thy prayer is heard. Elisabeth is going to have a baby.

Look at verses 57 to 60: **“Now Elisabeth’s full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother**

answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.”

Look in Luke Chapter 3:4: **“As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight.”** So you see John was predestinated some eight hundred years before he was born and in the foreknowledge of God. Look in the Gospel of John, Chapter 1:6: **“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”** Listen to what our blessed Lord says about John in Matthew, Chapter 11:10-11: **“For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of woman there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”**

Now we see our blessed Lord is calling John. Look now to the Gospel of John, Chapter 1:26-29: **“John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”**

Oh, dear saints of God, we can only bow our heads and praise the greatness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ for with God nothing shall be impossible (Luke 1:37). We know there are other barren women in the Bible, but these five women, God so gracefully used in the lineage and blood line of Christ. As we see in Luke Chapter 1:30-32: **“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 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.”**

Luke 1:37 says: **“For with God nothing shall be impossible.”** It is written in the Book of Jeremiah, Chapter 32:27: **“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?”**

In closing, I give all the praise and glory to our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Mini Edition

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TERRORISM IN THE "HOLEY" LAND

September 11 is now a day etched permanently in the minds of all Americans. We who are removed from the disaster geographically can never completely understand the full impact of this act. We watched on a two-dimensional screen, but could not smell the smoke or taste the soot and hear the background cries of horror. We will never be the same.

The honest response from God's people in any terror, devastation, or mishap should be one of introspection. Since God could have prevented this horror, but did not, we should look inward and examine ourselves. Individually, there are godly people in this nation who fear God and submit to Him daily. Nationally, the picture is very different. Society sanctions murder and calls it abortion. Homosexuality is endorsed and called an alternate lifestyle. Immorality and divorce are common and child abuse and molestation are found in most Christian families.

It is not my job or intention to call this tragedy a judgment from God. I do believe, however, it is a wake up call and professing Christians need to wake up, straighten up and pray up, for if the judgment of God against ungodliness has not begun, it may be knocking on the door. It may also be a reminder that America needs now, maybe more than ever, to stand staunchly with Israel.

However, the fabric of America has many holes in it. When something has holes in it, it must either be repaired or discarded, unless it is a sieve. Pray we will patch the holes, rather than wait for the discarding.

First, look at the *Political Holes*. America is still great in many respects. Concerning our form of government as a free republic, it is the greatest in the history of the world. But politically, we are riddled with corruption. There is great opportunity to become corrupted in the political system. Among our lawmakers, immorality, greed, dishonesty, and lying are rampant. The "Great Society" of liberalism promises total care for all from the cradle to grave, especially for those who do not contribute financially. A good work ethic and self-reliance and independent thinking, are discouraged by this liberal philosophy. But, these are just a few

of the political holes that need mending.

Second, there are *Societal Holes*. Society in general is guided by an extreme multicultural view of relativism. No act by any individual is viewed as either right or wrong. Situational ethics says that what's wrong for one person may not necessarily be wrong for another person. Homosexuality is tolerated and viewed as a personal choice of lifestyle with no moral implications. The modern public school system is vehemently anti-God with a campaign to sweep all vestiges of God or religion from its presence. Christian teachers in these institutions face serious challenges in the future and will have to compromise or get out. Mark my words.

Third, there are *Theological Holes*. More and more, there is a tendency to de-emphasize the personal responsibility and total depravity of man. Every human is personally accountable to God and must one day face Him. The new age teaching of the divinity of man is becoming more prevalent. This teaching states that within every person lies a divine spark, and when fanned, it will burst into a fire of goodness. Jeremiah the prophet said that man was rotten from the top of his head to the sole of his foot. This teaching complements the doctrine of salvation by works, via church membership, baptism, inward goodness, and reformation of lifestyle. But salvation is still a divine work of God, initiated, perpetuated, and completed by the Father, Son and the Spirit.

And Fourth, there are *Holes in the Family*. Someone once said, "As the family goes, so goes the church, the nation, and every other human institution." Husbands and wives make a one inch deep commitment at the altar of marriage and shortly end in divorce. The marriage ends in bitterness and blame-placing and the children are usually scarred emotionally for life. Do not be deceived: divorce hurts everyone involved. Where families stay together, some do not have the strong father and husband that is needed to lead the family, spiritually, emotionally, and financially. Leading a family is an awesome responsibility, for which each Father and husband must be accountable to God.

I do not believe the fabric is so full of holes it must be discarded, at least

not yet. There is still hope, and this hope is the strongest while we yet have freedom to seek after God publicly. Is the terrorist attack in New York and Washington DC a judgment from God? It's not for me to say. I do believe it is clear, however, that the attack is a call to seek God. On this, all Christians should agree.

ONLY IN AMERICA

In America, we have true freedom of speech and more absolute liberty than anywhere in the world. That doesn't mean that other Democracies do not have freedom of speech also. It just seems to be more absolute here in the USA. In a lot of other countries in the world, if you speak up against the actions of the government or its leaders, you just might end up slaughtered in the street and left there like an animal, as an example to other "rebels."

We have heard stories of people complaining this past week about "too much" flag waving. Excuse me, but there has not been ANY flag waving in this country, to speak of, since the 60's, with the exception of Ronald Reagan trying to revive patriotism in his administration. And then there was a small show of patriotism during the Gulf War.

Now consider the planned "peace" demonstration that is upcoming, beginning Sept. 29, in front of the White House. The demonstration is supposed to be mainly made up of students from college campuses who are skeptical about military retaliation over the recent act of terrorism. According to Fox News, some are disturbed about the (and I quote) "*feverish pitch*" and believe the patriotism is superficial, "*whipped up by President Bush*", so he can justify war. We don't know what will happen at the demonstration until Sept. 29, and I hope all goes well, but if it is like so many other pacifist demonstrations, anti-American slogans and phrases will be the focal point. I believe in the right for an individual to be a pacifist and demonstrate, if that individual so desires, but being un-American and anti-American is inexcusable.

True peace doesn't come from rhetoric, demonstrations, or speeches. It comes ONLY from a strong military and the resolve of strong leaders to use force when needed, to create peace. Unfortunately, peace is just not something that happens. "Make love not war" sounds inarguable, but the reality may be that we must make war to have peace. Our forced action after Pearl Harbor was a situation that created peace. Japan, nor anyone else, was interested in continuing the war after the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. If we had made love and

not war, American history from that point on, would have been totally different.

I know some may misunderstand me at this point, but I can't help but remember the wording on an old car tag I saw in the seventies: "AMERICA, LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT." And I add "OR DEMONSTRATE WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE," and don't use the freedom bought for us by the blood of others, to denigrate and downgrade the very system that gives you the right to express yourself. 'Nuff said.

WHAT A DAY!!

All the sorrow and heartache that resulted from September 11 can't be forgotten and history can't be changed. Yet, the results of that day are bittersweet. Let me explain. The aftermath of that day is bitter because of the death, shock, tragedy, suffering, and loss caused. If we could wave a magic wand and erase everything, we would. But we can't. Though the bitter taste lingers, yet pause with me a moment and reflect on the sweet that has been produced.

What a day it is in America, when the President of the United States calls the nation to prayer.

What a day, when churches and ministries by the thousands have special meetings of prayer.

What a day, when so many in congress speak of prayer and the importance of seeking God.

What a day, when patriotism is truly revived, and people display Old Glory with fervor and get teary eyed in her presence.

What a day, when Americans watch television and see the deaths and misfortunes of fellow citizens and break down in tears, followed by genuine compassion.

What a day, when Republicans and Democrats are united in one mind concerning the future of this great country.

What a day, when we can hardly tell conservative from liberal by their speech, because of the united compassion they both share.

What a day, when generation X, called the lost generation by some, has the privilege of seeing America rise to the occasion of the hour.

What a day, when race is not an issue and we see those who suffer, as humans first, not regarding their skin color or ethnic background.

What a day, to hear on the news that over \$100,000,000 has been donated from individuals, businesses, and corporations, to help victims and families.

We have lived to see this day. Glory to God!

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Mini Edition

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SO WHO'S REALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TERRORIST ATTACK?

On September 11, 2001, we witnessed the most massive, horrific terrorist attack in the world, and it was on American soil. This attack is unprecedented in its global impact, as far as terrorist attacks are concerned. Anything that affects the USA greatly, affects the world. Instead of talking about the "Who's" and "Why's," I'll leave that to others. Those topics already seem to have been covered fairly well, so far, by the pundits. Instead, I want to focus on another aspect.

Since the initial attack, I have heard more than one individual state that the attack was the result of America's stand with Israel. There could be *some* truth in the statement, *but*, let's be honest. Whoever was responsible, whether Arab, Palestinian or otherwise, *already* had a hate for America and the freedom she espouses and the democracy she promotes. America's stand with Israel for her right to exist is a lonely position, but do not be deceived. It is not a stand of two, but of three; Israel, the USA, and the God of the Universe. The last one mentioned places the group in the majority against the world.

There are two reasons why America should stand adamantly with Israel. The *first reason* is political: Israel is the only real democracy in the middle east, surrounded by over 20 nations that are not *"of the people, by the people, and for the people."* Politically, it's the right thing to do. The *second reason* is spiritual: Israel as a nation, inhabiting her piece of dirt, still has promises made over 3000 years by God, that are yet to be fulfilled, but are forthcoming, therefore, she is still God's earthly people, who will yet be blessed abundantly in His time and providence. Israel is not always right, but she is always God's.

When I hear reports of the "aggressor" Israel, trying to push out the poor Palestinians, it is almost laughable. The Palestinians are the land squatters. The Palestinians are the ones who cowardly, covertly plant bombs in acts of terrorism against Israel. Yet, when Israel responds militarily, as she should, Israel is the "big, bully aggressor" nation.

Here are the facts. The earth, dirt, rocks, plants, mountains, etc., belong to God. **"The earth is the LORDS, and the fullness thereof. . . ."** (Psa. 24:1; 50:12; 89:11). The only humans

that God (the true owner of the earth) ever gave a divine deed to, was Abraham and his descendants. It is well documented in Scripture, with boundaries described. God did not give a physical inheritance to any other group of people, and certainly not to Amalek and his descendants, the Palestinians.

Christians are quick to concur that God raised up America to be a shining light and send missionaries around the world in these last days. I agree, but believe the reason for America's existence may be twofold. God just may have built this nation to be a bastion for His earthly people, Israel, in these last days. God bless America and God help America, if she does not stand with Israel.

Revival at the Water Gate

Continued from page 201

Trumpets was intended to prepare the Israelites for the most important day of their religious calendar—the Day of Atonement—celebrated on the 10th of Tishri.

We learn from Ezra 3:1 this was the day which the altar was first set up on the Jews return from Babylonian Captivity. Hence this was the anniversary of the restoration of the altar of burnt offerings for the daily sacrifice.

THE PLACE

The place of this meeting was **"before the water gate"** (v. 1). This was a large street just inside the Water Gate in the east wall of the city, close to the temple. This gate led to Gihon spring, the main source of water for Jerusalem.

