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"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word,
it is because there is no light in them"—Isaiah 8:20.

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THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE PREACHER

by Rick Perdue
Taylorsville, N.C.

"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (I Peter 1:10-12).

Reference is made in the Scripture above to those who preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;". What does that mean, and does it apply today? It means those who preached with the power of the Holy Spirit and by His leadership, and it does apply today. It doesn't mean that the preacher simply opens his mouth and the Holy Ghost fills it; nor is the Spirit guilty of all that He is accused of today.

The day of inspiration is past, for we have the completed Word of God. However, the Holy Spirit does have a work in the preaching of the Word. In fact, without Him all of our preaching would be in vain. Therefore, the preacher needs to seek His aid that he might be profitable to his hearers.

The Scriptures tell us not to believe just any spirit that speaks to us, for there are many of them around today. We're to try the spirits to see whether they be of God (I John 4:1-3). The test is whether or not they confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. That confession must be measured by a scriptural definition of "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." There are those who say they believe it, but as you question their understanding they deny the Deity of Jesus and the sufficiency of His work. Both of these principles are inseparable from the confession as a test.

How can a preacher be assured of the aid of the Holy Spirit? The answer is found in

(Continued on Page 3 Column 4)

THE DEATH OF THE KING'S SON

by David West
Charleston, S.C.

"And the king said unto Cush, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cush answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is" (2 Sam. 18:32).

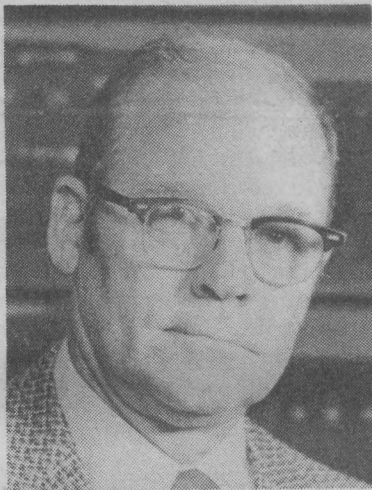
The text for this message is found in 2 Samuel 18:32. However, it would be good for you to read the entire 18th chapter, so that you might get the setting for the message.

We have here a rather unique Scripture for this message, but when you come to think of it, we have a unique Bible. This text may seem like an unusual one, yet we know that this Scripture is not there just to fill up space. God has a reason for telling us about the death of Absalom.

Absalom rebels against his father, David, who is the king. Absalom is ill-advised (2 Sam. 17:11). That is, so far as his safety is concerned. He is advised to go forth in his own person, and this amounts to his undo-

ing. The battle turned against him. When fleeing from the well-prepared soldiers of the king's army, his head was caught in the thick boughs of a great oak. He was riding on a mule and the mule went from under him. "his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went

(Continued on Page 3 Column 1)



David West

The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OVER THE PULPIT

"And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev. 2:2).

This subject is a very important one and is worthy of careful and prayerful consideration by every member of a true church of Jesus Christ. It surely is a neglected one. I do not recall ever reading or hearing a sermon or part of a sermon on this subject. It is a very serious one as it deals with some serious matters, and matters that will reach even unto the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

Now, there surely is the truth of the authority of the pastor. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Heb. 13:17). This Scripture, with several

others sets forth the truth of the pastor's authority. The fact that the pastor is the "angel" or messenger of the church shows his authority. The words used to describe the office and work of the pastor also show the truth of pastoral authority. The church as a whole and each individual member of the church should show proper respect to the authority of the pastor. He is the leader — the God appointed leader of the church. The work of a church cannot continue to prosper spiritually where the church does not have and manifest proper respect for the pastor and his leadership. This is a very important aspect of biblical truth and of the work of the church and important to the spiritual welfare of the individual church member.

There are Divinely given

limitations to the authority of the pastor. This authority is limited by and to the Word of God. As the pastor gives the message of the Word of God to the church, he stands in God's place and with God's authority. Those who hear him are as if they heard the Lord. Those who oppose him are as if they opposed the Lord. I say this is true when the pastor preaches the Word of God. The Word of God is as authoritative from the lips of the pastor as on the pages of the Bible. However, it is very important to remember that this Divine authority does not extend to the personal opinions of the pastor or to the interpretations of a portion of the Word of God. The pastor should be listened to respectfully, attentively, prayerfully. He should be

(Continued on Page 2 Column 1)

by Raymond A. Waugh, Sr.
Midland, Tex.

