

The Berea Baptist Banner

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

The New Testament Church and Her Mission

By Wayne Cox
(1913 - 2003)



I am not writing this in order to defend my own position, but to defend the plain teaching of the Word of God, and the Doctrine that multiplied thousands of Baptists hold dear to their hearts.

In order that we may understand this subject as we should, we must study the origin of the church. Baptists have always contended that Christ instituted His own church when He was here in the flesh. The popular theory is that the church was instituted on the day of Pentecost, but the Bible does not substantiate this theory, but on the contrary, teaches that the church was established by the Lord Himself, that it is His church, and that He is the head over all things to the church which His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:22-23).

THE ARGUMENT AGAINST THE POPULAR THEORY AS TO THE ESTABLISHING OF THE CHURCH

The church, and I use the word in the singular merely for

convenience, is a glorious institution, of Divine origin and shall never be destroyed. Christ asked the apostles a question in Matthew 16:15-16,18: **"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."** There are two or three words used in the above Scriptures that demand our attention. There are some that say that the Lord built His church on the Apostle Peter. The reason for this erroneous idea is because of the meaning of the name Peter (it means a stone); and the Lord said that upon this rock I will build my church. Well, we notice that the Master said upon this rock, and not upon this "stone."

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Don't Turn Away from God

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia



"And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. For the LORD will not forsake

his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do

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The Mysteries of the Bible

By Curtis Pugh
of Poteau, Oklahoma



A proper understanding of the Bible rests at least in part on understanding that the Bible is a progressive revelation. God did not reveal all that He would have us to know at one time. Many things are revealed in the Old Testament, but many things are not revealed there and were unknown to those who lived in that time period. So also the earliest Christians lacked any knowledge of a great number of things. Things prophesied, for instance, were often incomplete and the information given often pertained only to a specific people, the Jews, for instance. Probably

you are familiar with the illustration which portrays a prophet standing looking at a series of remote mountain peaks. He cannot see detail because of his distance from the mountains. Neither can he see the slopes of the mountains as they appear unto him row upon row in the distance – and he cannot see the valleys between the mountain ranges at all. So it often was with the prophets. And we should always remember that while all

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

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

New Testament

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The Bible discriminates between a stone and a rock, in short there is a difference. The word or name Peter means a stone, and the Greek word is *petros* and means a small stone or pebble, while the word rock upon which Jesus said He was going to build His church, in the Greek is *petra* and means a huge rock, a great rock. The Apostle Paul had something like this in mind when he declares that the rock (*petra*) that followed the children of Israel in the wilderness was Christ (I Cor. 10:4). So we can readily see that the Master was speaking about Himself, and not the Apostle Peter.

Now when did the church have its beginning? In the preceding paragraph the word "will" is used as if the church were to be established in the future, but a close observation of the word reveals that it is used in the sense of building up or edifying. The word build in the Greek is *oikodomeo*, meaning to build up or edify. The Lord said that He was going to build up His church, or to enlarge His church.

ARGUMENT AGAINST THE POPULAR THEORY OF THE CHURCH'S ORIGIN AS IS PREVALENT AMONG OUR BAPTIST PEOPLE

There is another theory that teaches that the church had its beginning in the sixth chapter of Luke, but if one will lay aside every preconceived idea and notion, it can be readily seen that the church could not have had its beginning in the sixth chapter of Luke. Let us examine this chapter and see just what it does teach. Luke 6:12-13: "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night

in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." This does not teach that the church had its birth here, but on the contrary it teaches that this was a great church meeting, that the Lord called unto Him the whole church, and from the multitude of disciples He called twelve to be preachers, and sent them out to preach; it was here that they were ordained. Mark 3:14: "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." So we can readily see that the sixth chapter of Luke was an ordination service, and not the birth of the church. But someone will ask, well, when did the church begin? John the Baptist made ready a people for the coming of the Lord (Luke 1:17). When the angel of the Lord announced to Zacharias that Elizabeth would bear a son, and that his name would be John, he further said that "...he shall go before him in the Spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." So the Lord took the material that John prepared and established His church. When He began to call men to follow Him, that is when the church came into existence.

ARGUMENT AGAINST THE PENTECOST CHURCH THEORY

Further argument against the Pentecost theory: In Matthew 18:15-18, Jesus gave specific instructions on how to discipline an offending brother: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him

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New Testament

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his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” This was before Pentecost, and if the church did not exist prior to Pentecost, then how could you carry anything to something that did not exist? And yet the Lord said to tell it to the church. Why, the Lord sang in the church while He was here in person. Hebrews 2:12: **“Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.”** Now when did the Lord ever sing? Well, in Matthew 26:30. On the night that He instituted the Lord’s Supper and also the night that He was betrayed. When He instituted the Supper by giving the emblems that set forth the body and the blood of the Master to the apostles, **“And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.”** So the only time that the Lord sang was on this particular occasion, and Paul said that it was in the church that He sang. Instead of the church being established on the day of Pentecost, about three thousand were added to it; how can you add to something that does not exist?

FURTHER ARGUMENT AGAINST THE THEORY THAT THE CHURCH HAD ITS BEGINNING AS RECORDED IN LUKE 6

Let us notice why men say that the church was established

in the sixth chapter of Luke. In I Corinthians 12:28 we read these words: **“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles...”** And in the sixth chapter of Luke we read about the Lord calling out twelve whom He named apostles. But in I Corinthians 12:28, Paul said that God set some in the church first apostles, that is, that they were the first officers of the church. May I raise this question: How could He set them in the church if the church did not exist prior to the sixth chapter of Luke? Why, the church had to exist in order for them to have been set in the church as the first officers of the church.

THE DIVINE COMMISSION

To whom did the Lord give the Divine Commission? If Christ gave the commission to the apostles as such then the commission would have died with the dying of the apostles, for the apostles did not live long enough to go into all the world, and yet Jesus said to go and teach all nations (Matt. 28:19-20). Of course the Lord had a church and He commissioned the church to go into all the world, and that church is here today and shall continue to be here until the Lord comes and takes her home to glory.

Since the Lord gave the commission to the church, then the church and the church alone has a right to send out missionaries. (Let it be noticed that I have used the word church in the singular, not because that I believe the church to be universal, but for the sake of convenience. I use it in the singular just as I would speak of man, or of the tree, the woman, not because there is just one big man or one big tree, composed of all the men or one big tree composed of all the trees, even so when I speak of the church I mean each individual

congregation.)

Let it be noticed that individual church members wherever they go may tell the story of salvation to those with whom they come in contact (Acts 8). And whosoever hears the message of salvation should pass it on to others (Rev. 22:17). But the only organized effort recognized in the New Testament for the work of missions is the local congregation of baptized believers.

THE INDEPENDENCY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

The church that the Lord instituted was, and is, sovereign and independent, a pure democracy. For example, we notice the first chapter of Acts and we can readily see the democratic ideals that were practiced in electing a successor to Judas Iscariot. We notice that two were nominated, namely, Justus and Matthias, and the whole body gave forth their lots, or cast their vote and Matthias received the majority, and so he was numbered with the twelve. This same thing is brought out in II Corinthians 2:7-8. Paul is instructing the Corinthian Church on how to treat a brother that had been excluded, and that he had been expelled or excluded by the many or majority. See also the sixth chapter of Acts on the electing of the deacons.

THE CHURCH SENDING FORTH THE GOSPEL

In the commission Jesus told the church to go into all the world and make disciples, but the church did not move out of Jerusalem until after Deacon Stephen was stoned to death, but as a result of his death the church was scattered and went everywhere preaching the Gospel, but there are a number of things associated with the scattering that demands our attention. One of the questions that is often asked

is, were these church members endowed with the authority to make, and baptize disciples, and I answer in the affirmative. The persecution that arose as a result of the stoning to death of Stephen, and the subsequent scattering is recorded in the 8th chapter of Acts. All were scattered except the Apostles. We notice this in verse one of the 8th chapter of Acts. We read: **“...And they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles,”** then follows the account of the preaching of Philip and the conversions that he was having, and also the many that were being baptized at the hands of Philip. So many people that hold to the erroneous doctrine that anyone that has been saved has a right to baptize without church authority like to call attention to Philip baptizing in Samaria as proof of their position, but one has only to study the 8th chapter of Acts but briefly to see the error of that position. Philip was baptizing in Samaria but by church authority as is made so very plain in the 14th verse, **“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God they sent unto them Peter and John.”** How did the apostles that remained in Jerusalem hear about the conversions of the Samaritans? They heard through Philip, whom the church had given the authority to baptize, and as a good missionary he had sent back a report to the church, for all of the church had not been scattered. The apostles had been left in Jerusalem, so when Philip sent in his report, that is the church, sent unto them Peter and John.

THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS AND HIS

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HOUSEHOLD

It has been claimed by some that Peter baptized the house of Cornelius without church authority, but I wish to refute that theory. Peter carried with him six brethren when he preached to and baptized the house of Cornelius. In his report to the church which is recorded in the 11 chapter of Acts, he declares that they were with him, that is, the six brethren. They of the circumcision brought the accusation against Peter that he had gone into the home of men uncircumcised but Peter rehearsed the whole matter from the beginning and expounded it in order (Acts 11:3-4), and climaxed his defense in verse 12, **“And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me...”** So he had enough to act or enough to transact business, for we notice in Acts 10:47 these words, **“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?”**

In other words, Peter called for the vote of the six brethren that had accompanied him, so we can readily see that he had church authority, and was not practicing free lance baptism.

THE CHURCH AND MISSIONS

My argument has always been, and is now and shall always be, that the church has no right to redelegate its power to any agency or board or committee, that the church and the church alone has the right to send out missionaries under the direction of the Holy Spirit. In the 11th chapter of Acts and the 19th verse through the 22nd verse we read: **“Now they which were scattered abroad**

upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word unto the Jews only, (or to none but unto Jews only), And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.” From these Scriptures we notice that the church there in Jerusalem sent Barnabas, and that no board or committee sent him out, but that the church and the church alone sent him to Antioch. We notice that word **“they,”** they sent him. Now they who? The church at Jerusalem. They, that is the church, had heard how the Greeks had received the Word of the Lord, and they sent out Barnabas.

THE ANTIOCH CHURCH

In Acts 13:1-3 we read: **“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence, they sailed to Cyprus.”** So we can readily see from these verses of

Scripture that it was the church at Antioch that sent out these two missionaries under the leadership of the Spirit of God, and we notice further that even the church does not have the right to tell the missionaries where to go, that that is left entirely to the direction of the Holy Spirit. We notice that He said **“...for the work whereunto I have called them,”** and also the expression, **“So they being sent by the Holy Ghost...”**

From these verses we can readily see that the church sent them out under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, that it was not a foreign mission board, neither was it a missionary committee but it was the local church. And when Paul and Barnabas had completed this particular missionary tour they returned to the church that sent them out and gave a detailed report of all that they had accomplished. Acts 14:26-27: **“And thence sailed to Antioch from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”** They were genuine missionaries, and did as they should have, they made their report to the home church, the church that had sent them out, but this is not the procedure today. Oh, no, the missionaries of today are sent out by the foreign mission board, and this unscriptural board tells them where they can go and where they cannot. Now if that is taught in the Word of God, I am unable to find it. This is a direct violation of the Word of God, and also the destroying of the sovereignty, and independency of the local church. Now let us notice Paul's second

missionary tour. Who sent him out, and who accompanied him? Acts 15:40: **“And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.”**

THE CHURCH EXERCISING HER GOD-GIVEN RIGHT IN SENDING OUT AND SUPPORTING MISSIONARIES UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Thus we can see it was the church there at Antioch that sent them out on this second missionary journey. Now the question will naturally arise as to how the Apostle Paul was supported? He was sent out by one church, but supported by others, especially those that he had organized. Paul with other missionaries was sent out by one church, and other churches accepted them as their missionaries, and supported them as such. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthian brethren, states as much. II Corinthians 11:8-9: **“I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.”** In this particular verse we notice two things: first, Paul said that he had received wages from other churches, and second, he did the Corinthian church service, or that is he labored among them while other churches supported him as we notice in the 9th verse: **“And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied...”** And so we can see that other churches supported Paul. These brethren from Macedonia were sent by the churches of Macedonia with offerings to help the Apostle Paul. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul commends them for their

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help, Philippians 4:15-16: **“Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.”**

In these Scriptures we find a church supporting Paul on the mission field. Now how did this church do this? Well, we find the answer in the 2nd chapter of Philippians and the 25th verse: **“Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.”** There are two or three things that are brought out in this text: first, Paul said that he was his companion in labor, and also that he was the messenger of the church and that he ministered to Paul’s wants. Here is that which is taught in this text. The church there at Philippi raised a monetary offering, and sent Epaphroditus as a messenger of the church with the offering to Paul.