THE PREACHER

The master of the assembly was Ezra, a ready scribe in the law of Moses (Ezra 7:6). Ezra had come to Jerusalem in 458 B. C. as a spiritual leader to teach the people about divine worship. In Ezra 7:10 it is written of him: **"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."** Being a priest, he was well qualified as an expositor of the law. Malachi 2:7 says: **"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts."**

While Ezra read and explained the Torah, verse 7 suggests a number of Levites assisted him. Some believe that Ezra read and explained the law for some time and then others followed him after he became weary. Still others believe Ezra read the Torah in the Hebrew tongue. The law was then translated into Aramaic and

explained to the people by these assistants so they could understand the reading. These make the Hebrew word translated "distinctly" to mean "translate." It can have this meaning, but it can also have the meaning of our English version as well. They contend this translation was necessary because many of the returned captives from Babylon were no longer fully acquainted with the Hebrew language (Neh. 13:24).

If it is true that the Hebrew had to be translated into the Aramaic, we can learn a lesson about translating the Scriptures. First, it is not wrong to translate the Bible into another language. Second, when it is translated it should be translated from the original tongues (Hebrew and Greek) into the common language of the people. This is true of our King James translation. Personally, I do not care much for a translation from a translation, for I fear the original sense of words may be lost.

By New Testament times it was customary in the synagogue to read the first five books of the Bible, and then to have the explanation given orally in Aramaic. **"For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day"** (Acts 15:21; cf. Luke 4:15-20). These oral translations were eventually preserved in the written Targum (Aramaic for "translation").

THE PULPIT

"And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose" (v. 4). This was literally a "tower." The same Hebrew word translated "pulpit" in Nehemiah 8:4 is translated "pillar" in II Kings 11:14. This was a raised platform in light of the fact it accommodated 14 men (v. 4, 7). It would be called today a wooden platform or podium. On this the priests were visible to everyone (v. 5), and the people could hear them better.

The pulpit in the Jewish synagogue was made in the same manner and was called by the same name. This is probably the origin of the pulpit, or raised platform, in our church buildings of today.

It is worth noting that the first wooden pulpit in the Bible was built in a public square for open-air preaching. Is there a lesson here?

THE PREACHER'S MANNER

First, he opened the service by prayer: **"And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God"** (v. 6). Before he began to read the book of the law, Ezra addressed God in a short prayer. The word "blessed" in this verse is related to the Hebrew word for "knee," and it sometimes means "to

kneel" (Gen. 24:11; Ps. 95:6). It is a term for worship. The people responded by lifting up their hands, the manner in which the Israelites prayed to God (Ps. 28:2; 63:4; 143:6; I Tim. 2:8). Their saying, **"Amen, Amen"** (v. 6), was their voice agreement and faith in the certainty for what Ezra had been praying.

This priest was conscious of the greatness of the occasion, the greatness of God, the great need of the people, the greatness of the message, and His great responsibility to the Lord. Before reading the Torah Ezra ascribed honor and glory to the being and perfections of God. He stressed in his prayer the greatness of God, and how God is the Author and Giver of the law he was about to read.

According to John Gill, the master of the synagogue would open the book and say this blessing: "O Lord our God, King of the world, who hath chosen us out of all people, and hath given us His law; blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast given us the law," and all the people answered, "Amen."

Second, he stuck to the Book: **"So they read in the book in the law of God. . ."** (v. 8). This means Ezra and the other priests with him. Ezra began to read and expound the law, and when he became tired some of the other priests relieved him. These priests believed the Bible was to be read and explained to the common people—men, women, and children. Ezra knew what the people needed—not his words, but the Word of God. This practice was brought over into the New Testament in synagogue worship (Acts 13:15, 27; 15:22). This practice was carried over into the New Testament churches. Paul wrote to the Colossian church: **"And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea"** (Col. 4:16). Again he wrote to the church at Thessolonica: **"I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren"** (I Thess. 5:27).

Justin Martyr (100-165 A.D.) gave this description of early Christian worship: "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in the cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

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Is justification by God-given faith to the sinner? Or, is justification by the faithfulness of Christ? --

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Justification may be defined as the deliverance from the penalty of the law and the guilt of sin through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ which includes His perfect life, His sacrificial death and blood shedding, and His glorious resurrection from the dead. The Bible clearly teaches that saving faith is a gift bestowed upon the elect as soon as they have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Since faith is part of the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22) it is a spiritual grace that is produced by the internal work of the Holy Spirit in God's elect. When an elect sinner is born of the Spirit they are immediately graced with the gifts of repentance and faith, enabling them to turn from sin and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. At the point of saving faith the sinner is declared not guilty and the righteousness of Jesus Christ is legally imputed to him. Acts 13:38-39 states: **"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."** Romans 3:24-25 records: **"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."** Romans 5:1 declares: **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

There is also a very real sense in which sinners are justified by the faithfulness of Christ as well. It was Christ's absolute fidelity to the law and His willingness to satisfy the penalty of the law on the cross that secured the justification of all His elect. If Christ had not been faithful to carry out the terms of the Covenant

of Grace and satisfy the claims of God's inflexible justice, there would have been no justification whatsoever. Each day I am standing in the finished work of Christ as revealed in the Gospel (I Cor. 15:1-4). I am resting only in the faithfulness of Christ and His finished work alone. Galatians 2:16 & 20 state: **"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. . . I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."**

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"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). **"Being justified freely by his (God's) grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"** (Rom. 3:24). **"It is God that justifieth"** (Rom. 8:33).

Justification before God includes both God-given faith and the faithfulness of Christ. In my understanding of the doctrine, it would prove to be an impossible effort to separate these two things when we consider the salvation of any sinner.

God is the author of justification. This fact should convince us that man has nothing to do with justification, but becomes a recipient of justification through God-given faith. The Word of God is clear in revealing that true faith is God-given (Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29). This God-given faith enables us to trust the faithfulness of Christ which is manifest so clearly in the gospel (Eph. 1:13). While some claim salvation and justification by an

exercise of their faith; their so-called faith may rest in church membership, baptism in water, human works, or in a combination of these things.

The elect receive God-given faith through the hearing of the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). True faith must rest upon the faithfulness of Jesus Christ in His accomplishment of that which was necessary for us to have a judicial standing before the Father, clothed in the righteousness of the Son (Rom. 3:21-26).

In closing I should point out the fact that our justification before God is said to be apart from any human work (Rom. 4:1-6) is not to be confused with our justification before men which is evidenced by our works (James 2:21-24).

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By justification we mean the judicial act of God wherein He, on account of the merits of the finished work of Christ, accounts a believing sinner to be just before God.

God is the author of justification (Rom. 8:33; 3:24, 26).

The basis of justification is the finished work of Christ. His shed blood on the cross was accepted by God as sufficient payment for the sins of all the elect who in due time believe in that finished work for the remission of their sins (I John 1:7; I Peter 2:24).

Since God is the author of justification and Jesus Christ's finished work in His sacrifice for the elect's sin then of necessity it was and is the faithfulness of God that makes justification sure (II Tim. 2:13).

Faith in and of itself has no merit for justification. Faith does not bestow but receives justification. The exercising of faith is given by God and is an act of inward obedience to God's quickening of the spirit of man by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 10:1-6; 16:26; II Thess. 1:8; I

Pet. 4:17).

Justification is by faith that it might be of grace (Rom. 4:16; 3:27).
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"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).

Those who are effectually called by the Holy Spirit are said to be justified. When an ungodly sinner is called and united to Christ they are at that moment justified. The Greek word that is translated "justified" is defined as "to deem to be right, signifies, in the N. T. to show to be right or righteous. . . ." (W. E. Vine). Justification takes place when our sins are forgiven and we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. We are made new creatures in Christ; therefore, we are to put off the old man which is corrupt and put on the new man. **"which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"** (Eph. 4:24).

We are said to be justified by faith. (Rom. 3:28; 5:1; Gal. 3:24). Faith which we received when we were effectually called. It is not faith itself that justifies us but the grace of God. God justifies all that are chosen in Christ and called. It is by His grace and through the redemption that is in the blood of Christ. **"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"** (Rom. 3:24-26). Justification frees the believing sinner from the penalty of the law and restores him to God's favor. It is given on the merit of the blood and righteousness of Christ (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 2:13).

DAVID O'NEAL



The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit questions on any Bible topic

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Are all Arminians lost and on the road to Hell? Must a man believe in the five points of Calvinism in order to be saved?
— Florida



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“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:9-13).

This passage of Scripture clearly reveals that salvation is bound up entirely in the finished work of Jesus Christ. I do not point men to a system of doctrine as the means of salvation. Rather, I follow the example of one of the greatest preachers of all time, John the Baptist who declared: “. . . Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). John 3:16 contains the following promise: **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”** I don’t think this promise is limited to Calvinists!

As much as I hate the perverted theology that the Arminians hold, I cannot make the blanket statement that they are all going to Hell. No, a man must not hold to the five points of Calvinism in order to be saved. Rather he must be trusting wholly in the finished work of Jesus Christ to be saved.

In fact, I know some Arminian brethren who I believe are genuinely saved and love the Lord. Their understanding has just not been opened up to the truth of the doctrines of grace. One day that will change according to the promise of John

16:13 which states: **“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. . .”** This Scripture will be literally fulfilled when all the saints reach the shores of the glory land. I have often said that there will be no Arminians in Heaven because by the time they receive their glorified mind and come to a full knowledge of the truth they will not hold to those doctrines any longer. I have Scripture to back this claim up. Isaiah 29:24 declares: **“They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”**

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We must be honest in noting the degrees in Arminian teaching as we are prone to do in discussing the five points of Calvinism. It should also be pointed out that Baptists who hold to all five points do not agree with much of Calvin’s teaching on other doctrines, and do not care to be called by any other name than a Baptist.

Not all Arminians are to be classified “Rank Arminians” as those who believe that salvation is produced solely through the efforts and works of man. There are some people who hold to some degree of Arminian teaching die to the fact that their churches and preachers have not declared the whole counsel of God to them. Many of these people have trusted Christ and are saved in spite of some false teaching they have embraced. On the other hand, there are those who hold to one, two, three and possibly four points called Calvinism. Would we claim that none of these are saved because they don’t understand all five points?

Then, what of our most able Elders, which were saved and became members of Baptist Churches where some degree of Arminian doctrine was taught? Are we to assume that these beloved Elders who are

declaring the truth, including all five points of grace, are not truly saved because their profession of faith was made in a church, which was in error on some point or points of grace? The testimony of many preacher brethren is that God led them to see the five points after being saved and called to preach. Are we to believe that these men were not saved because they did not fully understand all the points of grace when they trusted Christ?

: Rank Arminians who believe salvation comes by what man does are not saved. Those who have been born of God, and as yet do not fully understand the five points, are as saved as those are to whom God has given the greater revelation of grace. Men are not saved because of the amount of true doctrine they understand, but because they have been loved of God and called according to His purpose. Because they have been brought to trust and love Christ.

Let us not be guilty of denying salvation to those who have not advanced in biblical doctrine as much as we have been blessed to do.

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It is faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ that brings salvation, not faith in any one or many doctrines.

I’m sure the jailer of Acts 16 had no conception of the doctrines of grace but simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour that Paul and Silas witnessed of.