Part II

Sovereignty and Salvation!
These are truths men hate!

The Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees of the institutionalized religion of a distant day hated these truths. They desired a Messiah who would establish an earthly kingdom, but they wanted nothing to do with one who dealt with God's Grace. They looked for one who would reason as men — not for one who was sovereign and one who would deal with men sovereignly.

Very simply, they wanted no part of a man or a God who was steeped in the Word of God and who never tired of expressing His confidence in the Word of God. They despised even the concept of, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." As you may well realize, they could not abide the impact of, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

Men have not changed much, really. Today, there may be a few who can find some place in their hearts and minds for a God who is sovereign and for a God who does all of the saving. Needless to say, they are very few. For, in conceding that God is sovereign, and that He

sovereignly effects and consummates the salvation of those who are His Elect, the saved must ever condemn every religious device, every religious command, every religious doctrine, and every religious ceremony which men indulge and employ



Raymond A. Waugh, Sr.

in their earthly Kingdom Building.

These who make a mockery of the Lord Jesus Christ by their religion and with their religion may look like Christians, sound like Christians, seem like Christians, and some of them may even be called "Baptists." Nevertheless, as I have noted elsewhere, they show themselves to be anti-Christians by their attempted control of the people, by their hatred for the Word of God as the Word of God in fact, and by their hatred for the true New Testament local Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

These may sometimes express themselves in heavy, authoritative, sonorous tones, and with great eloquence, for, in some instances, their training has been the best that mortals

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AUTHORITY

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given great consideration. But the final authority is the Word of God and not the words of the pastor. The pastor's opinions of matters other than the Word of God should be given a hearing and given respect, but are no more authoritative than the opinions of any other member of the church. The pastor's opinions about the interpretation of a portion of Scripture should be given serious and proper consideration. But they are not the final authority for a church. The pastor does have all authority. It is a limited authority.

There is a higher authority than that of the pastor. I do not here speak of the authority of God. I speak of the authority which God has given to His true churches. Now I suppose that nearly all of us give lip service at least to the doctrine of church authority. But I have learned that many times preachers believe in church authority until it affects them. Then they want to interpose the authority of the pastor between themselves and the authority of the church. Brethren, there is no proper doctrine of pastoral immunity from church authority. Let me illustrate. I know many preachers who believe in church authority. Yet I have noticed that, almost without exception, when there is trouble between a church and her pastor, that other preachers will nearly always side with the preacher against the church. Even before or without knowing the truth of the matter. Preachers just seem to automatically side with preachers. Brethren, this attitude is not in harmony with our professed belief in church authority.

Now, the church has the authority to call her pastor. She has the authority to dismiss her pastor. And surely she has authority over the man while he is in the office of pastor. Does the church manufacture for herself a God when she calls a

man as pastor? Does the church thereby lose her authority over the pulpit? Certainly not. Now, pastors, I appeal to you. Is it not true that often the pastor feels that he is a little apart from and above the authority of the church? And that the church must listen to him in all things? These things ought not to be so. The authority of the church is higher than the authority of the pastor. The authority of the church is over the pastor. Do we



Joe Wilson

not teach church authority? Do we not teach this in the call and dismissal of a pastor? Do we not teach this in the matter of mission work? Well, let us teach it all the way and abide by the legitimate consequences of the scriptural doctrine of church authority.

Not only is the church in authority over the pulpit, she is also responsible for the pulpit. Now the pastor has an awesome responsibility to get his message from God and to be absolutely sure that what he preaches is the very Word of God. The church also has an awesome responsibility here. The church is absolutely responsible to God for what is preached from her pulpit. There should be no dodging of this responsibility by the church. The church cannot say she did not preach it, but the preacher did and he is responsible for it. The church is responsible for every word and doctrine.

Every individual member of the church is likewise responsible as a member of said church for what is preached from the pulpit. Do not say you are not the preacher and are not responsible. Every member is responsible as a church member to do all in his or her power to see that the doctrines of her pulpit are in absolute harmony with the Word of God. This is one reason every believer is to be rooted and grounded in the truth and not carried about by every wind of doctrine.

Not only is the church and each member responsible for the pulpit, but also they will be held accountable for the pulpit. Each church will give account to God for what she allows to be preached in her pulpit. Oh, this is an awesome truth. And church members will not like such heavy responsibility. But it is Bible truth. The church in my text had not allowed pulpit tyranny to rule over it. They tried some who called themselves apostles and found them liars. I am sure that their pulpits were henceforth closed to such men.