Now let us notice how the churches determined to send relief to the poor saints in Jerusalem in I Corinthians 16: 1-3: **“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order (or instruction) to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings (or collections) when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.”** And

thus we understand from these Scriptures that the church at Corinth with the churches of Galatia were to elect messengers and instruct them as to their message, and too, they sent letters of recommendation by them, so that the brethren at Jerusalem would know that they were bonafide messengers. We notice again in II Corinthians 8:19 something else along this line: **“And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind.”**

Now notice that they were chosen by their respective churches as messengers, and we have already seen what a messenger was; thus we see that even the brethren that carried the offerings of the churches to the poor saints in Jerusalem had to be chosen by the churches, and properly instructed by their respective churches. But someone will say that the word messenger is not used in II Corinthians 8:19. Granted, but Paul, in speaking in the same chapter in verse 23 uses the word messenger in discussing the same subject, and the same people: **“Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.”** Now in this same manner were the missionaries elected, and sent out under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and also in this same manner they were supported.

Now let it be further noticed that it is the Holy Spirit that calls and sends missionaries, but not independent of the church, but the Holy Spirit sends through the

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Little Hills By Nathaniel Hille of Plant City, Florida



The Lord & Evangelism #2

Let us observe the case of Andrew one of the two who heard John and followed the Lord Jesus (John 1:40-42). The Holy Spirit records that Andrew did first find his own brother Simon (Peter). This is where evangelism must begin, in our own homes. I pray that it does not end there, but it must begin in our own family. You that are fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, it is your duty to seek the salvation of your own children and grandchildren.

Andrew spoke of the Christ unto Simon saying, **“We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.”** In our personal evangelism we cannot expect one to be saved by speaking to them concerning politics, sports, hobbies, or even religion. Andrew declared unto Simon, we have found the Anointed One of God, He whom the prophets spoke of. So too, by the Word of God, are lost sinners brought to salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Rom. 10:17).

Andrew **“brought”** Simon to the Lord (John 1:42). The word **“brought”** is more properly rendered “to lead” [Strong’s Concordance]. In our personal evangelism, we are to lead folks to the Savior. Remember, these are lost sheep. Sheep are not to be driven, but led. While Andrew did this “leading” literally, that

is he literally went in front of Simon showing him to the physical location of the Christ; we must do it spiritually. While the specifics may vary from person to person, there is the essentials truths of leading one to Christ. First, they are in need of salvation because they have sinned against the righteous and holy One (Rom. 3:23). Second, Christ Jesus alone is the Savior (Acts. 4:12). Third, salvation is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31) accompanied with repentance toward God (Acts 20:21).

Are we leading folks to Christ with our words and actions? Or are we turning them off from the Lord? Are we engaged in the work of evangelism even as Andrew was with Simon? Are you parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters engaged with your own family leading them to Christ according to the Scriptural pattern as laid out in God’s Word? Beloved, **“The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest”** (Luke 10:2). Let us labor for the Master. I beseech you that are saved by God’s grace, especially those of the Lord’s church, to **“GO”!!!** (Matt. 28:19) and speak to a loved one and tell them of their personal need of the Savior and show them that Christ is the Savior promised of God.



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church, as we have already seen in the 13th chapter of Acts.

We are hearing much about expediency; expedient means the best means to an end. In short, it means that the results justify the means employed whether they are scriptural or not. This I wish to deny, for the Lord gave the commission to the church, and the church has no right to change that which Christ has commanded, and that is this: "Go and make disciples of all nations." So it is the church and the church alone under the direction of the Holy Spirit that is to send out missionaries, the Holy Spirit does not use any other agency but the church in sending forth missionaries. He sends through the church.

The Lord told His church to go and make disciples and baptize them and teach them the "all things" which He had commanded, and those all things which He commanded are found in the Word of God, and let us be careful to observe that which He has commanded, and cease trying to make the Bible say something that it does not say, such as expediency, or the end justifies the means employed whether they be scriptural or not. No, no, dear reader, the end does not justify the means employed unless the means are in harmony with the Word of God.

The greatest and grandest institution on earth is the church that Jesus established and commissioned, and this church and this church alone (and I mean a local congregation) has the right to send out missionaries under the direction of the Holy Spirit, this is what the New Testament teaches and what was practiced

in New Testament times and what our forefathers believed and practiced; may the day hasten when we, as members of the church that Christ built, return to the plain teaching of the Word of God. Relative to this important matter, may we lay aside every pre-conceived idea and notion and boldly and courageously turn back to the "thus saith the Lord." The time has come for action and for much study, and thus may we search diligently the Word of the Lord that we may be fully equipped for the action that must inevitably come.



Don't Turn Away

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wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king" (I Sam. 12:19-25).

The children of Israel were, at times, a sinful and wicked people. In reality, they were always sinners, with a varying number of truly saved individuals in their midst; except, there were times when the Spirit of the Lord, through various rulers, would draw them close unto Him. On the occasion referenced in our text passage, we find that the children of Israel, already caught up in sin, had sinned further. When confronted with their exceeding sinfulness, they initially seem to despair. However, Samuel comforts them, and encourages them, after having first condemned their sins. Samuel knew that the possibility existed that they might turn ever further from God, and turn ever more unto sin.

Now, I would like to apply this logic to our behavior and to our reaction to sin in our lives. It seems that sometimes it is almost easier to continue in sin,

and to gradually or abruptly be taken away from God, based on the inner shame or the inner fear of judgment that we feel over our sinful behavior. Certainly, in the lives of the unsaved, this must be true. Whenever they are confronted with a presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ; or, whenever they are forced to face the morality taught in the Word of God as it is compared to their own miserable lives, they will often consider it easier to just turn from God even further, and ignore the nobler aspects of humanity, and indulge further in sin.

Even in the case of the saved, when we are caught up in sin, our own shame and our own fear of God may cause us to doubt our usefulness unto God; and, since we have already (humanly speaking) distanced ourselves from God, we continue on our way away from God instead of turning to Him and crying out for repentance. And yet, the Lord will still use us, despite our sinful failings. And, though we do fail and sin from time to time, there is still mercy with the Lord, and there is still a cause for which we must contend. Do not despair in your sin. Do not turn further from God when you have stumbled or been caught in the mire of sin. I want you to know that the Lord is sovereign over all things including the salvation of men. He will not propose to take one unto Him in salvation, and then allow or tolerate the devil to destroy that soul.

DON'T LET SIN PREVENT YOU ANY LONGER

First, let me address the unsaved, the lost, the undone, the sinner drowning in the depths of sin. Do not let sin prevent your repentance and belief in Christ! The Gospel cry goes forth: "Ho,

every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1). Do not think that you have to "straighten out your life," or "turn over a new leaf," before you can come to the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Surely, if you wait on some goodness to come forth from you, which would be acceptable in the sight of God as a basis for your salvation, then you will forever wait, and you will be eternally lost. Instead, I want you to know that the very sins which are your destruction now are the sins which the Lord Jesus Christ came to save you from. Do not try to dress yourself up because you fear that your sins are too great, and they are a hindrance from coming to Christ. No, the knowledge of your sins should drive you to the saving arms of Jesus Christ! You will be destroyed and forever lost if you do not come to Jesus Christ! I know that it must be the Spirit of God Who draws you to Him. But, I also know that you must come because you desire Him. This salvation is not against your will; rather, your will, your desire for Christ, is made conformable to the desires and the will and the purpose of God. If you feel your need of Him, do not tarry! Do not allow the sin and the wickedness of this life to prevent you from the One Who is destined to save you from those very sins. "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa 55:6-7).

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Don't Turn Away

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The Word of God, and the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only hope for the forlorn sinner. Our only salvation is in Him, and is made possible (and certain) through the work, the suffering, the blood, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Christ paid it all for each of the terrible sinners ordained unto salvation. **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"** (Eph. 1:7). True, some are more wicked than others, but none that are His, are too far gone (away). He will recover them from their sins, and lead them into righteousness. They will repent; they will believe. All who are lost and undone need only turn to Jesus Christ, and turn away from their sins. The salvation that He has provided for His people is certainly and surely able to save His people from their sins.

Speaking of his own wickedness, and the terrible sinfulness that he had been caught up in, the Apostle Paul said, **"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first**

Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (I Tim. 1:12-16). The Apostle Paul is an example and a pattern for all of the Christian world to see of a man who was utterly opposed to Jesus Christ, and who was then saved by the grace of God. The grace of God was sufficient to save Paul! The Apostle Paul is an example and a pattern – for all of the Christian world to see – of a man who was wicked and undone, who was saved, and then used in a mighty way, to serve the God, and promote the cause, which he had once sought to destroy. The grace of God was sufficient to save Paul, and then to use him greatly in the churches of Jesus Christ. Do not let sin prevent you from coming to Christ. He will save, and His grace is sufficient, for each and every sinner who comes to Him in genuine repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

DON'T LET SIN SEPARATE YOU ANY FURTHER

Now, let me move on to address those who are saved, who may be caught up in some sin or sins in this life. I know, if you are truly saved, that you do love the Lord Jesus Christ, and your Father in Heaven. I know, if you are truly saved, that you have a sincere longing to please Him, and a genuine desire to exalt the name of Christ with your life. And yet, from time to time, we will (at least some of us) allow sin to come into our lives, in such a manner, or to such an extent, that it seems we are at a distance from God, and we seem farther away from Jesus Christ. If you are in such a condition, I implore you now, **"Do not let sin distance you from God, after you have been saved."** David said, **"Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also**

upon me, and answer me. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up. Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (Ps. 27:7-14). If you have fallen in some snare, I encourage you to get up and try again. Cry out unto the God of mercy and grace, He will save you out of your troubles, and the sins which might afflict you, and He will bring you near unto Him. I believe that all of us would faint in this life, due to the sorrows and the sins and the temptations of this mortal realm, if it were not for the goodness and the strength and the faithfulness of our Lord God. He will be faithful unto us. He will never forsake us. When we are caught up in some sins, perhaps, some of our family or friends in this life may forsake us; but, God will never forsake us. He will always be with us. Of course, it is even better if we can resist the temptations in the first place, and if we can remain focused and centered on Jesus Christ. And yet, we know, from time to time, and from place to place, we will stray from that dedication and from that faithfulness unto the Lord. In such a time, do not throw up your

hands in despair, and say, "It is easier to just continue on this way, and forget about being useful unto the Lord." Instead, remember that the Lord has a will and a purpose that must be accomplished in this world and this age, and He is using men, miserable and fallen creatures though we be, to accomplish His pre-determined ends. You and I must be a part of our God's will. You and I must not turn further from Him when caught in sin; instead, we must rise up, dust ourselves off, and get back to work laboring in the cause of Christ, and in the churches of the Lord.