I personally was saved while an Arminian by believing in the Word of Jesus Christ and what He did for me on the cross by paying for all of my sins as He proclaimed. After being saved by God’s grace the Holy Spirit by the instrumentality of human preachers and teachers enlightened me to the truth of the doctrines of grace. After learning these truths I did not believe in Christ anymore as Lord

and Saviour than I did before learning these truths, but learned to have greater adoration for such a great Lord and Saviour. The knowledge of the doctrines of the grace of God gave me more confidence in witnessing, but not any more salvation because salvation was a work of God, and His knowledge, not of my knowledge or efforts.

I believe that those Arminians who believe they are saved by creating their own faith, and that their faith is what saves them, are deceived and still lost. When one truly believes that their salvation is all by God, and the faith they believe with comes from God, are saved even in their ignorance of the doctrines of grace.

For one to have to know and believe in the doctrines involved in the redemption of the elect would involve man having a part in his salvation. Redemption would be by the created knowledge of man before he was quickened by God and given faith by God. I do not believe man has any part in his salvation. Salvation is all of grace, from God’s love, choice, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification (Rom. 8:28-34).

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“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 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 3:17-18).

First, I do not believe that the doctrine of grace should be referred to as the five points of Calvinism. This great truth was preached by Christ and many of His servants long before John Calvin.

Secondly, it is not what one may believe about the five points of grace that saves them, but that they have faith in God’s only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I find no place in the Bible where we are told that one must believe in Christ and something else. Let us remember that many who believe in the five points of grace, at one time, believed in the free will of man. (That they chose Jesus as their Savior.) If we believed that all who

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Revival at the Water Gate

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thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen. . .” (*The First Apology*, p. 186).

It is the business of every preacher of the gospel to give the people the Word of God. **“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God”** (John 3:34). In Jeremiah 23:28 the Lord said: “. . .and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.” Paul wrote to Timothy: **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears”** (II Tim. 4:2-3). On Sunday many churchgoers hear fun and foolishness, politics and programs, but very little of the Word of God. Modern-day churches are filled with Biblical illiterates because preachers do not preach the Word of God.

One of the greatest needs of modern-day church is for its members to become better acquainted with the Scriptures. Preachers and teachers need to acquaint their people with the doctrinal and practical parts of the Bible. Every doctrine should be established by **“Thus saith the LORD,”** and the people should be told that every doctrine demands the obedience of the faith. Let preachers keep before the people that they shall be judged, not by some creed or discipline, but by the Word of God (John 12:48).

Third, he spoke distinctly: **“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly. . .”** (v. 8). Ezra did not speak in deep theological terms, nor in some unknown tongue. He spoke in plain language so the people could understand God’s message. Every word could be distinctly heard (Ezra 4:18). If the people could not understand the law which was read, they could not retain it, and it would have no effect upon their lives.

Fourth, he explained the text. Verse 8 says he **“gave the sense.”** This is not some formal, heartless reading of the law and some haphazard exposition of it. Ezra showed the intent and meaning of the Torah, and what use was to be made of it. He compared Scripture with Scripture, and interpreted one Scripture by another Scripture (Acts 9:22). He showed the harmony of the Scriptures—how they perfectly agreed the one with the other. There would not be so many senseless hearers, if

all preachers were as faithful as Ezra to the Word of God.

Fifth, he enforced the truth of the Word. He not only gave the sense, but he **“caused them to understand the reading”** (v. 8). Reading and preaching of the Bible is good, but causing God’s people to understand the Word is the final goal. Ezra made them to know the mind of the Lord. As responsible beings, he caused them to exercise their minds to grasp intelligently the thoughts of God concerning themselves (Acts 8:30-31).

Sixth, the preacher was longwinded. The sermon lasted

They asked Ezra to read the Torah to them. He did not have to go and “round them up” and beg them to come and hear the Bible read and preached.

The congregation consisted **“both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding”** (vv. 2-3). The men, the women, and the children were together in the same place. The Word of God is for young and old. It is written in Deuteronomy 31:11-12: **“When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.**



“from the morning until midday” (v. 3). During this time the first five books of the Old Testament may have been read, or maybe the Book of Deuteronomy was read and explained. What is more remarkable is that the men, women, and children all stood from morning until noon (v. 5). Verse 7 says **“the people stood in their place.”** There was not a lot of running to the bathroom or to the water cooler. A preacher of this generation would have a hard time keeping churchgoers standing out in the hot sun for 6 hours. Evidently, people in those days had a greater hunger for the Word of God than modern-day professed Christians.

THE CONGREGATION

Verse 1 says: **“And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate. . .”** The people did not have to be “rounded up” by the preacher on Sunday morning. No one compelled them to come, but they gathered themselves together by common agreement.

Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law.” The Mohammedan confines religious knowledge to the men, and some Christians believe it is wrong to teach the Bible to little children. Both are wrong (Josh. 8:35).

Second, these hearers were attentive: “. . .the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law” (v. 3). Their attention lasted **“from the morning until midday”** (v. 3). These people literally were hungry for the Word of God. They sought not the man, but the message. What a delightful privilege to preach to such a people! Cornelius told Peter: **“Now therefore we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God”** (Acts 10:33).

Third, they were respectful: **“And**

Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up” (v. 5). These Jews stood up to declare their willingness to hear and obey Jehovah. They stood up to show their reverence for God and His Word. To stand in awe of God’s Word and to tremble at it (Isa. 66:2) are more suitable emotions than we usually see around us at the modern-day church service.

Fourth, they were worshipful: **“And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground”** (v. 6). They responded to God’s Word by bowing their heads and offering Him the adoration of their hearts. This was proper deportment of sinners in the presence of their God. They heard every word as if it had come from God Himself. The modern-day religious world has little or no respect for God and His Word.

THE EFFECTS PRODUCED

First, they wept when the law of God was read and explained: **“For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law”** (v. 9). The reading of the Word brought conviction to their hearts and tears of repentance to their eyes. They perceived they had not kept the Torah. On many occasions they had broken it, and so were liable to God’s wrath and judgment for disobedience.

This reminds us of Josiah: **“And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asshiah a servant of the king’s, saying, Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us”** (II Kings 22:10-12).

When the Bible shows us our sins we should weep in dust and ashes. Then we should repent of our sins and change our conduct.

Third, they rejoiced. While the people wept over this disobedience to the law of God, they were told not to mourn on a holy day dedicated to

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worship: **"And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep"** (v. 9). The verb **"said"** is singular in the Hebrew, and this suggests Nehemiah spoke, but he expressed the opinion of Ezra and the teaching Levites as well.

While the Feast of Trumpets was to be a day of joy and gladness (Num. 10:10), the Word of God had pierced their hearts and melted down their wills. But when they properly understood the Word they rejoiced with joy unspeakable. Mourning over sins is always followed by joy in salvation or restoration. **"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy"** (Ps. 126:5).

Note the words in verse 10: **"... for the joy of the LORD is your strength."** Spiritual joy will strengthen our bodily frame (Prov. 17:22) and renew the strength of our souls. This is the joy of the Lord, and the authority of His Word binds it upon us as a duty. **"Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous"** (Ps. 33:1). Jesus told His disciples: **"... but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you"** (John 16:22). **"Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice"** (Phil. 4:4). The Lord creates and establishes this joy in the heart of His people (I Thess. 1:6). We have this joy on earth, and on our death-bed, and in eternity in the Lord's presence there is **"fullness of joy"** (Ps. 16:11).

Third, they were obedient to the Word: **"Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. And all the people went this way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them"** (vv. 10-12).

If our minds are attentive to the commandments of God, we will be obedient to these commandments. Obedience is the best test of our sincerity, and it shows we did not hear the Word in vain. James 1:22 says: **"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your**

own selves." The joy of the Lord is oil on the wheels of our obedience.

CONCLUSION

1. Teaching the Word of God is an ordinance of God never to be dispensed with in time or eternity. It was needed in the Old Testament (Deut. 6:6-9) and in the New Testament (Matt. 28:19-20). This teaching of the Word will continue in the millennium with Christ Himself being the great Teacher of His people: **"... and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem"** (Isa. 2:3). In the ages to come the Word of God will be an ever-enduring spring of spiritual knowledge.

2. There is a great need in the religious world of preachers who can read the Bible and explain the meaning of the Scriptures to the Lord's people. Such men should aim to give the people a right understanding of the Bible to quicken them to obedience and holiness.

3. There is also a crying need of God's people to assemble in public for instructions and worship (Heb. 10:25). Men, women, and children should appear before the Lord for religious instruction. Those who assemble should give reverential attention to the Word of God which is taught and preached to them. **"All the people were attentive unto the book of the law"** (Neh. 8:3). **"And all the people answered, Amen, Amen. . ."** (v. 6).

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and condemns all unchaste thoughts and desires.

MARRIAGE A DIVINE INSTITUTION

Marriage is a Divine ordinance, older than any human institution, older than man's fall, older even than God's Sabbath. Marriage is as old as Eden and the human race. Jesus said: **"Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"** (Matt. 19:4-6). Marriage is as much a divine fact as day and night. In the very face of creating Eve and presenting her to Adam the Lord God ordained the marriage institution. God instituted monogamic marriage, indicating that one man should have

no more than one wife.

The marriage relation takes precedence over other human relation: **"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh."** Elder B. H. Carroll said: "A man is more under obligation to love and care for his wife than he is to stay at home and take care of his father and mother. A woman is under more obligation to love and to cherish her husband than she is to love and to cherish her own father and mother, or her own brothers and sisters" (*The Ten Commandments*, p. 75).

The very idea of marriage as existing in the Creator's mind precludes its dissolution while life continues: No longer two, but one flesh—no longer two individuals, but one personality. None but the God Who joined can disjoin: **"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."** Such is the original Charter of Marriage, as old as Eden, as Divine as Deity.

The marriage institution is the very bond and basis of society. Well do we speak of it as the "holy estate of matrimony." It is most fitting that the marriage ceremony would be of a religious flavor. Not that the minister really weds the couple: it is God Who joins them. The minister's function is declarative, not executive. Matrimony "therefore is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discretely, advisedly, soberly and in the fear of God." It is in the sight of God an act as sacred as baptism or the Lord's Supper.

Marriage typified the covenant relation between God and the nation of Israel (Isa. 54:3; 62:4-5; Jer. 3:14; 31:32; Hos. 1:2; 2:19-20). It is also symbolic of the covenant relation between Christ and His ransomed church (Rom. 5:14; Eph. 5:22-23).

FORNICATION IS FORBIDDEN

Fornication is condemned in the Seventh Commandment. This is voluntary intercourse between unmarried people. Premarital sex is not a normal development of a human being, nor should it be considered as necessary to growth toward maturity and subsequent domestic family life. It is now and will for ever remain sinful, unethical, and immoral. The Bible speaks in no uncertain terms about this sin. **"But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication"** (Acts 15:20). **"Flee fornication"** (I Cor. 6:18). **"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should**

abstain from fornication" (I Thess. 4:3).

Many young people are ruining themselves by this sin. They are cheapening and damaging the happiness of their future marriages through illicit sex before marriage. More than one million unwed teenage girls get pregnant every year, and 406,000 of them end the pregnancy through abortion. Venereal disease among teenagers has skyrocketed to epidemic levels, with a jump in syphilis alone being 500 percent in the last 20 years. Since 1960 there has been more than 400 percent increase in illegitimate births.