Do you understand what I say? The church (and each member as a member of that church) is responsible and accountable for what is preached from its pulpit. The pulpit is in authority only as it preaches the very Word of God. The church is in higher authority. She is over the pulpit. She is responsi-

ble to see that the pulpit teaches the Word of God. She is accountable to God if the pulpit does not teach the Word of God.

Now, must we not confess that pastors and churches are very neglectful of this Biblical truth? Let me illustrate. I illustrate in love. I illustrate in sadness that it is so. I illustrate with deep concern that we will practice the church authority that we preach. I illustrate with a burden over what I illustrate. A church stands for certain doctrines. She calls a pastor who stands for the same doctrines. While pastoring the said church, the pastor changes his position on these doctrines. He begins to preach these different doctrines. The church goes trotting along after the pastor into these different doctrines. Now, brethren, what does this indicate? It surely, without controversy indicates that the church is not fulfilling her responsibility over the pulpit. You say what if this different doctrine is true. Well, then the church was not fulfilling her responsibility when she believed what she did before. Or, when she called a pastor who believed what he did when called. Now, can you argue against this? A church is wrong when she believes one doctrine and calls a man believing that. Or she is wrong when she allows a man to preach a different doctrine and follows him in believing that doctrine. God's Word does not change. Church doctrines may change, but if they do it proves that the church was wrong either before she changed or after she changed.

What are churches? Preachers' little kingdoms where they can do no wrong and everyone must bow to them? What are pulpits? Preachers thrones, where they send forth their decrees for all their subjects to receive and obey? Is this what we believe? Are churches to change their doctrines every time they change preachers, or everytime the preacher changes his doctrine. Beloved, I consider this to be a very serious matter. And I think churches had better wake up to their authority over and responsibility for the pulpit.

Need I illustrate? A church is pre-trib. It calls a pre-trib pastor. Everything is fine. The pastor changes to post-trib, and he expects the church to follow along like nice little sheep and no one is to remain pre-trib and if they do, they are not to cause the pastor any trouble over it, for he is the pastor, you know. The pastor goes on to amillennialism. The church needs now to change her confession of faith, maybe change her sign or some of her literature and go obediently along with the pastor in his changed doctrines. A church is local and landmark in her belief. She calls a pastor who is the same. The pastor changes his position and believes and preaches the universal invisible. And the church is to meekly submit, change her beliefs and trot obediently along behind her pastor.

A pastor changes after he becomes pastor and begins to preach the new doctrine of the priesthood of the church. And no matter how far he goes in this — and some have gone mighty far in it — still the church is not to object or cause any trouble, but to meekly follow her pastor. We could illustrate with the elements of the Lord's Supper, the woman's place and many, many other things. We have all seen much of this take place in recent years. Now what if the preacher changes again? We have seen this happen, post-trib,

then priesthood, then amill. And where will it end, and what is the next change? And poor little church, will she ever be able to settle down in her belief? And what about the next pastor? Here we go again, different doctrines, maybe back to the old ones.

Brethren, am I right? Have we seen this happen? Is this the way it should be? Are churches bound to submit to and follow their pastor as he changes, and changes and changes again what he believes and from what he believes, and from what the church believed when she called him! One pastor took a pre-trib church and was seeking to change a member to post-trib. He told the member he had changed several times in the past year on the subject. The member replied that he thought he would just wait till the preacher got settled himself before he followed him in his views. Good for the member.

Now I have described situations as they exist in many cases. I insist that all this is contrary to the biblical doctrine of church authority. I am not now saying which doctrines in these illustrations are right, and which are wrong. I am saying that they cannot all be right. I am saying that the pastor does not have the authority to change the doctrinal position of the church just because he changes his position. I am saying that the church should not submit to preaching in her pulpit that which is contrary to the Word of God. Now surely, pre-trib or post-trib, one or the other is wrong. Priesthood is wrong or it is not wrong. Landmarkism is wrong or it is not wrong. And the church is responsible to know the truth and to demand and insist and exercise her authority

over the pulpit as to what is preached therefrom, and will be held accountable to God for her exercise, or lack of exercise, of this authority and responsibility.