An example that the Lord gives us is the "Parable of the Two Sons." **"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you"** (Matt. 21:28-31). In the end, the son who was obedient unto his father was the son who was initially rebellious. The son who was useful in the vineyard was the one who was, at first, unwilling to work at all. This is an example for us, even those of us who are saved. Our sins may cause us to resist the leadership and the call of the Holy Spirit, to work in the Kingdom of Heaven; but, genuine repentance, and godly sorrow over our own sins, can be the motivation to re-enter the work, and apply ourselves again in the service of

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Gleanings for the Young & Old



Uncle John Vassar - Mustered In

(or the conversion of John Vassar)

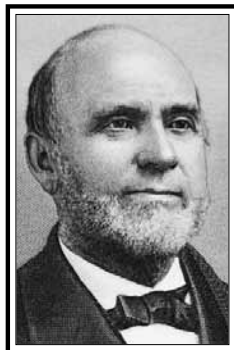
by E. T. Vassar

“And the angels echoed around the throne,

‘Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own.’”

Some incidents of childhood are cut into memory as inscriptions are cut into rock. No lapse of time wears them out, or tones down the sharp deep lines. One such is associated with the conversion of Uncle John. He had come out to see his parents and tell them what a Saviour he had found. We were at grandfather's when he arrived. What he said we were too young to understand, and not one utterance can now be recalled; but the recollection of the scene that followed is perfectly distinct. All wept while his story was being told. Presently they knelt around the room, and two or three offered prayer. In the old homestead there was a holy quiet joy all day long. It was the history of the prodigal gone through again. Another runaway had come to himself and had returned to the Father's house, and under the earthly father's roof there was gladness devout and deep. Shall we doubt that it was the echo of a delight felt in Heaven over the repenting sinner?

Uncle John's awakening, like everything about the man, was extraordinary. It is doubtful whether John Bunyan's or John Newton's was more powerful or profound. In the Baptist church a revival was in progress, and



early morning meetings as well as evening services were being held. He was urged to attend these, but in the most decided way refused.

Finally his cousin, Matthew Vassar, Jr., fairly hired him to go “just once.” He went, and readily promised to do the same again without reward. Before the second service was over, conviction deep and terrible got hold upon his soul. For a week he was shaken by the powers of the world to come as trees are shaken by mighty winds. Say what we will about what old divines were wont to call “law work” in regeneration, John Vassar quivered and struggled for days in its stern grasp. Sin and the woe it merits were awfully real to him—so real, that on going home from one of the meetings and finding his wife asleep, he roused her with the cry, “How can you rest when your husband is going right down to hell?”

Nor was it the record of a profligate career which stirred shame and fear and pain. He had a fiery, ungovernable temper, and had been given to terrible outbursts of profanity when provoked, but from other gross forms of wickedness he had been free. It was the consciousness of a state of heart radically wrong that lay at the bottom of his self-aborrence and alarm; the persuasion that outside decency was not the holiness of God.

The Holy Spirit was dealing with him, and hence he quailed. And when peace and pardon broke in, they did not come as the dawn of day. It was rather as if noonday sunshine were to flash out in the murky night. He got an assurance of sonship so bright and clear that nothing afterward darkened it for an hour.

In part, perhaps, such an experience would be natural to a temperament keyed so high. There could be no halfway emotion about the man, any more than there could be halfway work. Halfness went against the grain. But it was something more than mere natural intensity which glowed in his face and throbbed in the testimony of his tongue. There was a life hidden with Christ, whose pulsations, at the first, as ever afterward, were strong as ocean's undertow. Let this account for those positive ideas he held and urged concerning the doctrine of a new birth. Conversion was to him something definite and discernible. It was not a maybe and maybe not change. There was in his sight a line where living for self and Satan ceased, and living for God and godliness began; and that line he looked upon as sharply drawn. He could not have regarded it otherwise. Divine grace had stopped him as that light from Heaven stopped Saul of Tarsus, and as suddenly and as squarely he had turned around. Christ's image had been stamped upon his soul as the eagle is stamped on the bit of gold under the die of the mint; and whose he was, or what, he could not allow himself to question. That had been once and for ever settled. He was twenty-eight years old when he thus found the Lord; rather let us say, when the Lord thus found him. It is the Saviour who is the

chief seeker, and not the sinner.

Like every consistent convert he turned to the people of God and asked among them a brother's place. On the 3rd of April, 1842, he was welcomed into the fellowship of the Poughkeepsie Baptist Church. Rufus Babcock, who thus became his pastor, and was for many years his counselor and guide, could have told us much about the beginnings of this Christian life, had he been a little longer spared; but the venerated pastor got to the goal slightly ahead of his younger brother.

Edgar A. Van Kleek of Patten, Maine, for many years a most cherished friend, and at the time of Uncle John's conversion himself a new recruit in the army of the Lord, gives us this glimpse of the man when as a rebel against God he was brought to lay down his arms: “I well remember the night when he was in such distress of mind, though I was only a child in the Christian life then. The meeting was in the little prayer-room of the La Fayette street house, and as many were interested it was filled. I sat next to him in the first seat as you entered from the door. I never saw a soul in such agony as he. The service closed and most of the congregation had retired. As a few were lingering, he begged them not to go but to stop longer and pray for him. He said he could not go out of the room till forgiveness had been spoken and peace had come. A half dozen of us remained and prayed that mercy might be extended and his burden lifted off. Then he broke out into petitions for himself, and such begging for salvation I never heard from the lips of any other penitent. Dr. Babcock stopped with us and tried to point out Christ. He was more calm before

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Uncle John Vassar

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we separated, but not by any means at rest. The next night, however, he was rejoicing in a Saviour's pardoning love. There was rapture on his face, there was glory in his soul. There was glory in that old prayer room, too, as he told us that evening of God's own peace and the preciousness of Jesus.

"After this a number of us were returning from a neighborhood meeting one night where the interest had been very deep, and we were all so full of joy that some began to sing along the street as we went toward home. This rather unusual manifestation of enthusiasm called out the remark that people would think us crazy if we did not keep more still; whereupon Brother Vassar—the child in grace father of the man—at once replied, 'Let them think so; they said the blessed Jesus had a devil.'"

So we behold Uncle John enlisted for the good fight of faith. Years are to be spent in the drill-room now, but he has been mustered in. (*Uncle John Vassar, or, The Fight of Faith, 1879*).

An excerpt from A. J. Gordan on Uncle John Vassar:



To one who never met him it would be quite impossible to describe the impression which he instantly made on meeting him. He gave one literally a powerful electric shock the moment he touched him. There was such intensity of zeal, accompanied with such

a magnetic manner, that the impression was instantaneous and quite overwhelming. It was the lightning-like penetration of a piety that was always charged to the highest pitch. Indeed, it was the first question that occurred to one, how it could be possible for a man to live in such a tense and highly-wrought condition of religious fervor. Yet there was very little apparent variation of temperature. He traveled from Maine to Florida, from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific, on foot, on horseback, by rail, and by steamer, resting not in summer or in winter, in the one intense, eager pursuit of lost souls; and wherever you found him there was the same burning zeal speaking out in his looks and in his words. He was always moving in his work at a pace much nearer to a run than to a walk. In his humility he named himself "The Shepherd's Dog," and I often thought when I saw him, of the aptness of the name in another sense than that which he intended. For he was not only wonderfully successful in bringing home lost sheep to the good Shepherd, but he followed them with the keen scent and the swift pace of the hound upon the track of his game, tiring not, resting not, till he had won the object of his pursuit. It may be permitted, in this introduction, penned by one who was privileged to know this good man intimately and to see much of his work, to point out the most striking traits of his religious character, to indicate his methods of working, and to draw there from such lessons as may be useful to Christian workers.



Don't Turn Away

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the Lord.

We read the words of the Lord, again, in the book of Luke: "**And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God**" (Luke 9:62). If you have put your hand to the plow, and you have left the work for some reason (perhaps sin has brought you low?), I want to remind you that you have a duty unto the Lord and Saviour, Who is your Master! Return to the plow! Take up your task! Fulfill the blessed privilege and responsibility of being a laborer in the harvest, a runner in the race, a soldier in the battle, an envoy of Heaven in the world of men! Do not give in to the life of sin and laziness; instead, resist the evil inclinations of the flesh and rejoin the cause of Christ!

DON'T DOUBT YOUR SAVIOUR

Finally, I want to remind you that your salvation, as it is begun in you, and as it is worked out in your service unto God, is not a tribute to your success, your willingness, or your inherent ability to positively relate to God and His ways. Rather, your salvation from sin and Hell, and the promise of Heaven which is within you, are a tribute to the grace of God, and the preserving power of the Holy Spirit of God. Though you may imagine, sometimes, that you are not as useful as you should be; or, though you might be inclined to think, sometimes, that it would be better and easier to just drift through this life, and wait for the Lord to call you home; I can assure you that our sovereign God will not be denied, and He will use you in the way that He has ordained. In the end, the success

or the failure of your salvation rests in God. And, we can safely say that if success and failure rest with God, then we are certain of success, because God cannot fail. Do not doubt your Saviour. You may not have been all that you should have been in the past, but that does not prevent the Lord from using you in a mighty way in the future.

The prophet Samuel reminded the people of Israel that the Lord would preserve those who are called by His name. Though they had sinned, the Lord would still use them. "**For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people**" (I Sam. 12:22). Once God has put His name upon you, you can be certain and sure that He will not allow you to forever depart from Him. You may drift some distance from Him; you may stumble and you may fall; however, the Lord God of Heaven and earth will not allow His name to be brought low, nor will He allow one who is called by His name to be utterly destroyed. Our God will preserve and honor the people who are called by His name. If He is the sovereign God of this Creation, surely He is able and willing to preserve those who have called upon Him. Our preservation and His glory are inseparably linked. "**Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which**

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thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever" (Ex. 15:16-18).

Though we are sinners, we are saved by the grace of God. Our Saviour will not permit Satan the victory, not in the life of even one of those who are ordained unto salvation. **"The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah"** (Ps. 46:7-11). He will not allow sin to overcome and utterly destroy even one of His people. We need to realize that our success and our salvation is in the person and work of Jesus Christ. What the will of God has ordained to His glory, must be finally and perfectly accomplished. Our success in the works of salvation is certain and true, based upon the power and the sovereign predestined will of God our Saviour. **"Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake."** (Ps. 79:9). He will show us the way, and He will prosper us in that blessed way.

Despite the challenges that we face, and the weaknesses that we sometimes demonstrate, God will give us the victory over the sin and shortcomings with which we may sometimes be faced. Do not worry or be discouraged, He has a use for each of us. Do not despair

in your sin. Do not give in to it. Do not imagine that you will sin (or have sinned) beyond the point of no return. Do not turn away from God, turn away from sin. **"I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies"** (Ps. 40:1-4).



Mysteries of the

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the Bible is "for" us, it is not all "to" us or "about" us. Bearing these things in mind, let us look at the mysteries of the Bible.

The Greek word for mystery (musterion - moos-tay'-ree-on) is found twenty-seven times in our New Testament. It is used three times by the Lord Jesus, four times by John in The Revelation, and twenty times by Paul. There are eleven revelations of different areas of truth described as mysteries in the New Testament. One area of truth is revealed by the Lord Jesus found in the twelve parables of the kingdom in Matthew's gospel. Two such areas of truth were revealed to John in The Revelation, as well as that whole Book itself, and eight new areas of truth were revealed to Paul which were recorded in his epistles. Christ's revelation has to do with the kingdom as He said when asked why He spoke in parables; **"He answered and said unto them, Because it is given**

unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. 13:11). Thus parables serve a dual purpose according to the Lord Himself. They teach truth to the elect and hide it from those not chosen. This is a part of the truth of God's election of some.

John's first mentioned mystery has to do with "the seven stars" as is stated: **"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches"** (Rev. 1:20) and "the mystery of God" (which seems to be the whole plan of God for the end times especially as revealed in the book of Revelation). We read: **"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets,"** (Revelation 10:7), and specifically John wrote of "Mystery Babylon" saying: **"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"** (Rev. 17:5). Also the word appears in this verse: **"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns"** (Rev. 17:7).