"Research conducted by the University of Wisconsin has found that 430,000 people lived together during the 1960s. That number has increased 10 times to 4.26 million people cohabiting today, according to the Census Bureau. Between 1960 and 1990, there was a 41 percent decline in marriage. Conversely, the number of never-married people rose from 21 million in 1971 to 46 million in 1996 (*The Washington Times*, June 19-25, 2000). Today America has sex without strings and relationships without rings.

ADULTERY FORBIDDEN

Adultery is condemned by this commandment. This is voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife, or between a married woman and someone other than her husband. God says: **"Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbor's wife, to defile thyself with her"** (Lev. 18:20).

In the last few years throughout the world sexual immorality has exploded like a powder keg. One out of four people in America are having extramarital affairs. The modern world does not think that adultery is a sin. It is tolerated and admired in our society all the way from the prostitute house to the house of God. Today adultery is causing divorce and a new epidemic of sexual diseases.

"From the mid-1960s until the mid-1980s divorce increased dramatically throughout Europe, Australia, and Canada before dropping slightly or continuing to rise at a slower rate. In America the patterns were similar. Between 1965 and 1975 the divorce rate doubled, peaking at twenty-two divorces per thousand married women in 1979 and then dropping slightly and stabilizing at the 1994 rate of twenty divorces per thousand married women, the highest rate among all Western societies.

"The spread of divorce can also be described by a look at the experience of all Americans who married in a given year, projecting the likelihood

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of divorce for those married in more recent years. According to one estimate, half of all marriages made in the mid-1970s will end in divorce. As for marriages made more recently, demographers project that as many as 64 percent will end in divorce" (*The Divorce Culture* by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, p. 44).

"In 1960 there were 393,000 divorces in the USA. This reached a peak of 1,213,000 in 1981 and has remained only just below that figure throughout the '80s (1990 estimate: 1,175,000).

"In 1920 there was one divorce for every 7 US marriages; in 1940 it was one for every 6 marriages. The subsequent figures are: 1960: one in 4; 1972: one in 3; 1977: one in 2. Perhaps the most striking statistics of all are the comparisons between the number of first-time marriages (bachelor marries spinster) and of divorces in any given year. They are almost equal. In 1975 there were 1,294,000 first-time marriages and 1,036,000 divorces; by 1985 there were 1,310,000 first-time marriages and 1,190,000 divorces" (*Divorce and Remarriage* by Andrew Cornes, p. 12).

"The American Southeast is loaded with churches, and lush with conservative values, but for some reason, overflowing with divorce,' said a recent report in *Citizen* magazine, published by James C. Dobson's conservative Christian group, Focus on the Family.

"In fact, the divorce rate in the Bible Belt is second only to Nevada, according to government data for 1998, the most recent year available (*The Washington Times*, July 24-30, 2000).

More shocking than any of this is that among "born-again" Christians the group most likely to get a divorce are Baptists, according to a Barna report. This is enough to make all Baptists hang their heads in shame and disgrace. Surely Baptist ministers must bear much of the blame for this. There has been too little preaching about the home and keeping a marriage together.

HOMOSEXUALITY WRONG

Another form of sexual impurity prohibited by the Seventh Commandment is homosexuality. This is sexual desire toward a member of the same sex. This precept forbids sodomites, gays, queers, homosexuals, and lesbianism. Leviticus 18:22 declares: "**Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.**" "**There shall be**

no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel" (Deut. 23:17). A modern version of I Corinthians 6:9 reads: "**Don't you know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders. . .**" (NIV).

The modern world says a homosexual relationship is an alternative to marriage, and much pressure is being applied to recognize this as legitimate. Homosexuals are being presented on TV and Radio as "nice folks" whom we should accept and let them "do their own thing." Liberal politicians scream that the "gays" have their rights. Pornographic materials promote homosexuality and child abuse. These things greatly influence the young who seem to need no special "genes" or "chromosomes" to being sexual deviations. Religious liberals are working night and day to achieve "gay rights" so as to permit homosexuals to be ordained as ministers of the gospel. We are told we must accept a homosexual in love with his different lifestyle. The modern world pays little or no attention to the Seventh Commandment. To them it is a relic of a bygone age!

Liberals are working overtime to make Americans think homosexuality is an "acceptable lifestyle," but there is nothing acceptable about homosexuality. Consider these facts from the *New England Journal of Medicine*. In the decade since the passage of "gay rights" laws of San Francisco:

* Infectious hepatitis A increased 100%

*Infectious hepatitis B increased 300%

*Amoebic colon infection increased 2500%

*70-80% of the 75,000 patients seen each year in V. D. clinics were homosexual males

* 20% of gay men carried rectal gonorrhea.

The American Journal of Public Health reports that over two-thirds of all homosexual men have had at least one sexually transmitted disease. Taxpayers spend billions on hospital care alone for AIDS patients. The hospital cost for an AIDS patient averages \$100,000 per case. The AIDS threat is being passed to the general public in the blood supply. Many research doctors suspect the disease may be transmitted through saliva and mosquitoes. Liberals and leftists want special protection status for homosexuals in employment and housing. They want the right to teach

in public schools and to advocate homosexuality through sex education classes.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) was diagnosed in over 12,000 persons in the United States since 1981. Half of them have already died from the disease, and the number of AIDS cases has been doubling ever 9 to 12 months. Over one million Americans are now afflicted with the deadly HTLV-III virus that causes AIDS.

THE SIN OF RAPE

Another form of violating the Seventh Commandment is rape. This is sexual intercourse with a woman by a man without her consent and chiefly by force. God condemns this: "**But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die: But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; There is in the damsel no sin worthy of death**" (Deut. 22:25-26).

In 1982 the FBI reported 81,500 forcible rapes. It is a sad commentary on our country that every six minutes of every hour of every day a woman is raped.

THE INIQUITY OF INCEST

God is against incest. This is sexual intercourse between persons so closely related they are forbidden by law to marry. "**And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them**" (Lev. 20:11). Again it is written: "**A man shall not take his father's wife. . .Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. . .Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law. . .**" (Deut. 22:30; 27:22-23).

It is wrong to sexually abuse children. A pedophile is an adult who longs for a love relationship with a child. He causes serious abnormalities in the normal development of a child. The most serious abuse of children is through incest. A father who abuses his daughter has at his disposal the means to terrorize such a child. Many children victimized by sexual abuse for years receive damage which will remain with them throughout their lifetime on earth. Other family members have an obligation to report such offenders to the civil authorities for proper punishment.

UNSCRIPTURAL DIVORCE ADULTERY

According to the Bible, unscriptural divorce is sexual pollution. Jesus Christ said: "**Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry**

another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9). The Apostle Paul wrote: "**For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress. . .**" (Rom. 7:2-3).

Here the Savior makes it plain that all marriages which take place after divorce, except it be for fornication, are adulterous. No preacher has the right to remarry the man or woman at whose door lies the guilt of breaking up a home. Human legislatures have no right to tell men and women that they may put away their partners for any other reason than what God permitted. When they do, and a second marriage takes place, the law of God declares such a marriage to be adulterous. Fraud, impotence, conviction of a felony, habitual drunkenness, desertion, non-support, mental cruelty, physical cruelty, insanity, nor narcotics addiction are not Bible grounds for divorce.

Loose notions touching marriage, divorce, re-marriage, are painfully prevalent. The more modern theories about marriage are put into practice, the faster the divorce rate climbs and the more little children are doomed to grow up without the blessing of a happy home. Divorce generates more divorce. One out of two marriages now ends in the divorce court. Most divorced persons can't wait to seek a second mate, and some find a third or a fourth mate to satisfy the sexual desire. In our day the "holy estate of matrimony" has sunk into open polygamy and polyandry of savage tribes, and a promiscuous society of roaming animal hordes. "**The land is full of adulterers**" (Jer. 23:10).

The God-rejecters of modern society want a Hollywood-type romance—sex without marriage, or sex by divorce upon divorce. God has been ignored and marriage has been degraded to mere animalism. Our "until divorce do us part" generation has failed to learn the basic lessons about what marriage is really all about. They know little of any thing about love and concern for their mate, patience, humility, forgiveness, service, and life-long faithfulness. They give no consideration to the awful suffering and frustration that is common to children of divorced parents. God only knows what will be the result of the damage done to their young lives and minds, which will carry over into the coming generation

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and future marriages.

Let it be thundered from the pulpits of the world that divorce, saving for one solitary cause, is a threefold crime. It is a crime against the home, a crime against society, a crime against God. No court or legislator can pronounce something to be solemnly right which God has pronounced to be solemnly wrong! While God permits divorce for one cause, it is far better for each marriage partner to learn to help and forgive the other. All possible steps must be taken to preserve the marriage bond. Divorce for adultery is the last resort. It should be done only after much prayer, counsel, heart searching, and numerous attempts to save the marriage.

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

The medical profession is now able to put the sperm of a man into a woman's reproductive system in order to bring about fertilization and conception which could not occur in the normal way. The Scriptures give very little light on this modern-day practice. Some Christians oppose this practice. Personally, I see no evil in this, if the sperm comes from the husband. But if the sperm from a donor is used, the conception occurs beyond the limits of marriage. A third party is involved and the child conceived does not have the husband as the biological father. This breaks the marriage covenant. Thus artificial insemination by a donor other than the husband must be morally condemned.

What about In Vitro Fertilization and "test-tube babies"? This is a laboratory technique employed to fertilize an egg with a sperm cell, and the conceived embryo is then transferred into the uterus. This fertilization does not occur inside, but outside the woman's body. This often involves surrogate motherhood. Again we have very little scriptural light on this modern-day practice. I would say if this is practiced, the following things ought to be done. First, the embryo must originate from the wife and her husband. Second, the embryo must be implanted in its own mother. Third, all embryos must be implanted. Fourth, the embryos must be implanted as soon as possible.

=HEART ADULTERY

The process of adultery, divorce, and remarriage begins in the incurably wicked heart of man. Jesus said: "**For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications. . .**" (Matt. 15:19). According to Jesus Christ, the guilt of breaking the Seventh Commandment

lies not in the outward, bodily act, but in the inward, unchaste feeling. "**Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart**" (Matt. 5:27-28).

Men and women should be careful as to how they dress. Immodest clothing in the case of either a man or a woman can cause the opposite sex to have "**eyes full of adultery**" (II Pet. 2:14). There is what the Bible calls "**the attire of an harlot**" (Prov. 7:10). David saw the naked body of Bathsheba, sent for her, and committed adultery with her (II Sam. 11:1-5). We should do as Job. He laid a law upon his eyes: "**I have made a covenant with mine eyes, why then should I think upon a maid?**" (Job 31:1).

THE EVIL OF ADULTERY

Wherein does the evil in sexual impurity lie? First, it is a falsification of the marriage covenant. If a married man commits adultery with a woman, he has broken his marriage covenant. In Malachi 2:14-15 it is written: "**Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek godly seed. Therefore take heed to you spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away. . .**" If a married woman seduces a man to commit adultery, she is a covenant breaker: "**Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God**" (Prov. 2:17).