Now this is very important. It is important that a church be doctrinally sound. The church is not to be at the mercy of the different doctrines of the preachers. To keep herself sound in the faith, the church must use her authority and be true to her responsibility over the pulpit. Can I say that false doctrines begin with preachers and not with churches. Can I say that false doctrines have spread and spread and spread because churches have not been true to their responsibility to see that only the truth is taught from their pulpits.

Well, I have written in love. I have written under a burden. I see great problems arising, because churches will not arise to the exercise of their God-given authority and be true to their responsibility over the pulpit. I ask only that a serious, prayerful consideration be given to what I write. I would welcome correspondence in Christian love to this article. May God bless you all.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Recently, we received a very nice note from a church informing us that they were discontinuing their support of The Baptist Examiner. Now we verily believe in the absolute independence of each true church of our Lord. We believe that each church has the absolute right to choose what they will and will not support, that no other church or religious organization can interfere with this right, and that no other church has a right to oppose or feel hard towards a church in her exercising of this right. We do thank our sovereign God, and we thank each individual and each church that helps us in the work God has given us to do. We know, of a fact, that Calvary Baptist Church could not carry on the work she is doing without the support of many individuals and churches. We thank you all for any support, if it be a one time, or infrequent, or regular offering. We pray frequently for the ones who help us in the work of T.B.E. and of N.G.M. We appreciate the many offerings given us by the above mentioned church. We recognize their right to discontinue this support, and we bear them no ill-will for this, but only gratitude for what they have done heretofore.

The reason this church gives for discontinuing their support — and they owed us no reason — was that they have changed their doctrinal position so that it no longer coincides with ours. Now, so far as the Word of God is concerned, no man or church has the right to any belief contrary to that Book. However, so far as men and other churches are concerned, they do have the right to believe and practice as they see fit. So, humanly speaking, this church has the right to change her doctrinal position. I am sure they feel the same way as to our not changing our beliefs and practices. I will say that we desire, need, and are thankful for any support we might receive, but that changing our doctrinal position is too high a price to pay for such.

I am getting at this point. This church held a certain doctrinal position. They called a preacher as pastor who held the same position. The pastor has now changed his position. The church has gone along with that change and changed their position likewise. Let me say emphatically that, if a man changes his position, she has the right (I speak as a man, and of human rights) to preach that position, and to seek to change the church he pastors to that position. Let me say also that, if the church is convinced that they were wrong in their former position, and that this new position is the true biblical position, they have the right to change to this new position.

However, I do want to emphasize that the church has the responsibility and authority over the pulpit, that the church is to be sure that whatever is taught in her pulpit is the Word of God, and should exercise this authority. I fear that many churches just go along with the preacher rather than searching the Scriptures to see if these things be so. This is why I am re-running a sermon by the editor on THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH OVER THE PULPIT. I hope each one will read, carefully study, and practice what is taught in this article.

SON

(Continued from Page 1)

away" (2 Sam. 18:9). Joab takes three darts and casts them through the heart of Absalom. The men that were with Joab took Joab's armour and slew Absalom, as we read in verse 15 of chapter 18. They take Absalom's body and cast it in a great pit and put a very great heap of stones upon him. This was done to show the great contempt they had for Absalom's rebellion against the king. What a wicked thing for a man to do; and this against his father! This was treason and rebellion! This was sin against his own country! This was sin in the sight of God! Absalom should have known that God was with King David. He should have known that the king had the best servants that could be found.

If you will read the following scripture you will see that David had men that were swift on foot. They could run like roes on the side of a mountain, strong enough to slay a lion, snatch the spear out of a giant's hand and slay the giant with his own spear, and slay numbers of men at one time. (2 Sam. 23:8, 18, 20-21; 1 Chron. 12:1, 2, 8).

Let it be understood that in no sense of the word am I implying, or even trying to imply that Absalom is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. I do, and am saying that his death was a shameful one. His act was a shameful act and sinful rebellion against the king. He was treated in his death according to his treason. There was no honor in his burial. They laid a great heap of stones on him. What he received was due him, and more. What he did showed forth the depravity of man; all men. Every man is depraved and not fit for heaven in his depraved condition. The standing of men before God is bad. Men stand condemned under the sentence of death. Paul said, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves" (2 Cor. 1:9).

Let us notice some things that are true concerning Absalom. He had long hair for which the Scripture condemns. "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" (1 Cor. 11:14). We are living in a time and age when the average man doesn't care what the Scriptures have to say. Even many that are supposed to be Christian men have long hair, laying near or on their shoulders. Brother, is your hair so long it could get caught in the thick boughs of a great oak?