It was to Paul that eight great topics previously unrevealed were made known. Such an abundance of newly revealed truth was given to him that it was necessary that he be given a **"thorn in the flesh."** He spoke of these things as the **"abundance of the revelations"**

(II Cor. 12:7). Human sinful pride is bound in the hearts of all men and so Paul was afflicted, we think, with near blindness in order to keep him from being lifted up with pride. The most profound theology (doctrine) is to be found in those things revealed to Paul the importance of which could have ruined him had he become prideful because of those things revealed to him.

The word mystery, used in the New Testament twenty-seven times, never has the meaning of something incomprehensible, or difficult to understand. It is important that we all understand that last statement! In New Testament usage "mystery" actually refers to something hidden that has now, or is now, being made known. This Greek word "musterion" comes from the word "mustes." "Mustes" was used of one who had been initiated into one of the mystery religions. The Greek world and later the Roman was home to these mystery religions. Each claimed to have special knowledge which was revealed only to an initiate in their religion. To the initiate - the mustes - this special knowledge was made known. The word "mustes," by the way, comes from the Greek "muo" whose root is "mu" which means "closing the mouth." In fact our English word "mute" used of one unable to speak comes from this old Greek root word "mu." The important thing to remember is that a mystery as used in the New Testament does not mean something now hidden, but rather refers to truth unknown in the past that is now revealed.

Paul wrote: **"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of**

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Mysteries of the

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this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (I Cor. 2:6-7). There is one other Greek word we must understand found in this passage just quoted: the word perfect. It is the Greek word "teleios." Now when we think of a perfect man we think of a sinless one, but that is not the meaning of this word at all. It actually means complete and was used, as was the word mystery, in the mystery religions mentioned earlier. It was the name given to the initiated members of these religions for they, like some of today's secret lodges, claim to bring members to their completeness: to their highest potential. Paul takes these familiar words – words well understood by his readers – and uses them to mean in the above text that he and the others with him spoke of things not previously revealed to those who, being in Christ and having been taught basic Bible truth were capable of receiving the things newly revealed. He says his hearers and readers were "teleios" – complete, mature, initiated in the sense of having been regenerated and taught at least some basic truth. They may have been and indeed were carnal members of the congregation at Corinth, but they were not novices: not persons newly come to the faith.

The list of things revealed to Paul that were previously hidden are these: (1) the blinding of the nation Israel; (2) the mystery of the gospel; (3) the mystery of the rapture; (4) the mystery of the churches; (5) the mystery of the indwelling Christ; (6) the mystery of iniquity; (7) the mystery of the

incarnation; and (8) the mystery of the (glorious) end of all things.

Consider this: none of the Old Testament writers or prophets understood these eight things. These eight things were not revealed unto them. Nor do those who only accept the Old Testament Scriptures have any understanding of these things: notably the Jews of our own day. While such truths as were revealed by the Lord Jesus concerning the kingdom as well as those mysteries revealed unto John and to Paul may appear to us to be at least hinted about in the Old Testament since we have the full light of God's revelation before us, to those without the New Testament these were unknown. We do not mean that there is disharmony or disunity in the message of the Bible at all, but the Bible is, after all, a progressive revelation. Nothing revealed in the New Testament contradicts the Old. Rather the New speaks of Christ and His work and fills in the gaps in the Old, if we may use such an expression. Remember the adage referring to the two Testaments: "The New is in the Old contained: the Old is by the New explained."

A word of caution may be appropriate here. The eight things revealed to Paul were not revealed in the days of the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus. Jesus made this plain saying: **"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come"** (John 16:12-13). "The Son of God as God certainly did know these and all things, but He did not reveal them. For instance – and this is important – the return

of the Lord Jesus in the air for His church is not taught in the four gospels. While there is room for it there, it is not specifically taught and those who base their eschatology on only the parables of the Lord, etc., have an incomplete revelation as the basis for their teaching. The rapture as it is commonly called was unknown to the apostles and elders until it was revealed to Paul. So while the end time events spoken of by the Lord Jesus are most certainly accurate, they are incomplete and must be understood in the light of the later revelations given to Paul.

Not only did the Old Testament personages live and die ignorant of these things revealed in the New Testament, so also the early New Testament era disciples did not know these things. James, who wrote the earliest of New Testament books that bear his name, wrote before these revelations were made known to Paul. John had not received his revelation at that early date either.

While there is some disagreement as to the dates in which the New Testament books were written, there is general agreement among Bible believers. If James wrote as early as A.D. 44 and if Paul wrote Romans in A.D. 58, as some believe, then the early churches were without the greatest doctrinal book in the New Testament for about fourteen years. Paul probably wrote the first letter that we have to the congregation at Corinth some 5 or 6 years after James wrote his epistle. If these dates are correct then for five or six years after the first New Testament Book (James) was written, the churches were without any understanding of the new things revealed to Paul. So at least a part of the time covered by the Book of Acts took place prior to Paul's revelations

also.

Early on the churches had only the oral teaching and preaching of the apostles and other preachers of their era. Twice Paul refers to these oral and written truths which he calls "traditions" saying: **"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you {ordinances: or, traditions}"** (I Cor. 11:2 – complete with KJV marginal note) and again in II Thessalonians 2:15 he wrote, **"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."** In these two verses we have the word "paradosis" (par-ad'-os-is) translated "ordinances" in the first and as "traditions" in the second verse: the same Greek word in both places. This is one of those practices about which the King James translators wrote in their introductory material. Here as in other places they used a variation of English words rather than always translating a Greek word with the same English one. It seems to me by the very fact that they put in a marginal note explaining that "ordinances" could be understood as "traditions" shows that their choice of "ordinances" was misleading although it may have suited their Church of England ideas. After all, they stated that they kept the old church words: the old Roman Catholic words which the Anglicans got from their mother.

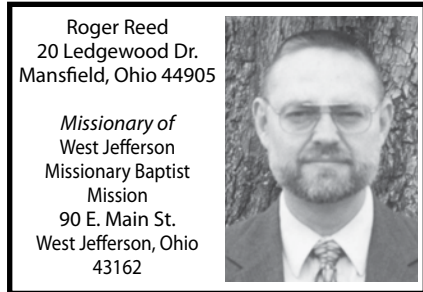
We who live in our day when all the Word of God is complete and available to us are indeed blessed. We can know more of God's truth than the earliest congregations: more even than the apostles knew in those times before these things were revealed to them. Just

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Is it ever right for a church to have unsaved persons speak to the church about secular or religious subjects, unsaved people perform musical numbers of programs, present skits and plays, etc. - all in church services? What about politicians and children of members, Sunday school classes, etc. - Oklahoma



“Let all things be done decently and in order” (I Cor. 14:40).

It is never right for an unsaved person to have any part in the local New Testament Baptist Church. I know and am aware of musical numbers, programs and those who present skits, and plays that are creeping into our Baptist Churches and these things are not to be so. There are those men and women out there who claim to be saved and want to help churches grow by other means than just plainly preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Always trying to get a foothold in the door and end up destroying those churches.

“For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after

them” (Acts 20:27-30).

Paul warns here of grievous wolves will enter in not sparing the flock, meaning they are out to destroy the Lord's true churches. Many times these folks are paid by the church for their services from the Lord's money; that should never be. I believe at that point we have made the church a house of merchandise.

“And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up” (John 2:14-17).

If we will not let anyone but members of each local assembly partake of the Lord's Supper and we will not receive alien immersion, than why would we let a lost person have anything to do with our churches or services?

My first pastor would not even let the Boy Scouts use our church building for their meetings like some so called churches do. I can not remember if this young girl was saved or not, but she was not a member of a New Testament Baptist Church and he refused to

let her sing at a funeral that was being held at the church. And because she was either a friend of the families or a family member of both parties involved who were members of our church, they got mad at our pastor and picked up the coffin and left the building and of course never came back. So the church lost two families who were members but I applaud my pastor for holding his ground in the matter, and how petty the families were over something that they should have backed their pastor on to begin with.

ROGER REED



First to address the propriety of secular leaders or politicians addressing the church, whether invited or not. The scenarios are probably not good, if the world is taking an interest in lecturing to the Lord's churches. Whether war, civil unrest, persecution or legal dangers, I can foresee several potential circumstances where the church might need to be gathered, and perhaps be addressed as a body. This would obviously not be a worship service, so if the church has a fellowship hall, it would preferably be the venue. But if that is not available, or large enough, and the circumstances require the use of the sanctuary, so be it. **“..for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold”** (Matt. 23:17)? The temple is now the church members (I Cor.6:15-19), the body of Christ, not the building any longer, so while the building is sanctified also, it (like the Sabbath) was

made for man, not the man for the building (Mark 2:27). Selah! Think about it!

The second aspect of the question deals with the true worship services of the church. Those services require that God's order be followed, as is detailed in Scripture. No lost people (secular or religious) have any place in God's order of worship! When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian attempted to negotiate with Nehemiah, he was not hesitant to tell them they would be trespassing in God's Holy Appointed Place. **“Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem”** (Neh. 2:20).

God does not recognize lawbreakers and even the solemn assemblies will not be tolerated without punishment and consequences. **“When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood”** (Isa. 1:12-15).

Lost people, women, uninvited/unauthorized speakers are all an abomination in the pulpit or behind teaching lecterns at New

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. Was the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue's house (Matthew 9:18, Mark 5:35, Luke 8:49) only in a type of coma when Christ came to heal her? Christ said she was only sleeping compared to that of Lazarus in John 11:14 when He said he was dead. - Mississippi

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coma. The sleep of death would be temporary however, as Jesus touched her in compassion and commanded her to rise from the dead. Only God has the ability to give spiritual life to dead sinners, and to raise people from the sleep of literal death. Thank God for His awesome power!

TOM ROSS

After reading all the inspired accounts recorded in the Gospels it appears that the 12 year old girl had literally died. Her parents confirmed that she had died along with all of the mourners who had assembled at the house. When Jesus raised her from the dead the Word says: **"And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished..."** (Luke 8:55-56). This implies that the spirit of life had departed from her at death, but was now restored by the life giving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The reaction of the mourners to the statement of Jesus reveals they had concluded she was definitely dead. The reaction of her parents to the miracle also indicates that they were astonished that the Lord had the power to raise the dead.

Jesus knew the girl was dead. His reference to her sleeping the sleep of death is very similar to what He said to His disciples regarding Lazarus. The fact that He did not plainly state it in the same way on this occasion does not nullify the overwhelming evidence that she was indeed dead and not in a temporary

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"These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead" (John 11:11-14).

Actually, both times, the Lord uses the word "sleep" in reference to these dead folk. (...not a coma!) "Koimao" (wonder where "coma" comes from?) is used by John and it is a descriptive Greek word meaning "to slumber, or be unaware of surrounding circumstances." It is used often in Scripture to describe the death (absence/made to slumber/be unaware of circumstances any longer) of a loved one. **"And the**

graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose" (Matt. 27:52). **"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit...And when he had said this, he fell asleep"** (Acts 7:59-60). See also I Corinthians 7:39, 11:30, 15:6, 18, 20, 51. The word Matthew and Luke use concerning Jairus' daughter is "katheudo" and it also is used figuratively of death in I Thessalonians 5:10 and Ephesians 5:14, **"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."**

Why such pictorial language by our Lord and the Scriptures toward death? Some might speculate that we use the word "sleep" instead of the harsh word "death" to soften the grief of loved ones. But that is really not it, although it will eventually come around to that. The reason is that death is much more complicated than just the "cessation of breath." The intimate person that we once knew may be laying in a casket and "dead to the world," but that body is not the primary "part" of the person we loved! The soul (and spirit) are not DEAD! The soul and spirit of a saved person (by the grace of God) is departed into another plane, **"...to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord"** (II Cor. 5:8). The lost person is not annihilated by death either, **"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments..."** (Luke 16:22-23). **"...them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt"** (Dan. 12:2).

This contrast of the death and immobilization of the physical body here on earth, yet the continuation of cognizance and existence of the Spiritual specter of our nature is a difficult, but necessary piece of knowledge for every person in the world. The purpose of the Bible in using the word "sleep" for saved people, is because the death of the physical body is but temporary, until the resurrection and glorification scheduled by Christ is come. Then the body will "leap" out of the grave and **"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality"** (I Cor. 15:51-53).