The law of the land requires at least two human witnesses at a legal marriage. Few seem to realize that God is a witness to the marriage vows and is the One Who actually joins the two together. When either the man or woman promises to love, cherish, honor and cleave to the other until God by death shall separate them, they are making these vows in the presence of Almighty God. The Lord is a witness to those who in the freshness of life vow in their hearts to be true to each other (Gen. 31:49-50). God is always the Witness and joiner of such a union, and He requires that each party live up to his or her vows. For either husband or wife to deal treacherously against the

other is to lie to God; it is to falsify the marriage covenant to which God is a witness.

Second, sexual impurity makes a man resemble an animal. In Jeremiah 5:8-9 it is written: "**They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbor's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?**" As a studhorse goes mad over a mare, even so the Israelites had gone crazy over running after their neighbor's wife. How tragic when a lustful husband leaves little children and the companion of his youth, who has shared his sorrows, joy, hopes and interests, for the arms of a whore. How mean is a woman who will leave the comforts of home and the companion of her youth for the arms of a lustful man? Such senseless lusts make human beings into "**natural brute beasts.**" The low morality of some humans would shame a horse or a hog!

Third, adultery often results in base born children. This sin inflicts a deadly wound on a generation that is yet unborn. The Bible speaks of "**the seed of the adulterer and the whore**" and of "**children of transgression, a seed of falsehood**" (Isa. 57:3-4). In a moment of fleshly passion, the cry of babes is unheard, "You shall not commit adultery." Such children are often sent off to grandfather and grandmother, given out for adoption, left on someone's door step, or murdered. Those who live out their days on earth always wonder who their real father is. They must listen to the whispers of the gossipers who say, "His mother was a whore."

Fourth, sexual defilement drains the pocketbook of a person. The prodigal son devoured the estate of his father "**with harlots**" (Luke 15:30). Proverbs 29:3 reads: "**He that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.**" Mistresses cost a great deal. Prostitution is an expensive business. Venereal disease is expensive to try to cure. Lawyers and divorce courts do not come cheap. Abortions and marriage counselors are not inexpensive. Sexual impurity is a very expensive adventure from the physical and spiritual standpoint.

Fifth, sexual defilement destroys one's reputation. Proverbs 6:32-33 says: "**But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding. . . A wound and dishonor shalt he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.**" A person guilty of violating the Seventh Commandment brings dishonor and a reproach upon his name. He brings grief, hurt, offense, and misunderstanding into his family. Sexual promiscuity makes a wound no

physician can heal. It is a perpetual blemish upon one's character which will follow him to the grave. When the adulterer dies his name lives on in the minds of people. As his body rots under the ground, his name rots above the ground. Base-born children live on earth as monuments of his shame.

at:Sixth, sexual sins steal the mind. Hosea 4:11 declares: "**Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.**" Whenever passions rule the understanding man becomes brutish and irrational. A person would have to be a fool to ruin his home, run the risk of venereal disease, and destroy his reputation for a few moments of sexual pleasure. Remember Proverbs 6:32 says: "**But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding.**"

Seventh, this sin in the case of a Christian gives great occasion for the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme the name of our God. After King David committed adultery with Bathsheba the prophet Nathan said to him: "**Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme**" (II Sam. 12:14).

Eighth, this sin is needless. God has provided a remedy to prevent it. "**To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband**" (I Cor. 7:2). It is an inexcusable sin—like a thief who steals when he has no need.

Ninth, adultery is a great dishonor to God. "**Thou shalt not commit adultery.**" The adulterer sets his will above God's holy law, he tramples upon His righteous commandment. It is "**great wickedness**" and a "**sin against God**" (Gen. 39:9). Hebrews 13:4 declares: "**Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.**" God forbids adultery, and every time he or she commits this sin, they defy God.

Tenth, adultery is destructive to the body. Proverbs 31:3 says: "**Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.**" There are a number of diseases which are sexually transmitted such as herpes, syphilis, gonorrhea, and pelvic inflammatory diseases that lead to forced sterilizations.

Eleventh, the sin of adultery is a sin against the family. God ordained marriage so the world could have a healthy family. Man, woman, child: that is God's eternal triangle, the base on which the pyramid of life is raised. The sacredness of motherhood and

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do not know the doctrine of grace were on their way to Hell, then many of us who came to this knowledge after salvation would need to be saved. Most when they are first saved knew nothing about the doctrines of grace. They were convicted of their sins and caused by the Holy Spirit to see Jesus as their Savior.

Salvation is by the power of God. The Holy Spirit gives life by revealing to the sinner his need of Christ. At that time, he knows only that he is lost and that Jesus is the Savior. Salvation is by God-given faith in the person of His Son. There are some that may never come to the true knowledge of God's grace, but if they know and believe in Christ, they are saved (John 3:36).

DAVID O'NEAL

The Seventh Commandment

Continued from page 215

childhood is secured by marriage. When the Seventh Commandment is broken God's provision for both mother and child is destroyed. Adultery destroys the sacredness, uniqueness, and specialness of marriage, the basis on which families are built. Any sin which blights marriage and destroys the family is the enemy of God and man. **"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"** (Ps. 11:3).

Twelfth, the violation of the Seventh Commandment destroys the soul. **"But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: He that doeth it destroyeth his own soul"** (Prov. 6:32). Of the whorish woman Solomon said: **"For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death"** (Prov. 7:26-27). The deceased guests of whorehouses are at this moment **"in the depths of hell"** (Prov. 9:18; Eph. 5:5). The delights of a few moments on earth brings eternal torment, for **"whoremongers. . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death"** (Rev. 21:8).

CONCLUSION

Adultery without repentance damns the soul: **"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators. . . nor adulterers, nor effeminate,**

nor abusers of themselves with mankind. . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9-10). Jesus forgave the adulterous woman in John 8:10-11, but He dismissed her with the caution: **"Go and sin no more."** There can be no forgiveness when an adulterer or adultress continues to live in their sexual impurity.

The worst sex pervert is not beyond the sovereign grace of God. The blood of Christ can wash away the darkest stains of sexual sins (I Cor. 6:9-10). Where sin abounds God's grace super abounds. In God's gracious purpose before all time He purposed to save some fornicators, whoremongers, homosexuals, queers, and people guilty of incest. A great multitude is included in this number. If so many are included, why not you?



SUFFERING OF VIRGINIA BAPTISTS DURING THE CIVIL WAR

By Garnett Ryland

From 1861 to 1865 Virginia suffered repeated invasions by Federal armies, which devastated the country, disrupted the churches that lay in their paths, scattered their members, damaged or destroyed many of their meeting houses, imprisoned eight of their ministers and executed a young preacher.

Meeting houses damaged or destroyed by Federal troops were those of Enon in Chesterfield; Bethlehem, Mount Pony and New Salem in Culpeper; Backlick ("Old School") and Jerusalem in Fairfax; Broad Run, Carter's Run, Grove and Mt. Holly in Fauquier; Antioch, Four Mile Creek and Pioneer in Henrico; James City in James City; Waterford in Loudoun; Mulberry in Nansemond; Liberty in New Kent; Old Shop in Prince George; Berea and Hartwood (both "Old School") in Stafford; High Hills in Sussex; Bethel, Grafton and Mt. Calvary in York and in the towns of Charles Town, Fredericksburg and Winchester.

Charles C. Bitting (1831-98), pastor of the Baptist Church in Alexandria, was imprisoned for two months because he would not take the oath of allegiance to the United States Government and was compelled to ride all day on the fender of the locomotive that ran from Alexandria

to Orange Court House to prevent attacks on the train by Mosby's Men.

William F. Broaddus, pastor in Fredericksburg, was arrested in 1862 by Federal officers and carried to prison in Washington as a hostage for Union men held as political prisoners in Richmond by the Confederate authorities.

On May 9, 1864 Charles W. Dobbs (1840-1916), pastor of Court Street in Portsmouth, was imprisoned by order of the Federal General B. F. Butler.

The Minute Book of Long Branch Church in Fauquier County records on October 15, 1864, that its pastor, George W. Harris, was "a prisoner."

Jeremiah Hendren (1793-1864), pastor of Tanner's Creek, was one of the citizens of Norfolk who were arrested and imprisoned or placed under severe surveillance by the Federal Army when it occupied the city. His anxiety and suffering brought a rapid decline and early death.

Richard Nutt Herndon (1809-66), pastor at Luray, on his refusal to take the oath of allegiance, was taken from a sick bed by the Federal authorities and sent to "a cold, damp prison" at Culpeper Court House, where he contracted rheumatic fever. He died the year after he was paroled.

Federal troops gutted and destroyed the home of John M. Lamb (1821-1905), pastor of Mt. Pleasant in Charles City County and carried him off to a Northern prison where he was confined for twelve months.

Meriwether Winston (1828-66) resigned the pastorate of the Sanson Street church in Philadelphia at the beginning of the War and returned to Virginia, his native state. He was taken in 1864 from his home in Hanover by Federal raiders and forced to go on foot through rain and sleet to Fortress Monroe, where for three months he was incarcerated in the military prison with felons from the Union forces. The exposure and hardship caused the pulmonary disease which brought on his early death.

Albert C. Willis, a licentiate of Crooked Run Church in Culpeper County, a young preacher of promise, who had been a colporter in the Shiloh Association, was a member of Mosby's Command when he was captured and by order of the Federal General, William H. Powell, was hanged in Rappahannock County in retaliation for the shooting of a Federal spy by Mosby's Men. The inscription on the stone at his grave in the Flint Hill Baptist Church yard is "A. C. Willis—Killed Oct. 14, 1864—Co. C. 43rd. Va. Battalion—Mosby's Command."

(*The Baptists of Virginia*, pp. 297-299, 1955 edition).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Chesapeake, Ohio, and Pastor Tom Ross will have special services Nov. 8-11. The speaker is Elder Milburn Cockrell, Mantachie, Miss.

Elder Kelley Hinson has a new address. It is 5618 Oak St., Ft. Worth, TX 76140. His phone is (817) 563-0154 or email ohinson@cowtown.net.

The Morris Street Baptist Church, Hobbs, New Mexico, and Pastor Leroy Pack will have special services Nov. 2-4, with evening services beginning at 6:00 p.m. and Sunday morning service at 10:30 a.m.

The Central Baptist Church, St. Petersburg, Fla., and Pastor Steve Shelton will have special services Nov. 17-18. The speaker is Elder Bob Keller, missionary to Germany. The church will celebrate its 17th anniversary on Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. For more information email SWSHELTON@prodigy.net.

The Calvary Baptist Church, 3339 13th Street, Ashland, Ky., has called Elder Chris Burke as pastor, and he has accepted the call. His new address is: cw.burke@verizon.net.