Again, Absalom got hung on a tree. It is a curse to be hanged on a tree for some crime. In Deuteronomy 21:22-23 it is written, "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God); that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

Furthermore, Absalom was depraved, as all men are depraved. The Scriptures teach that men are depraved. Man's will is depraved, his heart is depraved, his mind is depraved, his conscience is depraved. All of man's faculties are depraved. All there is about man is depraved and he cannot in anywise at all recover himself from this depraved condition. It takes the work of God.

Now, I want to bring to your attention my text, 2 Samuel 18:32. This refers to the death of

Absalom, King David's son. Verse 21 of this same chapter refers to the message Cushie was carrying to David concerning the death of Absalom. To David this was a most important message, a message about his son. This to him was important.

Let us now turn our attention to another king, the King of Heaven and of earth, the King who is sovereign over all. Not just some things and men and angels, but over all creation. (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; Rev. 15:3; 19:16). It is to this Son that I have reference, the only begotten of the Father. I want to speak now more particularly concerning the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Father's Son.

There is a contrast in what Absalom received in his death, or that which brought about his death and that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Absalom was guilty of his shameful death. Christ was not guilty of that which was put on Him. His death was a most cruel one. Christ did no sin, there was no guile found in his mouth (1 Pet. 2:22). Let us now look at some of the things which speak of the death of the King's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The death of Absalom was an inglorious one. The message of the death of Christ is a glorious one. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul speaks of the glorious gospel of Christ. It is a message which "hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). It is glorious because it is called the gospel of the grace of God. Paul said in Acts 20:24, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Marvelous indeed is this grace which God has bestowed upon us. While we were ill deserving and hell deserving. While we deserved the worst, God gave us the best. No wonder we can sing of the love that passes knowledge; love so amazing, so rich, so great. We can never get through telling of the wondrous, glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is glorious because it brings peace to the troubled soul. It is a message of peace to the poor soul of the wayward sinner (Ephesians 2:17; Isaiah 57:19). It is a message that satisfies and quiets the conscience of the wounded sinner (Psa. 107:20). It is glorious because it is the joyful sound. It takes away the fear, the terror of hell. This message, the glorious gospel, tells us of the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 2:7; 3:8).

This message of the death of the Father's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the gospel of the good news of the kingdom. (Matthew 4:23). It is good message because it is good news from heaven, good news from God, good news from a far country (Luke 4:18; Acts 13:32-33).

This message that we are carrying concerning the death of God's Son is that it was one of humiliation (Philippians 2:7-8). Christ came from heaven to earth, leaving His glory that He had with the Father, disrobing Himself of this glory. Humiliation in His birth, in His life. Herod sought to kill Him soon after He was born. He was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4), of a poor woman, of a sinful woman, in a poor village, in a poor family. He labored with His hands. The Creator of the universe working



QUESTION: — What woman fell in love with young men from their portraits?

ANSWER: — Aholibah, Ezekiel 23:11-17 — "And when... Aholibah saw this,... she doted upon the Assyrians her neighbours, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men... for when she saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermillion,... she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea. And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love..."

Aholibah was Jerusalem personified, and the story was told by Ezekiel as a parable.

as a common toiler. Christ, despising the shame, endured the death of the cross. Shame on you! Shame on me as we see what Christ endured, and yet, we are so careless, cold and indifferent. Let us renew our strength and run with patience the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The death of Christ is mentioned some 175 times in the New Testament. Since it is spoken of so many times, do we not have good reason to run with such an important message to tell of Christ? His death is prophesied many times in the Old Testament. We are not to tell only of His death! This is not enough. We are to preach how Christ died according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-30). And we are to preach, also, how He was buried and that He arose again according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:4). How did Christ die? He died a most cruel death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8). Christ in His suffering and in His death was reviled and He reviled not again. He was smitten with the palm of the hands of the officers that stood by. He was spit upon, hit with a reed, blindfolded. When He was in the garden His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, so much so... "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). He was whipped in Pilate's judgment hall until His back was a mass of gore and blood, as the Scripture says in Isaiah 50:6. They plowed furrows in His back (Psalm 129:3). No sorrow was ever equal to that of Christ. (Lamentations 1:12).