That is what is so important about the Lord showing His power to raise the dead (not comatose). This physical resurrection is but a prelude to the spiritual resurrection coming by the Saviour of life. The Son of God can give life to the dead and not just the physical dead, but those that are slumbering and unaware of the danger of hellfire and judgment coming at breakneck pace toward us. **"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation"** (I Thess. 5:6-8).

Darkness, sleeping and death is the "norm" of this world. Poor sinner, we need to awake and see

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Forum #1

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Testament Baptist churches. Musical or theatrical talent notwithstanding, what God requires is to be worshipped in Spirit and truth! It is proper to invite the world to attend the church's worship services, but not to control said services. The world is allowed to participate only in the congregational capacity, not in a leadership role.

The third facet of the question deals with the children. **"And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not..."** (Mark 10:13-14). Certainly we would not want to anger the Master by rebuking children that might desire to come to Christ. If the Sunday Bible class, or vacation Bible class children desire to sing some of their songs, we cannot rebuke what would bring glory to God. I realize not all requests are the same, so judicious reverence should be exercised in rejecting any man-glorying petitions, while those genuine requests by a child/children/their teachers should be encouraged, so to edify the saints and bring glory and honor to our great Saviour and Lord! The Bible gives examples of children ministering to God at an early age (before salvation), the clearest being Samuel. Unsaved until chapter 3, the Lord clearly accepts the child's service in His house before that (I Sam. 1:28, 2:18, 3:1, 7), because of his parent's spirituality. **"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband:**

else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (I Cor. 7:14). Young children (lost or saved) of members of the Lord's churches should be encouraged to participate in the worship services, as they freely desire to come to Christ to do so. Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



As I read this question I thought to myself, Could we throw in just a couple of more categories for good measure? I cannot presume to answer this question for other Independent, Autonomous Baptist churches. I will answer on behalf of Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church in Chesapeake, Ohio.

To the first question and the various categories listed, no. Our worship services are dedicated to the Lord by offering simple prayers, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, fellowship with the saints, and the preaching of the Word of God. In 24 years of ministry here I can not ever recall programs, skits, plays, or secular speakers during our worship services or any other special services we might have had.

To the second question we have never had a politician speak in one of our services. We have never had a politician in our membership that I recall. If we had one that was sound in the faith he could certainly pray in our assembly and if he was gifted as a teacher, he could contribute through teaching.

As to children who are not

saved we do not have a hard, fast rule. To be honest, I am grateful for all the children that attend our services. I wish we had a lot more! I am always blessed when children sing special hymns or recite memory verses. I am greatly encouraged that children are being taught to sing or play instrumental music that honors God. So I personally do not have a problem with children of church members singing with their parents, or a Sunday School class, or a children's choir.

TOM ROSS



Forum #2

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the light before it is too late and the darkened pits of Hell become the eternal abode of the lost, sleep-walking people of this earth. **"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"** (Matt. 25:30). **"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"** (Rom. 13:11). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



In John 11:14 Jesus made it very clear that Lazarus dead. **"Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead"** (John 11:14). That Lazarus was dead is made even clearer in John 11:39 by Martha Lazarus sister, **"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that**

was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days" (John 11:39). Martha verifies that he has been dead four days, the stone was already put on his tomb and Martha knew the decomposition of a dead body by declaring he stinketh.

Lazarus was dead, had his grave clothes bound on him and was buried in a tomb with a stone put upon it. So when Jesus said he was dead, he most assuredly was dead. If we read carefully (vv. 41-42) we will see that all this transpired so the people may hear and learn that Jesus is truly the Son of the living God and Father and I believe it was to glorify God as Jesus' Father, and to show how disbelieving God's people really are.

I will use Mark 5:25 since the account of this twelve-year-old girl is mentioned in Gospels of Matthew and Luke as well. Whether one chooses to believe this girl was in a coma, dead, or merely sleeping is not really the point. We must listen to what Christ's words are here and I do take them very literally. In verse 39 it is said, **"Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth."** Jesus said she was sleeping, so that is what she was doing. She had not passed on and been dead four days like Lazarus. She had no grave clothes on, she was not put in a tomb, and she did not stink.

For me, we already had the answer in verse 36, **"As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe."** Jesus had not even come to where she was and He told us the condition of the twelve-year-old girl. When Jesus told the ruler to have faith then

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Forum #2

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we can be assured his daughter was alive and would be healed.

In both these cases, the main point is faith, faith in Jesus Christ, all else will fail. If Jesus says Lazarus is dead, then he is dead! If Jesus says this twelve-year-old girl is not dead, but sleeping, then she is not dead, but sleeping. Oh we of little faith. May we gain more faith by hearing and reading the word of God, **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Rom. 10:17). God Bless!

ROGER REED



Mysteries of the

(Continued from page 11) ◊

as ancient Israel was put in the crossroads of the ancient trade routes both by land and by sea so that they could be a witness to the one true Jehovah, so we have been born when and where it pleased God to place us. And we, too, have a reason for being where we are both in time and geography. Jesus said, **“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”** (Matt. 5:14-16). As individual lamps on a lampstand, each member of one of the Lord's congregations together with the other members are to give light to all around them. Let us let our lights shine by our good works so that the Father will be glorified.



From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



An Everlasting Salvation

“But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end” (Isa. 45:17).

Perhaps the most precious word in the English language is the word “salvation.” The salvation of Jehovah is rich and free; it is bountiful and plentiful to all kinds of people. Christ said: **“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me”** (John 12:32). The cross of Christ is a great magnet to draw some from among all nations from sin to holiness, from misery to happiness, from earth to Heaven.

THE PEOPLE

My text set forth the people to be saved with an everlasting salvation: **“But ISRAEL. . .”** (emph. MRC). The word “Israel” was the name the Angel of the Lord gave Jacob at Peniel (Gen. 32:28). This word was later applied to the whole Jewish nation (Ex. 3:16). By the time of the New Testament the term Israelite had become synonymous with the word Jew (Acts 2:5,22,36). In most cases in the Old Testament the word had reference to the nation which came out of the loins of Jacob. This nation was sovereignly chosen by God to become an everlasting nation.

Some commentators see only a reference here to Israel's deliverance from Babylonian Captivity. This cannot be the meaning of my text. When Israel

was saved from Babylonian

Captivity it was not with an everlasting salvation, for soon they were overrun by other nations. It is best to see here a reference to spiritual salvation by the Messiah for Israel. While many Israelites rejected Christ a remnant did not (Rom. 11:5). When the Messiah returns to this earth there will be many Israelites converted (Zech. 12-14). Romans 11:25-29 declares: **“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake”** (cf. Isa. 45:25).

But what is said in this text of the elect of literal Israel is equally true of spiritual Israel. I mean the whole number of the elect from among the Gentiles (I Cor. 1:30). There is such a thing as a spiritual Israelite: **“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is**

a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2:28-29). Spiritual Israelites are the people of the covenant of grace whom Christ saves from their sins (Heb. 8:10-13). These are **“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people”** (I Pet. 2:9).

THE PROSPECT

My text continues: **“But Israel SHALL BE SAVED. . .”** (emph. MRC). Here is seen the certainty of their salvation. It is not merely a probability or possibility. It is not that they “might” be saved, but they “shall” be saved. There is no doubt about it. The God who cannot lie has said it will be so. Theologians may deny it. Satan may try to prevent their being saved. Heretics may try to confuse them. Come what may, the Israelites shall be saved. God said it and that settles it whether any person believes it or not.

First, the chosen people shall be saved because it is the will of God that they be saved: **“And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day”** (John 6:39-40). Peter, writing to the elect of God (I Pet. 1:2; II Pet. 1:10), declared: **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”** (II Pet. 3:9). The Bible makes it plain that God's will

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An Everlasting

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cannot be resisted (Dan. 4:35).

God has appointed that the covenant people be saved by Christ's atonement: **"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"** (I Thess. 5:9). God's appointment always comes to pass: **"For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him"** (Job 23:14).

Second, the salvation of the righteous is certain because Jesus Christ gave **"...his life a ransom for many..."** (Matt. 20:28). Hebrews 9:28 says: **"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many..."** Verily Jesus Christ shall have **"...many brethren"** (Rom. 8:29). He shall bring **"...many sons..."** to glory (Heb. 2:10). He shall certainly **"give eternal life to as many as"** the Father gave Him to save in the covenant of redemption (John 17:2). Of the many the Father gave Christ to save He shall lose none: **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me..."** (John 6:37). In John 6:39 our Lord said: **"...Of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing..."**

Third, Jesus Christ has already taken possession of Heaven in the name and nature of believing Israelites: **"Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec"** (Heb. 6:20). The presence of Christ in Heaven guarantees that everyone He entered Heaven for shall one day arrive safely in the same place where Jesus now is. For this Jesus Christ prayed: **"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am"** (John 17:24).

Fourth, the salvation of His people is certain because they shall be effectually called by the Holy Spirit of God and the gospel (II Thess. 2:13-14). They shall all receive repentance and remission of sins (Acts 5:31). They shall all be brought from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18). They shall all be glorified together with Christ (Rom. 8:17). The foreknown and predestinated shall be called, and the called shall be justified and glorified (Rom. 8:29-30). There is no break in God's golden chain of grace.

THE PERFORMER

My text continues: **"But Israel shall be saved IN THE LORD."** (emph. MRC). This would be best translated from the Hebrew "by the Lord," or "by Jehovah" (See *Barnes Notes*, Isaiah, p. 158). The "LORD" means the Messiah. The Targum has "by the Word of the Lord," meaning the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. So the text says that the Lord's people are to be saved by the sufferings and death of Christ.

The everlasting salvation is not accomplished by human works or worthiness. No mere human power could save the Jews from Babylonian Captivity. No human power can save a soul from Hell. They shall be saved by Jehovah-Jesus, not saved by themselves. **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"** (Eph. 2:8-9). **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"** (Tit. 3:5). From first to last, salvation is all of the Lord: **"Salvation belongeth unto the LORD..."** (Ps. 3:8). Jonah said: **"..."**

Salvation is of the LORD" (Jonah 2:9). The psalmist wrote: **"But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD..."** (Ps. 37:39).

The modern religious world makes man his own savior in much the same way that the heathen world teaches salvation by human merit. Arminians have invented many "do-it-yourself" plans of how the sinner may save himself. "Obey God's four spiritual laws and be saved." "Let one of our preachers baptize you into Christ and be saved." "Pray through on the mourner's bench and be saved." "Sign a decision card and be saved." "Believe with your head that Christ is God and be saved." "Get filled with the Holy Ghost and speak in tongues and be saved." These man-made schemes are all wrong, for they allow man to save himself or to help God in the work of salvation. The Bible teaches that men are saved by the power of Jehovah alone.

Christ alone **"...obtained eternal redemption for us"** (Heb. 9:12). The Bible says that Christ **"...by himself purged our sins..."** (Heb. 1:3). Salvation is in Christ as a possession, purchased by His own blood. In Acts 20:28 Paul declared that Christ **"...hath purchased us with his own blood."** Ephesians 1:7 states: **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."** When it comes to spiritual salvation it is not man and Christ, it is only Christ. Acts 4:12 tells us: **"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."**

THE PEDIGREE

"But Israel shall be saved in the Lord WITH AN EVERLASTING SALVATION." (emph. MRC). Our salvation is not a temporary deliverance,

but a perpetual one. Literally the Hebrew says "a salvation of the ages," meaning a salvation which will continue age after age. God purposed the salvation of His people in eternity past (Eph. 1:1-12). He saves them by Christ in time, and He keeps them safe unto eternity future (Jude 1:1). Hence His people are blessed with an eternal salvation. The Father has made Christ **"...the author of eternal salvation..."** (Heb. 5:9).