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 8-31-2001 to 9-30-2001

| | |
|--|------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$581.00 |
| RECEIPTS: | |
| A. D. Richardson, Cedarville, WV | 100.00 |
| B.C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL | 22.95 |
| Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS | 200.00 |
| Berea B. C., Stonington, IL | 60.00 |
| Berea B. C., Westport, TN | 50.00 |
| Berea M. B.C., Mansfield, OH | 50.00 |
| Bethel B. C. Pasadena, TX | 20.00 |
| Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID | 20.00 |
| Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV | 300.00 |
| Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY | 125.00 |
| Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL | 50.00 |
| Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL | 20.00 |
| Faith B. C., Seffner, FL | 50.00 |
| Faith M. B. C., Clarksville, TN | 100.00 |
| Gail C. Knowles, Scarborough, ME | 20.00 |
| Gerald Price, Johnson City, TN | 25.00 |
| Grace B. C., Corbin, KY | 100.00 |
| Grace B. C., Georgetown, KY | 35.00 |
| Grace M. B. Mission, Marion, IL | 25.00 |
| Hillcrest B. C., Winston-Salem, NC | 50.00 |
| Indore B. C., Indore, WV | 100.00 |
| Jack Farmer, Mobile, AL | 25.00 |
| Landmark M. B. C., Moncks Corner, SC | 25.00 |
| Letson Farrell, Long Beach, MS | 190.00 |
| Meadow Branch B. C., Millport, AL | 100.00 |
| Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM | 300.00 |
| Mt Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH | 100.00 |
| New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN | 10.00 |
| New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN | 50.00 |
| Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA | 40.00 |
| Philadelphia B. C., Aztec, NM | 25.00 |
| Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL | 100.00 |
| Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR | 50.00 |
| Sam Byrd, Brookville, MS | 150.00 |
| Solid Rock B. C., Kenedy, TX | 20.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS | 50.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Fulton, MS | 100.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Galena, OH | 50.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL | 100.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Raleigh, NC | 100.00 |
| Sovereign Grace B. C., Sillsbee, TX | 30.00 |
| South Park M. B. C., Seattle, WA | 25.00 |
| The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC | 50.00 |
| Victory B. C., Courtland, VA | 100.00 |
| Subscriptions | 138.00 |
| Anonymous | 75.00 |
| Dividing checks | 125.00 |
| Sub Total | \$3,675.95 |
| TOTAL | \$4,256.95 |
| EXPENDITURES: | |
| Wages | 2,375.00 |
| Printing | 471.76 |
| Postage | 851.91 |
| FICA taxes | 181.70 |
| Supplies | 69.90 |
| Dividing Checks | 125.00 |
| Total Expenditures | 4,075.27 |
| | 181.68 |
| Bank charge | -18.14 |
| ENDING BALANCE | \$163.54 |

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.

CC

FALWELL, ROBERTSON CRITICIZED FOR REMARKS ON TERRORIST ATTACK

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (EP)—Two of America's leading religious broadcasters, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, came under fire for remarks they made on "The 700 Club" on Sept. 13 while discussing the recent terrorist attacks in the U.S.

In calling America to repentance, Moral Majority founder Falwell and Christian Coalition founder Robertson suggested that the nation's rejection of God could have helped bring about the attack. Their remarks were widely condemned. A White House official called the remarks "inappropriate" and added, "The president does not share those views." Bush himself reportedly called Falwell to express his displeasure.

Falwell later apologized for his remarks. Robertson issued a statement distancing himself from Falwell, but refused to comment further.

During the Sept. 13 satellite interview with Robertson and his "700 Club" co-hosts, Falwell said, "The ACLU's got to take a lot of blame for this. Throwing God out, successfully, with the help of the federal court system, throwing out of the public square, out of the schools."

Falwell continued, "The abortionists have got to bear some burden for this. God will not be mocked. When we destroy 40 million little innocent babies, we make God mad. I really believe the pagans, the abortionists, and the feminists and the gays and lesbians, who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way, all of them who tried to secularize America. I point the thing in their face and say, 'You helped this to happen.'"

"I totally concur," said Robertson. Earlier in the broadcast Robertson suggested that the attack could be a sign of the approaching apocalypse. "Jesus is coming back," he said. "And we're going to be having some labor pains until He comes. A new kingdom is being born in our world and the world is going to be having some labor pains until this happens."

Robertson said America has "insulted God," and cited abortion, pornography and restrictions on school prayer as examples. He commented, "And then we say, why does this happen? Why it's happening is that God Almighty is lifting His protection from us."

Robertson's organization also released a

statement Sept. 13 which said, "We have imagined ourselves invulnerable and have been consumed by the pursuit of . . . health, wealth, material pleasures and sexuality."

Despite his on-air agreement with Falwell and his subsequent statement, Robertson later appeared on Fox News' "The Edge" and called Falwell's remarks "totally inappropriate." A statement issued Sept. 17 by Robertson's organization claimed that Falwell "unexpectedly" issued "a political statement of blame to certain segments of the population which was severe and harsh in tone." Robertson also blamed the liberal activist group People For The American Way for taking remarks made by Falwell "out of context."

Falwell apologized for his remarks on Sept. 17, acknowledging that his comments were ill-timed, insensitive and divisive at a time of national mourning. "In the midst of the shock and mourning of a dark week for America, I made a statement that I should not have made and which I sincerely regret," Falwell said. "I want to apologize to every American, including those I named."

Falwell further explained, "When I talked about God lifting the curtain of protection on our nation, I should have made it very clear that no one on this earth knows whether or not that occurred or did not occur."

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1).

CHURCHES CLOSED, CHRISTIANS ARRESTED DURING CRACKDOWN BY LAOTIAN AUTHORITIES

Phonethong, Laos (EP)—Recent letters received by the religious Liberty Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) confirm that the Laotian government is stepping up its efforts to persecute Christians within Laos.

According to one witness, numerous arrests and church closings in August have crippled the Christian community in the Savannakhet province. In one village of that region, authorities closed down all eight churches. Over 21 people are still in prison, charged with "propagation of the gospel and belief in a foreign religion, the enemy of the Party."

In another province, 80 families were forced to sign papers declaring that they had

renounced their religion. Others, including teachers and professionals have been told to renounce Christianity or lose their jobs. Many have been ordered to leave the country.

"The situation with the Church has become very serious," reported the WDF's Laotian contact. "The government always replies through the media to the US government that such persecution is not true. They say they did not arrest Christians but the law breakers [criminals] only. If this is true why do they continue to close down churches?"

During this crisis, Laotian believers are requesting that Christians pray for them, and make appeals through diplomatic channels to end the persecution. "We urgently need your help to stop the government's operations," pleaded the contact.

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Mark 13:13).

COMMENTARY: HOW WOULD PAUL RESPOND TO TERRORISM?

By John W. Mauck

CHICAGO, Ill. (EP)—The Apostle Paul lived in a society full of violence and terrorists. Terrorists sought his life, he was mistaken for a terrorist and he was accused of terrorism. In this day of terrorist attacks on our nation how can Paul's experience with terrorism show us the Godly way to respond?

In the first century, Jewish zealots resisted Roman rule through violent assassinations. Attackers named *sicarii* ("knifewielders") would blend into crowds at Jewish festivals, surround Roman soldiers, murder them and melt back into the crowds. The Roman government through crucifixion of its opponents and other violent suppression of dissent, conducted what amounts to state sponsored terrorism.

In Acts 23:12-30, Luke writes that 40 or more men conspired to murder Paul while in Roman custody. Certainly they constituted terrorists. Those who started the riot around the temple and attempted to murder Paul as described in Acts 21:27-36 may also qualify as terrorists.

When Paul was arrested by the Roman Commander of the Jerusalem garrison, Claudius Lysias, he was initially mistaken as an Egyptian terrorist—see Acts 22:37-38. When brought to trial in Caesarea, Paul's opponents accused him of inciting civil unrest and insurrection—again, essentially terrorism. Finally, new scholarship indicates that these charges followed Paul to Rome and his trial before Nero.

What was Paul's response?

First, he worked within the existing legal system, as corrupt as parts of it were, for his own safety and the safety of others (Acts 23:17).

Second, he and his companions avoided violence (Acts 17:10, 19:8-9, 30-31).

Third and most important, he did not get

distracted from presenting the gospel. In fact, he used these attacks and the trials that followed as opportunities, as platforms, to spread the message of salvation. When opponents tried to kill him at the temple, he used his arrest as an opportunity to tell of his conversion (Acts 22:1-21, see also Acts 26 where Paul turns his legal defense into another call to faith). I believe that Luke, in writing Acts, was using the occasion of Paul's trial pending before Nero and the writing of a legal brief in his defense as an opportunity to present the gospel to Theophilus and other Roman officials.

How can we use the terrorist attacks of September 11 to further the gospel? As we pray for the victims, the perpetrators and this nation, let us also pray that as the Apostle Paul did, we may use this occasion of violence and terrorism initiated by Satan to proclaim the mercy of God offered in Messiah Jesus even to the terrorist.

When Paul did this, he always recounted his own history of violence (Acts 26:9-11). Thus, as we proclaim the gospel we must remember that but for God's grace we are all suicide bombers.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

FIGHT BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN NIGERIA LEAVES OVER 150 DEAD

JOS, Nigeria (EP)—Violence between Muslims and Christians in the predominately Christian city of Jos has left almost 200 people dead and 900 injured.

According to reports, the violence began on Sept. 7 when a Christian woman tried to cross a street where Muslim men were praying. Some semblance of calm returned on Sept. 9, but only after government troops were called out by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to keep the violence from spreading.

Jos is home to over 4 million Nigerians and is a center of missionary activity from Western agencies and churches.

Witnesses say that rioting Muslims burned down churches and attacked Christians regardless of age or gender. Christians responded by burning down mosques both in Jos and the surrounding area. According to the Associated Press, Christian mobs were going from home to home, demanding that those inside recite Bible verses or have their homes burned to the ground. Reports said bodies were lying in the streets, some of them charred by fire. Victims who survived attacks by the rival gangs were taken to hospitals with their eyes gouged out.

According to a Nigerian group known as Voice of the Christian Martyrs (VCM), the death toll is much higher than official estimates, and could number in the "hundreds."

Unfortunately, this kind of religious violence has been growing in this western African nation. Last year, over 2,000 people

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died in clashes between Muslims and Christians over the integration of *sharia*, the strict Islamic code of conduct, into some state governments.

"The soul of the wicked desireth evil" (Prov. 21:10).

RANGOON, Myanmar (EP)—Authorities in Myanmar are following through on a government order to shut down religious buildings housing Christian services that are less than 100 years old. According to Charisma News Service, over 80 churches have been shut down since July. In a town north of the Myanmar capitol, 20 other churches were shut down and Christians have moved their meetings to private homes. Every church in the village of Hlaing Tai Yar has been closed. The government ruling also forces existing churches keep their bells silent on Sundays and forbids the erection of crosses on buildings. Fearing more persecution, ministers have gone into hiding and a small number of foreign missionaries have left the country. James Mawdsley, a Christian who spent over a year in solitary confinement in a Myanmar jail after he was arrested for protesting against the Myanmar government, called on the international community in September to influence social change in that country. "The oppression of millions of people in Burma and the appalling violations of their most basic human rights, continues today," said Mawdsley. "Sick and elderly people have been burned alive, villagers are used as human minesweepers, children are removed from their families and women raped and murdered. The military junta forces people off their land which they have farmed for generations and will do anything to stay in power. I hope the international community acts resolutely to restrain the excesses of this brutal regime."