The death of Christ was predestinated. It was in the mind of God before the creation of the world. Acts 2:23, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." 2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Ephesians 1:4, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Revelation 13:8, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." These Scripture should be sufficient for anyone to see that the death of Christ was in the mind of God before the world began. There are those who fight this doctrine. The Scriptures teach not only that Christ's death was predestinated but that all things are predestinated. Men and angels are under the absolute control of God's sovereign will.

Absalom's death by hanging in the thick boughs of a great oak was a curse; a curse to him and on him. He received that which was due him. But Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Christ became our curse. He took our place. All that was put on Christ was due the elect of God. Isaiah 53:5 says, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Thank God for the sinless life of Christ. Praise Him for His victorious death and for His justifying resurrection. What a great message we have; bearing the message of the death of the King's Son, the Father's only begotten Son! What a great privilege we have bestowed on us, through we are unworthy to carry it! Let us see to it that we are faithful in carrying it. Let us not turn to the right or to the left. Let us stay in the plain pathway. May we run with patience and bear this good news, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

May God bless you!

SPIRIT

(Continued from Page 1)

two things: 1) He must be called of the Holy Spirit; and 2) The leadership of the Spirit is ascertained by prayer and study.

MUST BE CALLED OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. We see in Paul an example of one being called to preach. He was chosen of the Father. When Paul came (at the direction of the Lord) to Ananias, he said to him, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee" (Acts 22:14). And what was he chosen to do? Preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. He was called to a specific work by the Holy Spirit. While a member of the church at Antioch, and "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" (Acts 13:2). You notice also that the Spirit's call was to and through a local church, i.e. the church at Antioch. The Spirit works the same way today. If a man is desirous to do the work he believes the Lord has called him to do, let him find a local body of people who are faithful to the Word of God. Paul also said, in his first letter to Timothy, that the Lord Jesus Christ put him into the ministry (1 Tim. 1:12). So we have the Triune God-Head active, in connection with a local church, calling His preachers.

One may ask "how can I know that I am called to preach?" I know of no better answer than to cite some scriptural examples of what God-called men have said. Paul said

to young Timothy, "...If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (1 Tim. 3:1). First, let us understand that the scriptural usage of the word "bishop" denotes the office of pastor, not the modern mis-conception of the term. Then, let us consider the word "desire" or "desireth." The root word means "a longing for; a rising up (the same source of the word "mountain"); set the heart upon." An undeniable desire; one that cannot be suppressed. If you think that you've been called to preach and can be satisfied doing any thing else, you've not been called of God. Hear the woeful cry of Jeremiah when he was reproached for declaring the Word of the Lord: "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. 20:9). Paul likewise admits that he must preach: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me" (1 Cor. 9:16, 17).

Having been convinced that the Lord has called you to preach, THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS FOUND IN PRAYER AND STUDY. Proof of this is seen in the church at Jerusalem when deacons were first ordained. They were ordained to relieve the Apostles of the responsibility of looking after the physical needs of the church in order that they might give themselves "continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).

The importance of prayer in the lives of God's ministers is magnified in the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Over and again we read of Him "as it was His wont" He went out into a mountain, or the Mount of Olives, to pray. The night before He chose the twelve Apostles, He spent all night in prayer. The night of His betrayal He agonized in prayer. If He, Who is omniscient and did always the will of the Father, thought it necessary to pray, how much more need we to be continually in prayer.

Paul depended much on prayer. As in his letter to the Ephesians, he admonishes them to pray always for each other "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. 6:19). The next time you want to criticize the preaching, consider first if you've prayed for the preacher. If you have, then pray some more. How wonderful, if when folks got together, they would pray for the preacher instead of roasting him.

Private prayer in the preacher's life is a necessity. This, no doubt, is the forgotten tool. The Lord has promised to openly reward secret prayer (Mat. 6:5, 6). Is our lack of open reward an evidence of neglected private prayer? Our private prayer life is to include praying for those God has given into our care. To neglect this is sin, for, though Samuel knew that Israel was wrong in asking

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The Baptist Examiner Forum

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER — P.O. Box 71 — ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0071

What are some guidelines as to our attitude towards different types of so-called 'religious' music?

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We must remember one thing. The important thing is not the name. There are so-called churches with the name "Baptist" over their door, but their doctrines are far from baptistic. Many people call themselves Christian, and their lives believe their name. Just because a record, tape, or sheet music says it is religious does not make it good Christian music. Many "gospel" singers sing songs that are unscriptural.