Arminians cannot bring themselves to believe in an everlasting salvation. They are content to live in a world of doubts and fears. They believe that a man may be saved today and lost tomorrow. By such a teaching they reveal their ignorance of what the Bible teaches. Any person that denies he has an everlasting salvation declares that he does not have the salvation of Jehovah. The only kind of salvation that Christ saves with is **"an everlasting salvation."** Work-mongers often publicly admit they do not have an everlasting salvation. So far as their so-called salvation is concerned, I could not agree with them more, for I fear they are in **"...the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity"** (Acts 8:23).

Why does God save His people with **"an everlasting salvation?"** First, it must be so because salvation is the work of **"...the everlasting God"** (Gen. 21:33). Ecclesiastes 3:14 says: **"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."** Nothing can be added or taken from the work of God, for it is perfect. No creature can prevent God's work nor alter it. When God saves a soul there is nothing which needs amendment.

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An Everlasting

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Second, salvation is everlasting because it is based on **"...an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure..."** (II Sam. 23:5; cf. Heb. 13:20). This covenant is ordered in all things for the security of all the covenant ones. This covenant of peace makes the salvation of God's people not a possibility but a Divine certainty. This covenant shall never be abrogated nor disannulled.

Third, it is an everlasting salvation because it flows from God's **"...everlasting love..."** (Jer. 31:3). The people of God loved in eternity past He will love to eternity future. John 13:1 says: **"...Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end"** (cf. John 17:23-24). Contrary to modern thinking, God does not love everybody (Ps. 5:5; Rom. 9:13).

Fourth, this salvation is everlasting because Jesus Christ bestows on them eternal spiritual life: **"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand"** (John 10:28). Despite the plain words of Jesus Christ about His sheep never perishing, some will affirm that some of them do perish. This cannot be so. If ever at any time the spiritual life bestowed by Christ upon His sheep ceases to exist, then it would not be everlasting life. A person who has everlasting life cannot perish, for everlasting life has no end.

Fifth, the salvation of the Bible brings all who possess it **"...into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"** (II Pet. 1:11). Earthly kingdoms fade and fall, but not so of the kingdom of Christ. The kingdom the righteous are born into and are to inherit is

an everlasting kingdom because it was prepared for them **"...from the foundation of the world"** (Matt. 25:34).

Sixth, this salvation is everlasting because it gives **"everlasting joy"** (Isa. 35:10). Jesus said in John 16:22: **"...Your joy no man taketh from you."** No being in the universe can completely rob the believer of his unspeakable joy which arises from his everlasting salvation. He is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the spring of everlasting joy. Satan and sinners may try to rob him of this spiritual joy, but they shall never be completely successful. Those who have entered into the joy of an everlasting salvation shall go no more out.

Seventh, the salvation of Jehovah is everlasting because it delivers from **"...shame and everlasting contempt"** (Dan. 12:2). None of God's elect shall ever be subjected to **"everlasting fire"** (Matt. 25:41), nor **"everlasting punishment"** (Matt. 25:46). They shall be different from those **"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"** (II Thess. 1:9).

How wonderful to be saved by Jehovah with an everlasting salvation! Such a salvation will take a people to Heaven without the loss of so much as one soul. Oh, sweet Heaven! where we will meet no foes, suffer no calamities, never go into exile, and never experience the second death. Who would want a salvation he could not keep? Thank God that all who are truly saved by Christ are saved with **"an everlasting salvation."**

THE PROMISE

Carefully consider the words: **"Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end."** Those who trust Christ shall never be ashamed that they trusted Him with the keeping of their souls.

This was not the case with those saved with a national salvation from Babylonian Captivity (Dan. 9:8-9), but it is true of those saved with spiritual salvation.

No person will ever regret he chose Christ as his everlasting portion. In prosperity or adversity, in sickness or health, at home or abroad, in life or death, there shall be no regrets! You may be persecuted for Christ's sake. Your name may be cast out as evil. You may be put in a cold, damp, dark jail cell. You may be burned at a stake as were 50,000 Anabaptists during the Dark Ages, but you will never regret being a Christian. When your race is run, your warfare over, your course finished, you will never be ashamed of Jesus Christ. When friends and relatives stand by your dying bed, you will never regret you trusted in the Savior of sinners. Yea, at the judgment bar and in eternity to come, you will never be confounded nor ashamed! Romans 9:33 says: **"...Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."**

There is an eternity to come in which Christ-rejecters will be ashamed. The wicked dead are raised up **"...to shame and everlasting contempt"** (Dan. 12:2). Isaiah 41:11 declares: **"Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish."** Job 8:22 reads: **"They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought."** Those who trusted their good works for salvation shall be ashamed (Matt. 7:22-23). Those who trusted in dumb idols shall be ashamed.

CONCLUSION

1. If our hope of salvation is Christ and Him alone, we have a

hope of which we need not to be ashamed. In Romans 5:5 Paul says **"...hope maketh not ashamed..."** Let us never be ashamed of our faith and hope in Christ before **"...this adulterous and sinful generation..."** (Mark 8:38). Let us never be ashamed when we suffer as a Christian (I Pet. 4:16). May we never be ashamed of His Word, nor ordinances.

2. Oh, the worth of an everlasting salvation by Jehovah which brings no regrets! What an encouragement to duty (I Cor. 15:58). Who would want a "be saved today and lost tomorrow" salvation? What would such a salvation be worth if it could be lost to sin and Satan? Such a salvation is not the kind that a man needs, nor is it the kind that God saves His people with.

One time when I was out on visitation in the state of Missouri I talked to a woman about her soul. I asked her if she was saved. She said, "I once was, but now I am lost." I told her that I did not know what kind of salvation she formerly had, but that I was glad she had lost it, seeing it was not the salvation in Christ Jesus. Then I went on to tell her about how God saves His people with an everlasting salvation which cannot be lost and has no regrets.

3. Men and women are so foolish. They pursue the ways of sin and confusion when there is a way that brings no regrets. Are you going the broad road to destruction? Are you trying to save your own soul? Give up this foolishness, for it is an impossible task. Quit trying, and start trusting in Jesus Christ. Remember that the Bible says that He saves with an everlasting salvation. Get off the broad road and start down the highway of holiness.



THE BIBLE NEWS PAPER

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.

A LOOK AT INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

(WNS)--The U.S. State Department just released a long-awaited annual report detailing the state of international religious freedom in 2016. By law, the State Department documents religious freedom conditions in nearly 200 countries around the world, providing useful data for the executive branch and Congress. It is notable that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson personally unveiled the report with an accompanying statement. To the delight of religious freedom advocates, Tillerson clearly labeled Islamic State as a perpetrator of genocide against religious minorities in Iraq and Syria—something the Obama administration refused to do until March 2016. Now that the State Department's report is out, it has 90 days to designate nations as "countries of particular concern"—which could alter diplomatic relations and induce sanctions from Congress. For the first time, USCIRF recommended Russia as a country of particular concern for its treatment of Russian citizens and the abuse of its neighbors, Ukraine and Crimea.

MANDATORY GENDER IDENTITY INDOCTRINATION

(WNS)--The California legislature is considering a bill that would require all companies with 50 or more employees to implement regular training on gender identity and transgenderism. The measure, called the Transgender Work

Opportunity Act, responds to reports of high unemployment among the transgender community. Opponents say the bill threatens the religious liberty of business owners and employees by forcing them to vocally affirm something contrary to their faith. The bill passed the state Senate in May, has passed through three Assembly committees, and is now awaiting a hearing on the Assembly floor.

ABORTION FREE-FOR-ALL

(WNS)--Oregon Gov. Kate Brown made good last week on her promise to sign a bill requiring health insurance plans to cover abortion. The bill, passed by the state legislature in July, requires insurers to cover 100 percent of abortion and contraception costs, as well as screening for sexually transmitted diseases, pre- and postnatal care. Churches and religious nonprofit organizations are exempt, but any employees wanting the abortion or contraception coverage can apply to a \$10 million state fund set aside to cover those costs. Lawmakers also allocated \$500,000 to cover abortion and contraceptive costs for illegal immigrants, who do not qualify for insurance coverage.

TRANSGENDER STUDENTS WIN LEGAL BATTLES

(WNS)--Two schools accused of discrimination against transgender students recently resorted to payout settlements and policy changes. The settlements do not bode well for schools that maintain traditional

policies on gender, gender transitions, and restroom use. Nova Classical Academy, a charter school in St. Paul, Minn., agreed on Aug. 7 to adopt a far-reaching gender inclusion policy and pay a child's parents \$120,000. The agreement ended a 16-month legal battle initiated in 2016 by David and Hannah Edwards, the parents of a then-kindergartener who was born a boy but wanted to identify as a girl. Another settlement finalized in recent weeks involved three transgender students in a Pittsburgh-area school district. The students sued the Pine-Richland School District over a restroom policy requiring students to use either unisex restrooms or the restroom that matches their biological sex. According to the settlement, obtained by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, the district agreed to pay each student \$20,000 and attorney fees, rescind the previous restroom policy, and update its nondiscrimination policy to include gender identity.

TEXAS ADVANCES BILL REQUIRING SPECIAL INSURANCE FOR ABORTION

(WNS)--The Texas legislature passed a bill that would require Texans to buy a special health insurance plan if they want coverage for non-emergency abortions. The bill passed the House 92-46 on Tuesday and the Senate 20-10 on Aug. 11, avoiding Democrats' attempts to add exceptions for fetal abnormalities, rape, incest, and the mental health of the mother. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott called a special legislative session last month to focus on several issues, including abortion. Meanwhile, Texas faces a lawsuit from abortion groups over its new ban on dismemberment abortion.

SURVEY SAYS: PRIVATE SCHOOLS ARE BEST

(WNS)--Americans believe children get the best education

at private and parochial schools, according to a Gallup poll released Aug. 22. When asked about the five types of schooling offered in the United States, survey respondents ranked independent private schools first and public schools last, based on the quality of the education. Here is how the rankings broke down when surveyors asked about schools' ability to provide an excellent or good education:

Independent private schools: 71 percent

Parochial schools: 63 percent

Charter schools: 55 percent

Home schools: 46 percent

Public schools: 44 percent

CLIMATE MODELS FALL SHORT AGAIN

(WNS)--Despite climate alarmists' insistence that the science is settled on human-caused global warming, new discoveries keep popping up that researchers cannot explain with current climate models. Two such studies have emerged within the past two months. One study, published in *Geochemical Perspectives Letters*, offers the first scientific evidence that the natural weathering of rocks autocorrects temperature changes and allows the earth to survive hot and cold temperature fluctuations. Another study, published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, showed some of the world's largest nonpolar glaciers in the Karakoram, a large mountain range spanning the borders of Pakistan, India, and China, are stable and even growing due to a vortex of cold air covering the range.

A BACTERIAL MIND CONCEIVED THROUGH DESIGN

(WNS)--A new study shows that antibiotic resistance in bacteria points out yet another flaw in Charles Darwin's theory of

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evolution. According to Darwinian evolution, MRSA, an antibiotic-resistant bacteria, should have developed a gene mutation after coming in contact with the antibiotic methicillin. Natural selection would have favored the resistant bacteria. But in a recent study, published in *Genome Biology*, scientists discovered that MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) acquired the antibiotic-resistant gene 14 years before methicillin was ever used.

WHAT HAPPENED TO DEFUNDING PLANNED PARENTHOOD?

(WNS)--In a letter sent to Republican lawmakers on Tuesday, leaders of 10 pro-life organizations urged Republicans to make defunding Planned Parenthood a priority during budget negotiations. "The pro-life majority that now controls both chambers of Congress and the White House must pass a reconciliation bill stopping the vast majority of federal funding for Planned Parenthood," the letter read. "Doing anything less brings into question whether this Congress can truly be called the Pro-life Congress. Rhetoric must be translated into law." The letter's signers included leaders from the Susan B. Anthony List, Concerned Women for America, Students for Life, March for Life, Live Action, the Family Research Council, Americans United for Life, the Family Policy Alliance, American Values, and the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

IN-CLASS GENDER FLIP SHOCKS PARENTS OF KINDERGARTNERS

(WNS)--Parents at a California charter school are refusing to be

sidestepped after a kindergarten teacher guided her students through an in-class gender transition for another student late last school year without parental notification. On Aug. 21, concerned parents spoke out at the Rocklin Academy Gateway school board meeting. "My daughter came home crying and shaking so afraid she could turn into a boy," one parent told the board at the meeting, according to CBS 13 in Sacramento. According to reports by the kindergarten students (the school refused to discuss the details of the event with parents), one of the boys in the class changed from wearing boy's clothes to girl's clothes. The class was told the student had a boy's body but a girl's brain, and from now on, they needed to call the student a new name and use only female pronouns.