SOEST, Germany (EP)—At its present rate of growth, Islam could soon be a dominant religion in Europe, second only to Catholicism, in the next 15 years. According to the Central Institute Islam Archives in Soest, Germany, over 33 million Muslims currently live in Europe, including Russia, which has the largest European Muslim population. Idea News Service reports that Muslims already outnumber Protestants in France, Belgium, Italy and Spain. If the Muslim growth rate holds steady at 6.5 percent, Islam will surpass the Orthodox faith to become the number two religion in Europe by 2014.

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (EP)—A homosexual activist at Harvard University is urging homosexuals to lie to the Red Cross when they volunteer to give blood. Clifford Davidson, head of a homosexual group called BOND, noted that the Red

Cross seeks to screen out sexually active homosexuals because of the threat of AIDS. He told homosexuals, "You should lie." He later insisted that he meant only that homosexuals who have been tested for AIDS should lie to get past the Red Cross screening procedures.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—A year after receiving government approval, RU-486 the so-called "abortion pill"—is in only limited use in the U.S. Only 6 percent of gynecologists say they have offered RU-486 to their patients, according to a new survey by the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation. Of the gynecologists surveyed, 40 percent didn't offer RU-486 because they object to abortion on moral grounds, while most others say their patients simply haven't asked for it. When the drug was introduced it was hailed as a way for women to get private abortions from their own doctor.

TRENTON, N. J. (EP)—A homosexual student leader at the College of New Jersey was arrested in August for filing a false police report. Edward Drago, treasurer of the Gay Student Union, reportedly sent phony hate e-mails to other homosexual students on campus, and sent himself swastika-covered messages such as "Die," and "I will find you." The fake hate-crimes were apparently part of an effort to gain sympathy for homosexuals on campus. Similar incidents have been reported at other schools, including St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, the University of Georgia, and Eastern New Mexico University.

JAKARTA, Indonesia (EP)—Radical Muslims attacked a Christian village in Indonesia in September, causing widespread damage but no deaths. According to Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) representatives the attacks occurred on Sept. 17 at Klaksanaan Village where Christian houses were burned and 58 Christian families were left homeless. Two churches, the Seventh Day Adventist church and Pasundan Christian Church, were also burned down in the attack. No one was killed or seriously injured during the attacks, but fanatical Muslims in Indonesia reportedly have killed 10,000 Christians within the past two years, says VOM. "Violence against Christians in Indonesia has not subsided since the impeachment of former President Gus Dur Wahid this past summer," said WOM spokesman Gary Lane. "The incident this week in Klaksanaan village proves that radical Muslims in Indonesia are motivated by more than just politics." VOM has asked President Megawati to act decisively in assuring that the perpetrators of this attack and others against Indonesia's Christian minority are brought to justice. The Islamic extremist movement in Indonesia may be receiving funding from terrorist leader Osama bin Laden; a leader of Indonesia's movement formerly fought beside Bin Laden.

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (EP)—An Alabama judge best known for his fight to display the Ten Commandments in his courtroom rejected a request for an atheist monument. Roy Moore, chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, had a monument displaying the Ten Commandments quietly moved into the building in August. In September he denied a request by American Atheists Inc. to put a statue of their symbol next to the Ten Commandments display. Moore said the request was "not. . . in conformity with the purpose or theme of the foundation of American Law and government." Moore says the monument, which also contains quotations from various Founding Fathers of the nation, demonstrates the link between the Commandments and modern law.

PHOENIX, Ariz. (EP)—A Phoenix woman says an Arizona abortion doctor sexually abused her both before and after the abortion. Finkel denies any wrongdoing, and has expressed offense at having his "integrity" challenged. Five other women have made similar allegations of sexual misconduct against Finkel, dating back to 1991.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—Africa has been home to the world's most pervasive violence in the past year and a half, concluded a report released by the U.S. Committee on Refugees (USCR) this summer. During 2000, 3 million Africans were forced from their homes or became refugees. In early 2001, the total number of refugees living on the continent topped 13 million. The committee blamed violent conflicts in 12 nations as primary causes for the high numbers of refugees. Sudan has the largest population of displaced persons and refugees—4 million—of both Africa and the world, the committee reported. A 20-year war, currently being fought between radical Muslims in the north and Christian and animist populations from the south, has claimed over 2 million lives.

DALLAS, Tex. (EP)—Dallas Theological Seminary has come under criticism for failing to reveal a problem involving a former student. Pastor Jon Gerrit Warnshuis was charged in mid-August with sexually assaulting boys from Oak Hills Community Evangelical Free Church near Argyle. Warnshuis was expelled from the seminary in 1988 over unrelated allegations of child molestation, but was later readmitted and allowed to finish his degree. Donald Campbell, seminary president at the time, told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, "We believe that people should be given a second chance if they turn their lives around." The seminary is being criticized for failing to reveal prior allegations against Warnshuis when contacted for references.

LONDON, England (EP)—The leader of British Catholics says that Christianity is almost vanquished in England. Cardinal

Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, archbishop of Westminster, told the *London Times* that belief in Jesus Christ has been replaced by "music, New Age beliefs, the environmental movement, the occult and the free-market economy." He also said that Christianity has little to no influence on modern culture and intellectual thought in that country. "There is indifference to Christian values and to the Church among many young people and, indeed, not only the young. You see quite a demoralized society, one where the only good is what I want, the only rights are my own, and the only life with any meaning or value is the life I want for myself," Murphy-O'Connor told the *Times*. The cardinal is leader of over 4 million Catholics in England.

SIDON, Lebanon (EP)—Palestinian refugees reacted with joy to news of terrorist attacks on the U.S. Dozens of Palestinian refugees fired assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades into the air from the Ain al-Helweh refugee camp near Sidon. Similar celebrations were held at the Shatila refugee camp in Beirut. U. S. television showed faces of happy Palestinians dancing in the streets and distributing candy in celebration of the attacks.

When news of the terrorist attacks reached the West Bank town of Nablus, thousands of people flooded the streets chanting "God is Great."

ROCK HILL, N.C. (EP)—Two North Carolina preachers have been sentenced to prison for their part in an \$8.5 million investment scheme, Johnny "Bill" Cabe, pastor of Rock Hill's Riverside Independent Baptist Church, was sentenced to nine years. His partner, Gastonia minister Shelton Joel Shirley, received nearly two years. Cabe was ordered to pay back about \$7.8 million, while Shirley was ordered to make restitution in the amount of \$673,500. Their scam, known as Hisway Ministries, started in 1998 by promising people that they could double their money.

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam (EP)—A Vietnamese pastor, his wife and another man were arrested in August reportedly for their ties to religious activity. This is not the first time Nguyen Hong Quang has been at odds with Vietnam's repressive policies against Christianity. Quang said that in the last six months police have burst into his home four times while he and visitors were holding church services. Quang, a Mennonite pastor and a lawyer, has been arrested numerous times in the past for evangelistic activities, and for documenting and exposing the communist government's persecution of Vietnam's Mennonite population, reports Compass Direct. Quang's arrest occurred just one day after the U. S. Commission on International Religious Freedom officially requested that Vietnam be added to the State Department's list of "countries of particular

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concern." Countries names to this list are considered the worst persecutors of religious freedom.

KETCHUM, Okla. (EP)—A Pentecostal pastor in Oklahoma is charged with embezzling thousands of dollars from a small congregation he led for less than two years. Fred Thomas Simpkins, 37, reportedly stole up to \$75,000 from the 400-member Church on the Lake near Ketchum, and spent the money for a lavish lifestyle and Internet pornography. When the church treasurers discovered the crime, the church was about \$13,000 behind on bills Simpkins was supposed to have paid. Members paid the debts within a week from their own pockets to protect the church's reputation.

CHICAGO, Ill. (EP)—Though Oprah Winfrey may mean well, she's playing a major role in leading people into New Age deception, according to the Christian Research Institute. The cult-watching organization's Christian Research Journal recently analyzed Winfrey's work and identified her as "the biggest contemporary disseminator of New Age belief systems." Author Kate Maver noted that Winfrey's guests include New Age gurus Marianne Williamson and Gary Zukav, and that while the self-help books recommended by Winfrey may mention Jesus, they "are, in fact, wholly antagonistic to the gospel." Maver concludes that Winfrey's intentions are good, and observes that the television host's popularity is "a symptom of the decades-old search for meaning in self-obsessed American culture."

CROWN POINT, Ind. (EP)—An Indiana church is being sued by a woman who says she was publicly humiliated by her pastor because of her marital difficulties. Anna Calabrese says Pastor Wayne A. Vanderwier of Grace Church in Crown Point told her "to become her husband's doormat and submissive helper." She is suing for damage to her reputation and emotional distress. The lawsuit says Vanderwier disclosed her personal troubles to the congregation, organized a campaign to persuade her to be obedient to her estranged husband, then "publicly humiliated [her] because she failed to do so." Vanderwier issued a statement denying wrongdoing, saying he and church members acted "graciously, patiently and biblically in attempting to respond to Anna's concerns."

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (EP)—A review of all 120 counties in Kentucky by the *Louisville Courier-Journal* found that 27 county courthouses display the Ten Commandments in public areas. The American Civil Liberties Union of

Kentucky is mounting a court challenge to the postings.

Americans gamble \$600 billion a year on lotteries, casinos, horse racing, and bingo, more than they spend on groceries.

About 33% of U. S. kids are born out of wedlock, up from 11% in 1970 (*Straight Talk*, 9-6-01).

Just in time for the UN's World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, Zimbabwe's Marxist dictator Robert Mugabe escalated his campaign to liquidate that nation's white farmers. At the same time, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) were "asked to join the UN force in Kosovo despite allegation that the force... has aided President Mugabe's campaign to undermine the rule of law," reported the September 5th *London Daily Telegraph*. As the Zimbabwean economy collapses, bands of terrorists who called themselves "War Veterans" have been unleashed on both the nation's white farmers and members of the Movement for Democratic Change, the country's opposition political party. ZRP and other Zaimbabwean law enforcement organs have allowed the depredations to proceed unchecked—or have eagerly joined in the mayhem. "The ZRP demonstrably ignore the rule of law at home," commented Tony Reeler of the Human Rights Forum in Zimbabwe. "We must wonder why they are entrusted to protect lives in Kosovo when they are unable to protect the lives of people at home" (*The New American*, 10-8-01).

The Internet website of the left-wing People For the American Way warns: "As a new school year begins across the country, parents, students, teachers and school officials in many districts will find themselves confronted by right-wing efforts to violate religious liberty in public schools. These efforts include promotion of improper "Bible as history" classes or Bible classes that present the Bible from a religious perspective" (*ibid.*).

According to reports from the Employment Policy Foundation, approximately 46 percent of the U. S. workforce is female.

Eugene Hill, professor of electrical and computer engineering at Canada's University of New Brunswick, "respectfully sent" the following letter last week to Inside the Beltway. For the benefit of our readers, and in particular our nation's elected representatives, we reprint the Canadian's letter in its entirety:

"Please let me first express the deepest sympathy and heartfelt sadness at the incomprehensible tragedy of innocent deaths in the United States this past week. Following from that, we in this idiotic country of Canada in which I live have just witnessed a day of prayer and a government-sponsored service during the

national Day of Mourning in which there was no public prayer.

b: "In the same context, this past week the courage of the people of the United States, and the return of the people of the United States to their spiritual roots, was remarkable and in my opinion so appropriate and characteristic.