NASHVILLE STATEMENT SIGNERS STAND UP FOR MARRIAGE

(WNS)--Signers of the Nashville Statement, a declaration affirming Biblical teaching on human sexuality, defended their position from religious and secular opponents last week. The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) released the statement online Aug. 29. The initial 150 evangelical leaders who signed it asserted the church needed clarity amid widespread confusion about a Biblical understanding of sex, sexuality, and morality. The statement affirms marriage only as a covenant between one man and one woman and denies that God designed marriage for homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationships. The statement also says God designed humans distinctly male and female, and a homosexual or transgender self-conception is not "consistent with God's holy purposes in creation and redemption."

WHO DECIDES WHEN LIFE IS WORTH LIVING?

(WNS)--An Oregon man wants healthcare workers at his wife's assisted-living facility to stop offering her snacks—the extra calories have boosted the Alzheimer's patient's wispy weight far enough from the edge of death to worry him once again. Former librarian Nora Harris, diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2009, signed an advance directive that put her husband in charge of her medical decisions. The 64-year-old woman can no longer communicate coherently or feed herself. Her husband Bill lost a court battle last year to force workers at Fern Gardens in Medford, Ore., to stop spoon-feeding her. He said her advance directive stipulates she would not have wanted her life to be prolonged and would prefer to die under such circumstances. Her husband may take Fern Gardens to court again to force the staff to stop feeding her.

GROUP CHAMPIONS ABORTION TO REDUCE IMMIGRATION

(WNS)--Shrinking the population through abortion and contraception will make America great again, according to Negative Population Growth, an anti-immigration and low-birth rate advocacy group. In a new report titled "Resurgent Pro-Natalism in the Trump Administration," the group's deputy director, Tracy Henke, argues the pro-life policies of the Trump administration could be disastrous for America. Henke wrote that defunding Planned Parenthood is a terrible idea because it will "deprive millions of low-income women of affordable and readily accessible birth control." She added, "Below replacement fertility levels, which the U.S. has enjoyed for decades, could suddenly become a thing of the past."

MEN AT WOMEN'S COLLEGES

(WNS)--Nine women's colleges now accept men who identify as women. Spelman College, a historically black university for women in Atlanta, became the latest, announcing it would no longer consider gender during the application and admissions process. Transgender advocates hailed the change as indicative of broader support for those with gender dysphoria. But economic and demographic changes also play a role. Fewer students are graduating from high school and preparing to pursue higher education, and all small private colleges, including single-gender institutions, are feeling the pinch as they compete with larger state schools to fill seats.

JAIL TIME FOR PRONOUN MISUSE?

(WNS)--A bill in California that would create a law making it a crime to "misgender" nursing home residents advanced in the state Assembly last week. The bill, SB 219, passed the state Senate in May. Among other provisions, the proposed law would make it a criminal offense not to call elderly LGBT residents at nursing homes or intermediate-care facilities by their preferred names and pronouns. Offenders could face a fine of up to \$1,000 and a year in prison. Supporters say the measure, called the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Long-term Care Facility Residents Bill of Rights, would protect LGBT senior-care residents from discrimination and harassment. In addition to outlawing "willfully and repeatedly" failing to use a preferred name or pronoun, the bill would make it illegal to deny admission to a resident or evict a resident for their sexual orientation. It also would require facilities to open restrooms to individuals based

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on their gender identity.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS NO MORE SKIRTS

(WNS)--A secondary school an hour south of London has issued a ban against girls wearing skirts. The new gender-neutral uniform policy—trousers for all—was implemented in part to accommodate a growing population of transgender students, headmaster Tony Smith told The Telegraph of London. Smith said students also complained about having different uniforms, and some community members felt the girls' skirts were too short: "So we decided to have the same uniform for everybody from Year 7." Some parents at Priory School in Lewes, East Sussex, applauded the change, but others said the new rule discriminates against girls. "My daughter said she has got a gender and it is female, so being gender-neutral when she has got a gender is a big deal for her as she is proud to be a girl," one parent told The Telegraph. "I feel girls should be allowed to wear skirts if they want to."

RUSSIAN ANTI-MISSIONARY LAW MAINLY HAMPERS CHRISTIANS

(WNS)--Concerns among Russian Christians that the government's antiterrorism legislation, adopted last year, would take away their religious freedom have been proven true. The Yarovaya Laws, named for the lawmaker who sponsored them, ban proselytizing, preaching, and praying outside recognized religious institutions. Forum 18 counted 186 cases filed since enforcement began, with roughly half the charges against various Christian denominations and individuals or Christian-affiliated organizations. Officials later dismissed only about 20 percent of

the cases. Punishments ranged from fines and confiscation of materials to orders for deportation. Since July 2016, authorities have prosecuted Christian churches and individuals for announcing an upcoming service, conducting home prayer meetings, distributing religious calendars, failure to fully display a church name, and organizing a concert.



The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

By Wallace York

The Bible reveals one God in His tri-personal existence as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the nature of the one God, there are three eternal distinctions which are represented to us under the figure of persons, and these three are equal. Each possesses the essential characteristics or attributes of deity, such as: omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence.

In the Old Testament the Father is prominent; yet the Son and the Spirit are present and are often mentioned. In the Gospels the Son of God is prominent though the Father and the Spirit are also present. Since the day of Pentecost, the ministry of the Holy Spirit has been prominent.

As a young preacher I learned there is much confusion among Christians concerning the office work of the Holy Spirit. This is easily seen when one begins a serious study on the baptism in the Spirit. Such things as tarrying services, speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues must be dealt with.

For a few minutes let us consider the subject, "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit."

I. APPROACH

Most commentaries and Bible

writers have taken the wrong approach to understanding this important subject. The secret to understanding Scripture is to use the right key, and the key to understanding the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to approach it logically by first understanding baptism. A person who does not understand water baptism cannot be expected to understand Holy Spirit baptism.

When writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul said there is only one (literal) baptism, and that is the baptism in water instituted by John the Baptist by divine commission, received by the Lord Jesus, and by Him committed to His church to be observed as an ordinance for disciples only. The other baptisms in the Bible are figurative and must be interpreted or understood by the literal baptism in water.

Four things are essential if baptism is to be scriptural;

A. There must be a proper administrator or authority. The first person in the Bible to administer baptism was John the Baptist. His authority to baptize was from the highest of all sources, God Himself (John 1:33). Later, we find Jesus baptizing through the agency of His disciples (John 4:1-2). Having organized His disciples into a church, Jesus commissioned it to continue making, baptizing, and training disciples to the end of the age (Matt. 28:18-29). That same church which the Lord founded and commissioned is still in the world carrying out those orders. Churches with a human founder have no such authority to administer this ordinance of the church.

B. There must be a proper subject to be baptized. Not just any person is qualified to be baptized. John the Baptist demanded "...fruits meet for repentance" as a prerequisite to baptism, and Jesus required

by precept and example that the making of disciples precede their baptism (Matt. 3:7-9; 28:19; John 4:1). At Pentecost "**..they that gladly received His word were baptized..**" (Acts 2:41). Every person baptized in the New Testament was a professed believer. Not a single instance of so-called "infant baptism" can be found in the Bible.

C. Scriptural baptism also requires a proper mode. The Biblical act of baptism was immersion in water. A person with no knowledge of the Greek language can see this from the study of the New Testament in the King James version. John was baptizing where there was "**much water**"; when Jesus was baptized He "**..went up straightway out of the water..**"; and the Ethiopian eunuch, after having trusted in Jesus for salvation, said, "**..See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized**" (Acts 8:36). Had sprinkling been the mode of baptism they would have had drinking water sufficient for that purpose. That this is not the way to baptize is clear since it is said that the chariot was stopped and Philip went down into the water with the eunuch where he baptized him. That baptism is by immersion is very clear in Romans 6:4 where Paul says, "**Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death..**" A so-called baptism that does not involve immersion of the whole person in water is not scriptural baptism.

D. The fourth essential element of scriptural baptism is a proper purpose. Baptism, like the Lord's Supper, is an outward expression of an inward experience. That is, baptism is a preaching of the gospel in a picture. It portrays the subject's belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul. Because he

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believes Jesus died on the cross for his sins, was buried and rose again for his justification, the believer wants to picture what Jesus has done for him. This he can do in water baptism.

II. APPLICATION

Now that we understand these minimum essentials for scriptural baptism let us apply these same essentials to the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

A. First, there must be a proper administrator. The way some people discuss the subject is they lead one to believe the Holy Spirit is the administrator of this baptism. Jesus, not the Holy Spirit, is the agent at work in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is seen from the Bible. Listen to John the Baptist: **“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire”** (Matt. 3:11, see also Mark 1:8). It should be clear to any student of the Scripture that John is speaking of Jesus, who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is to be interpreted by water baptism.

There is another baptism that Jesus shall administer: the baptism in fire. That this is not to be confused with Pentecost and the baptism in the Holy Spirit may be seen by looking at the following verse: **“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”** The wheat represents Christians who will be gathered by the Lord and the chaff represents lost people who will be “immersed in fire.” Anyone praying for a baptism in

fire is ignorant of the Scriptures.

B. Next, there must be a proper candidate to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Contrary to popular belief the Bible does not teach a baptism in the Spirit for individuals any more than it teaches a spiritual baptism. The church that Jesus built was the proper candidate for this baptism, and she received it on the day of Pentecost. During His earthly ministry Jesus organized His kind of church and after His resurrection He commissioned it saying, **“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”** This was a tremendous task for such a small band of Christians. They were powerless to do such a work. Jesus knew that and told them that **“...they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me”** (Acts 1:4). **“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”** (Acts 1:8). Now, to nail this point down, look at verse 4 of chapter 1. **“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem...”** A church is a local, visible body of baptized believers who are assembled together in one place to carry out God’s will in that locality. They were assembled: they were a called-out congregation waiting to be **“...baptized with (or in) the Holy Ghost not many days hence”** (Acts 1:5).

C. Then we notice the mode

of baptism is by immersion. We have already seen Jesus as the administrator and the church as the subject to be baptized. Paul said, **“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”** An individual may be scripturally baptized one time. The same is true with the church and that baptism of the church in the Holy Spirit took place on the day of Pentecost. We are given the account in Acts 2. On that day they were all in one place, and in one accord, sitting....not praying, not taking part in a tarrying service.... and they were baptized by Jesus, as a church, in the Holy Spirit. Collectively, they were baptized in the Spirit: individually, they were filled with the Spirit. There is a difference between a burial and a filling. When the church was baptized, individuals were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues. Please notice that when the Christians spoke in other tongues, it was not some kind of ecstatic utterances but speaking in a language they had not spoken before (See Acts 2:4-8).

D. What is the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit? It is two-fold:

(1). They were endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49) that they might preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with power. The result of such preaching was the conviction of sinners by the Holy Spirit, their conversion, and continuing steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine. **“...And the same day there was added unto them about three thousand souls”** (Acts 2:41).

(2). It was to identify or accredit the church as being of the Lord. John the Baptist identified believers with the Lord Jesus Christ by His baptism in water. Jesus baptized His church in the Holy Spirit and thereby identified it as a divine institution with power

from on high. (Unbelievers will be identified with the baptism in fire throughout the endless ages of eternity).

My aim or purpose in writing this article is to help the Christian to rightly understand the Word of God that he be not deceived by Satan. The Devil will lead a person into believing there is such a thing today as a baptism in the Spirit and will cause him to waste valuable time trying to get it. The church was baptized in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost and that baptism was sufficient for every New Testament church. As I was seminally in Adam when he sinned, the church which I pastor was seminally in the First Baptist Church of Jerusalem when it was baptized at Pentecost.

Christians who do not understand the truth about the baptism in the Holy Spirit are looking for such an experience for a selfish reason. Some of them are not sure they are saved and want an additional experience to prove they are. They do not need an additional experience: they need to believe the Word of God.

We are no where in the Bible commanded to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, but we are told to **“...be filled with the Spirit”** (Eph. 5:17-18). A Spirit-filled Christian may be distinguished from others by the subject of his conversation. Jesus said of the Spirit, **“...He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of himself. . . .He shall glorify me”** (see John 16:13-14). Simon Peter did not speak of himself on the day of Pentecost. He did not mention how he felt as a result of that infilling. No, he spoke of Jesus. Any person who is filled with the Holy Spirit of God will not speak of himself: he will want to glorify Jesus.



The Real Truth about Noah's Ark

By Roger Reed
of Mansfield, Ohio

When I was in college trying for my Bachelor's Degree in Theology (never got to finish) one of my first classes was "Speech and Communications." Our professor was a woman and we did not see eye to eye. But our first assignment was to give a presentation before the whole class, who was made up of people I worked with, trying to take advantage of getting a degree through GM and the UAW. So some were older, some younger, and others the same age as myself.

We could pick any topic we wanted to, just as long as it was something that we would be able to communicate to the whole class. So, since I was going for my Bachelor's Degree in Theology I would use something in the Bible that would be interesting enough and try to communicate my point to the others. So I picked the topic about Noah's Ark that had become a pet peeve of mine (and still is) once I saw the truth about what I had learned as a Baptist, versus what I was taught in Sunday School where I was in organized religion as a Lutheran. But I was not saved those eleven years while going to a Lutheran church.

Before I explain what I believe is the true story of Noah's Ark (which is undisputedly the Biblical view), let me tell you what happened during my presentation (speech) with my professor. As I will explain to you dear reader, I was explaining to my class. I got to the point where I mentioned that the Ark was in process of building over a period of a hundred and twenty years;

my professor went ballistic on me and said that was the craziest thing she had ever heard in her life. Now, for the record my professor was supposedly a Christian and did not know this fact about Noah's Ark, so much for higher learning!! I had later learned that she had asked her minister about this and apparently he told her the very same thing concerning the hundred and twenty years. When she mailed me my final grade she included a note that read, "Dear Roger, I hope this reaches you, I didn't have your home address (she sent it to my work). It was a pleasure to have you in the class. The teacher always learns as much as the student! Dr. Beth." Apology accepted Dr. Beth!! She gave me a 3.00 grade average, which for me is pretty good considering I hated school!

Now I told you all that to tell you this. I have been hearing a great to-do about the "Ark Encounter" in Kentucky. And in our local newspaper there is a full page write-up about it and the Creation Museum. I have seen many pictures of this so-called ark built to scale, and I could not hold my peace about it any longer. Part of the article reads, "The Creation Museum turned a decade old in May. In a field in Grant County, the Ark Encounter, a massive Noah's Ark built to scale (this is totally false which I will prove by Scripture) based on specs in the Bible, celebrated its first anniversary July 7."

Now the length, width, and height may be to scale, but it does not have the appearance of the original Ark. And that, and some other things I would like us to make note of.

As a child and in almost every book that I have seen makes the

Ark out to be this big boat or ship, and it is absolutely not true. God told Noah to build an ark, not a boat or a ship. Noah was not sailing anywhere; he was being protected from the great flood brought on by God.

I have watched the shows on the History and Discovery channel and have never seen them get the Biblical account of the ark correct or what the Bible says the ark looked like.

So, two things I want to bring to light in this article, what the Ark looked like, and how many animals went into the Ark which are the two things no one seems to pay any attention to.

First of all let us get the picture of the Ark down to what it really looked like and why. God told Noah to build an ark, "**Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits**" (Gen. 6:4-15). To make this easy a cubit can be from 18 to 21 inches long depending on the length of one's forearm, it is a measurement from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow. So the ark was 400 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. It was built for the protection of eight people and all living things that God instructed Noah to bring in the ark. This is not the ark you will see in a field in Grant County, called the "Ark Encounter." I have not been there but have seen enough pictures to know what it looks like.

The word ark means a chest or box and according to the measurements it would be a rectangle shape. Not at all like a boat or a ship. When God told

Moses to build an Ark of the Covenant, which means a chest or cupboard, why did he not build something that looked like a boat or ship? Dear reader, Noah and Moses knew what an ark was. Like I said, Noah was not sailing anywhere.

The experts and professors want to argue that the ark that I am describing could not withstand the wind, waves, and storm. No, no, no, they do not get it!! If we read chapters 6-8 we will see that there is no mention of a storm, no waves, no lightning, and thunder and no wind except in chapter 8:1, and I will explain that later. Have you not just seen it rain straight down for hours with no wind, or lightning and thunder? What makes people believe that that is what happened with the flood, the Bible records no such thing?

The water came from two places: Genesis 7:17-20, "**And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.**" Genesis 8:1-3, "**And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; And**

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Noah's Ark

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the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated."

So the waters came from the earth and from the heavens, and they lifted the Ark up off the earth. In (8:1) it says, "...and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged." It does not say a strong wind or even that it was a tempest but "a wind to pass over the earth" to start the evaporation process of the water. I do not for the life of me understand why people think the Ark was tossed to and fro in a great gale storm. No such storm is recorded in Genesis 6-8.

Some may be quoting Matthew 23:24, "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." I assure you this is not the case and I will get to the point in a little bit.

We have learned and taught our children that the Ark was a boat, find me one children's book that does not show a boat in the story of Noah and the Ark and I will be surprised.

The next thing we notice that is totally left out of this story of the Ark is the number of animals that went into the Ark. "And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive" (Gen. 6:19). And I am sure if you go see this man made replica of the Ark in a field in Grant County you will see two animals in each of the stalls one male and one female. But a

great tragedy has occurred, they left out one of the most vital and important parts concerning these animals. But all you ever hear told about is two of every kind male and female, but God adds to this in chapter 7. "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth" (Gen. 7:2-3). Remember reading that part? I highly doubt that most Christians even know that is in their Bible.

Now, why would God tell Noah this? To me this is very important, but most want to leave this part out because it points to Jesus as our sacrificial lamb. See, when Noah came out of the Ark the first thing he did was build an altar, and sacrificed one of every clean beast and clean fowl unto the Lord. Never heard of such a thing in the story of Noah and the Ark, I bet? "And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done" (Gen 8:20-21). I do not know why we do not want to remember this very important point. We must not want to retain this knowledge, because it is not in the storybooks, but it is in my Bible. The number seven is the number of divine completion and the seventh clean animal and

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The Pastor's Wife

*There is one person in your church
Who knows your preacher's life;
She wept and smiled and prayed with
him,
And that's your preacher's wife.*

*The crowd has seen him in his strength,
When glistened with drawn sword,
As underneath God's banner folds
He faced the devil's horde.*

*But she knows deep within her heart
That scarce an hour before
She helped him pray the glory down
Behind a closed door.*

*She's heard him groaning in his soul,
When bitter raged the strife,
As, hand in his, she knelt with him—
For she's the preacher's wife!*

*You tell your tales of prophets brave
Who walked across the world
And changed the course of history
By burning words they hurled.*

*And I will tell how back of them
Some women lived their lives,
Who wept with them and smiled with
them,
They were the preachers' wives.*

—Selected

Postage & Shipping Chart

Order Value	Add
Minimum	\$5.00
\$25.00-49.99	\$6.00
\$50.00-74.99	\$7.00
\$75.00-99.99	\$8.00
\$100.00 and Up	FREE

BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 8-1-2017 to 8-31-2017

Beginning Balance	\$1,183.03
RECEIPTS:	
Amazing Grace B. C., Stockdale, TX	50.00
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	50.00
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	300.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	70.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Parkway Landmark B. C., Springfield, OR	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR	50.00
Providence B. C., Tupelo, MS	150.00
Reginal Webb, Dothan, AL	20.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Subscriptions	10.00
Anonymous	2,030.00
Dividing checks	300.00
Sub Total	\$4,712.50
TOTAL	\$5,895.53

EXPENDITURES:

Printing	490.00
Postage	523.88
Wages	2,300.00
FICA	175.96
Dividing checks	300.00
Bank Charge	13.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,802.84
ENDING BALANCE	\$2,092.69



BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 8-1-2017 to 8-31-2017

Beginning Balance	\$3,803.82
RECEIPTS:	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	225.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	200.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
	525.00
TOTAL	4,328.82
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	1,003.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,003.98
	3,324.84
Interest	+03
ENDING BALANCE	\$3,324.87

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, 3484 HWY 92 N, Silsbee, TX will be hosting a Bible Conference October 20th thru 22nd.

Scheduled speakers are Elders Larry Wilson, Elden Joslin, David O'Neal, Dan Taylor, Joey Newell, and Jimmy Nelson.

Service times are Friday 5:00 p.m., Saturday 9:30 a.m., and Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

All are invited to attend.

The Grace Baptist Church of Temperance, MI has called Brother Joe Sidders as pastor.

Please remember this church and their new pastor in your prayers.

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

The Grace Baptist Church of Fairmount, GA is in need of a pastor. Due to old age and health reasons Bro. Al Lyons is planning to retire in October.

The church is looking for a man that believes like they do. They are Sovereign Grace, independent, landmark Baptist. Visit their website which states what they believe: <http://gracebaptistchurchfairmountga.com>.

Interested parties should contact Pastor Al Lyons, phone: 770-881-1486; Email: Preacher@royal-lion.com or Mail: P.O. Box 861, Fairmount, GA 30139.

The Windsor Baptist Church in Windsor, IL is seeking a qualified candidate for pastor. We are a sovereign grace

independent Baptist church, small in number but rich in truth. We are seeking a candidate qualified for the position as described in I Timothy 3. Any interested potential candidate please contact Brother John Gregory at windsorbaptist.grace@gmail.com or phone 217-728-8311.

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

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

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

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested

brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

Noah's Ark

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fowl was for a sacrifice unto the Lord.

One other point I would like to make before I wrap this up, and that is there was only one window in the Ark, just one, not a whole row of one cubit windows. Just one either an eighteen by eighteen or a twenty one by twenty one inch window depending on the length of Noah's forearm. **"A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above"** (Gen. 6:16). A SINGLE WINDOW!! Why is that so difficult to understand? It was made such because when things got a little stressed inside that crowded, smelly Ark, they had no choice but to look up at the only light coming in from above. Scary situations should always make us want to look up from where our help comes.

Now you may be asking, what does it matter? Well, that is exactly what one of the men in the Speech and Communications class asked me. And my answer was, we have been led to believe that Noah built a boat or ship and only two of every kind of creature went into the Ark, and there

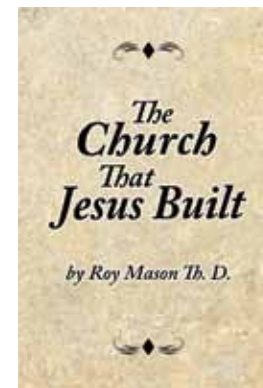
was a whole row of windows, which apparently many have believed and not taken the time to study for themselves. Even though you may think this very insignificant, what do we do with real important things in the Bible, such as the doctrines that Christ taught? Are we going to believe the History and the Discovery channels? Or are you going to read and study the Bible for ourselves? I just wonder if you would go into any Sunday School Class (I prefer Bible School) and ask any of the children or even adults to tell you about Noah's Ark what they would tell us? **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Tim. 2:15).

I would never condemn anyone for going to see this colossal sight, but I would caution them to keep their eyes open to the truth. God Bless!



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