"But there remains a great mystery—how people and a country could for 40 years, through their attitudes and courts, do everything they could to get every reminder of God, no matter how small or insignificant, out of the public domain and out of public sight and then suddenly, in a very public and government-involved way, seek God?

"The ACLU aside, it does not seem possible to have it both ways and it is probably therefore very fortunate (for all of us, even in our everyday lives) that the Bible record shows God to be merciful, generous in overlooking our inconsistencies and faults, and ready to forgive" (*The Washington Times*, Sept. 24-30, 01).

A coalition of conservative evangelical leaders say the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11 are a result of America's sin, calling for revival and repentance. The statement, drafted by Campus Crusade for Christ founder Bill Bright, declares: "In many ways, the results of the recent days are a reflection of the crumbling foundation of America. It is time to reflect and repent." It urges pastors to use the crisis to "spark the flames of revival." Supporters include James Merritt, president of the Southern Baptist Convention; James Dobson, president of Focus on the Family, and televangelist Pat Robertson (*Western Recorder*, 9-25-01).

The average American pays \$2,642 dollars in "hidden taxes" every year, according to the Institute for Policy Innovation (IPI). The IPI study says that taxes take up as much as "56% of annual personal consumption spending," but most people don't realize it. Hidden taxes include gas taxes, travel taxes and the employer's share of payroll taxes, which is equal to the employee's share. These figures do not include the heavy cost of regulations, which drive up the price of consumer goods by increasing overhead and stifling competition (*Human Events*, 9-10-01).

The FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies knew about the presence of at least two of the terrorists in the United States, but failed to get the information to airlines. Khalid Al-Midhar and Nawaq Alhamzi, who were on Flight 77 that hit the Pentagon, were already on the so-called watch list. But federal officials failed to notify airline officials who might have been able to stop at least one of the terror attacks, reports the *Los Angeles Times*.

This is Nancy Pearcey in the Public Square.

Christians had better brace for a backlash. Several articles coming off the

presses are suggesting that all religions are breeding grounds for terrorism.

The well-known scientist Richard Dawkins says it's the doctrine of an afterlife that creates suicidal maniacs—people willing to sacrifice this life for future happiness. He calls "dangerous nonsense" and say: "Filling a world with religion. . . is like littering the streets with loaded guns."

Of course, this itself is dangerous nonsense. The bloodiest regimes of the 20th Century were not founded by religious believers but by ideologically committed atheists: Hitler, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao all slaughtered millions of people to build officially atheistic, totalitarian regimes.

Christians need to gear up to respond to the coming backlash. The problem is not religion: The problem is any system of thought when it becomes a totalitarian ideology. When that happens, even atheists become bloodthirsty fanatics (*Human Events*, 9-24-01).

This year, the United States continued a Clinton-era policy and committed more than \$100 million in foreign aid to Afghanistan—making us the country's largest humanitarian donor. In May, Secretary of State Colin Powell announced an additional \$43 million in relief, which includes 65,000 tons of wheat, vegetable oil, blended foods, health programs and shelter (*ibid.*).

According to the latest report from the U. S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), nearly half of the women who had an abortion in 1997 had had at least one previous abortion. Nearly one in five of those women had undergone at least two abortions. In its December 8, 2000, report of state and national abortion statistics for the year of 1997, the CDC found that 45.5 % of women having abortions reported having one, two, three, or more previous abortions. Only a little bit more than half (52%) were reported as never having had a previous abortion (*National Right to Life News*, 9-01).

Asked to explain the "murderous anger" of the hijackers who killed thousands of Americans on Sept. 11, Sen. Hilary Rodham Clinton compared the terrorists to opponents of her 1994 health care plan (*Washington Times*, 8-14-01).

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 8-31-2001 to 9-30-2001

| | |
|---|----------|
| Beginning Balance | \$516.46 |
| RECEIPTS | |
| Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY | 75.00 |
| Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR | 50.00 |
| Grace B. C., Corbin, KY | 100.00 |
| Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS | 500.00 |
| TOTAL RECEIPTS | 725.00 |
| EXPENDITURES: | |
| Radio Time | 1,002.00 |
| Postage | 19.75 |
| Tape production | 40.00 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES | 1,061.75 |
| | \$179.71 |
| Bank Charges | -10.00 |
| BALANCE | \$169.71 |
| CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT | |
| Beginning Balance | \$733.32 |
| RECEIPTS | |
| Total | 733.32 |
| EXPENDITURES: | |
| WCTT (Apr) | 160.00 |
| Total Expenditures | 160.00 |
| ENDING BALANCE | \$573.32 |



WORLD SCENE

By G. Russell Evans - Norfolk, Virginia

Another Day that will Live in Infamy



It is virtually impossible to concentrate on anything except the cowardly attacks on our country at the New York World Trade Center (WTC) and at the Pentagon in Washington by terrorists on September 11th—another “day that will live in infamy” just as December 7, 1941 when the Japanese surprised us in another sneak attack and sank most of our fleet at Pearl Harbor.

We avenged that and we will avenge this!

COMPARISONS

There is a distinct difference, however—a tragic difference—loss of life is far greater than at Pearl Harbor; and the terrorist attack was against our financial center and military headquarters instead of the operating military forces.

There is also a distinct similarity—our national resolve to run down and avenge this historic insult to our country, our freedoms and our culture. Americans are uniting behind President Bush, as they united behind FDR in 1941, sixty years ago.

President Bush calls this an act of war, 21st century war.

Former Senator Sam Nunn calls Sept. 11th a “day of hate” and a “day of sorrow.” Let us add: “a day of uniting.”

Volumes and volumes are going to be written and spoken about this immense tragedy, how it happened and what to do. Let me join.

OVERWHELMING SUPPORT

Congressional leaders and every member of the Congress have come out personally in overwhelming support of the Commander-in-Chief for retribution, swift and sure. Their immediate gathering on the Capitol steps was impressive solidarity.

Their full-scale meeting in the Capitol Rotunda the next day was a religious reaction to this national tragedy. Can anyone doubt the religious foundation of our nation—despite the spurious and regular stacks by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and others for separation of church and state? So, where was the ACLU’s Barry Lynn?

This Christian reaction was spontaneous and natural.

THE FOUR C’S

President Bush proved, throughout, the qualities we need in our Commander-in-Chief: courage, confidence, calmness and common sense—the 4 C’s! He led in uniting the

country and inspired unity among our allies, particularly NATO, where Article 5 was paramount: An attack on one is an attack on all.

The president was emphatic about hunting down the perpetrators and the nations who gave them shelter and any other support, all equally guilty.

NEW YORKERS SUPERB

Particularly inspiring on the home front were the New Yorkers:

* Those hundreds of firemen and policemen going literally into the jaws of hell and almost certain death when the World Trade Center towers were collapsing.

* Those thousands of WTC workers calmly evacuating from the 110-story towers down the steps even when stalled half-way down.

* Those WTC evacuees, coming down at the 43rd floor and cheering on the young firefighters going up.

* Those hundreds of WTC evacuees calmly running away in the streets away from the firestorm of the crumbling towers.

* New York Mayor Rudy Guiliani calmly and confidently taking charge with leadership and management skills to make him a shoo-in to the U. S. Senate should he some day decide to run.

* The TV interview of the young New York fireman, scarred and battered, telling Larry King, “No, I’m not quitting; I’m in for 20 years.”

WHO DID IT?

A group of terrorists somewhere carefully and skillfully plotted this extremely well-coordinated assault. Perhaps in Afghanistan. Perhaps the notorious Osama bin Laden. Both are

prime suspects and both are on the short list.

So, why didn’t our intelligence services find out? Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Cal.) is adamant, calling our government “either incompetent or unwilling to protect us.” He charged too much reliance on technology and not enough on human intelligence—the intelligence “foot soldiers” to penetrate and dig out plots against us.

RATS IN THE SEWER

A retired FBI agent said that often our intelligence people wanted to get the rats, but were unwilling to go into the sewer after them.

Senator John Warner (R-Va.) calls the terrorist attacks “the most tragic act in U. S. history.”

Former U. S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke calls it “act of war,” justifying swift retribution with the full cooperation of our allies to pursue the perpetrators and those countries who shelter and support them in any way.

Former Secretary of Defense William Cohen was not surprised, knew terrorism was coming and that we were not prepared.

Tom Clancey, the famous author, once asked a four-star general of the Joint Chiefs of Staff if contingency plans existed for a suicide airliner crash into the Capitol during a joint session of Congress. “No plan for that,” said the general, “but we better do it tomorrow.”

SOLIDARITY

Many allies and friends have expressed solidarity in varying degrees, including Russia, China and even Pakistan and Afghanistan, itself a prime suspect with its Taliban rule and probable sheltering of bin Laden.

Canadian TV personality, Gordon Sinclair, in a scathing editorial, praised the Americans for generosity and world leadership, and denounced the world’s hypocrites and free-loaders whose specialty always has

been to criticize us.

In his long commentary, Sinclair shamed the British, French, Germans, Italians, Japanese and others who had been bailed out with our Marshall Plan and the Truman policy and who, so often smear us as decadent warmongers. But, asks Sinclair, who among them has built an airplane like Boeing, or put a man on the moon or “raced 5,000 times. . .to help other people in trouble.”

In conclusion, said Sinclair, “our neighbor faced it alone and I’m one Canadian who is d. . . . tired of seeing them kicked around. They will come out of this with their flag high. . . .Stand proud, America.”

(Captain Evans’ columns are distributed by the Americanism Educational League of Buena Park, Calif.).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Citrus Missionary Baptist Church, Inverness, Fla., and Pastor Troy Sheppard will have special services Nov. 5-9 at 7:00 p. m. nightly with a Fellowship Meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 10th and regular services on Sunday the 11th. The guest speaker is Elder Joe Wilson, Tulsa, Okla. For more information call Pastor Sheppard at (352) 860-1636 or 860-0686.

The Faith Baptist Church, Lawtey, Fla., is without a pastor. You may visit their website to see their doctrinal position <http://www.homestead.com/fbclawteyfl/index.html>. Or you may contact Bro. Wayne E. Massey (904) 782-3415 or Bro. Rick Sullivan (904) 964-3331. If you respond by email, please use the following address: faith_baptist99@hotmail.com.

The Berea Baptist Church, Mantachie, Miss., and Pastor Milburn Cockrell will have special services Nov. 1-4 at 7:00 p.m. nightly and the regular times on Sunday. The speaker is Elder Michael W. DeWitt, Springfield, Oregon.

The Grace Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas, and Pastor Dan W. Cozart will have a Bible Conference on “The Doctrines of Grace” Nov. 1-3. Speakers are Elders Paul Brown, Jack Duplechain, Forrest Keener, Bill Lee, and Mike Whisenant. For more information call Pastor Cozart (903) 561-7664 or 561-1163.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coming in the next issue . . .

You and Your Pastor by Clyde F. Hancock
With What Body Do They Come by John McNeil
Grace Defined by Milburn Cockrell

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