All music, whether from the hymnal or special songs, must be evaluated. A good song leader is very careful as to what he sings, or leads the congregation into singing. If a song gives credit to the person rather than the Lord, it should not be sung. If it speaks of a universal church or general resurrection, it is unscriptural. If it speaks of works for salvation or implies that a person could lose his salvation, it is unscriptural.

When we sing we must magnify our Lord and Saviour. There are many verses that speak of this, let me just quote a few. "Sing praises to the Lord..." (Psalm 9:11). "But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy..." (Psalm 59:16). "Sing forth the honour of His name: make His praise glorious" (Psalm 66:2). Paul said to the church of Corinth, "...I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." (I Cor. 14:15). Our songs must be scriptural and full of praise.

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If the music connotated "religious" does not compliment or magnify the God of the Bible and His religion it ought to be relegated to the realm of eternal silence. Any doctrine, hymn, or religious music which does not exalt the Christ of redemption should not be given the briefest hearing. On the contrary, they should be shunned with a totality that is absolute.

Most N.T. Baptist churches are supra-selective as to hymnology, making sure they do not pervert the gospel in song. Then, too, they are equally selective as to their music instrumentals, and what is good

for the church is good for the home, and everywhere else.

Our attitude toward any religious action or thing which does not give honor and glory to God should be one of disgust, and that includes false religious music.

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Read Psalm 150.

I definitely believe that music is, or at least can be, a great way in which we can honor our God. All of us should seek to help all we can in the song services of our churches. I personally think it is a sin for members not to join in the congregational singing. The Bible instructs us to make both a joyful and a loud noise unto the LORD. A good song service is oftentimes the stepping stone to a good church service. Now to answer your question.

Mark 4:24 says, "And He said unto them, Take heed what ye hear..." As there are songs that can be very helpful to God's people, there are also songs that can be very harmful. Indeed, there is a lot of music today that goes under the title of "religious" that has nothing whatsoever to do with religion. Let us set down some guidelines that I feel would be helpful in deciding if it is religious music or just so-called religious music.

First, who is singing or who wrote the song? I realize this is not always a set rule, for surely some lost people sing some good christian hymns. But there are many people who are in the "religious" music business just to make money. Their songs will have a glimpse of the Spiritual and the rest will be pure flesh. I think of a song writer and singer who was voted Gospel Music Singer of the Year last year. Recently, I heard and read where He was arrested for usage of cocaine. So, sometimes we can get a hint from the author and singer.

Second, Does the song appeal to the spiritual man? Does the song, and in particular, the words stir our souls for the service of God. Do they cause us to think of Christ and of spiritual things? If so, then I would listen to them.

Thirdly, do these songs in anyway excite the flesh? I never did like to see these so called gospel singers dancing around while they were supposed to be singing to the glory of God. A lot of the so-called religious music of today is hard to distinguish from disco or rock music. If this music appeals to your flesh then I would leave it alone. Much of Arminianism is based on this exciting of the flesh.

Fourthly, are the words scriptural or are they heresy? We who believe in the doctrines

of grace should never sing those songs that are contrary to these truths. We should always examine the words of all so-called religious music by their words. I don't care how beautiful the music may be, if the words are not according to the Word of God then we had better avoid that song. By singing songs that are anti-scriptural we become propagators of that heresy.

Fifthly, does the song give honor and glory into God? We ought to sing those songs that exalt our God and avoid those that abase or those that neglect.

I hope these few guidelines will be of help to all of us in our effort to praise God in song. May we all be more faithful in the future in singing for the glory of God.

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Not being able to "carry a tune in a bucket," I do not claim to be an authority on music, but looking in the Word of God I find that God has much to say concerning music. It is said that there are over 500 specific references to music in the Bible. God has given us clear instructions as to the kinds of music He would have His people to use. Many of the songs of the Old Testament saints are recorded in the book of Psalms.

In Ephesians 5:18-19 we are told to be filled with the Spirit and the result will be, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." In Colossians 3:16 we are told, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

A psalm is a sacred song or poem which glorifies God, to be sung to the harp or other musical instrument. The hymn is a song of praise or honor to God, and a spiritual song is any ode or poem set to music and is sung in praise of God or Christ. "The song of Moses — and the song of the Lamb" of Revelation 15:3 are songs thanking and praising God for deliverance of His people by His mighty power and for their redemption through the atoning sacrifice of His Son.

It has been said that music has a physical effect as well as a mental and a spiritual effect on people. This is shown in the case of Saul who had a nervous disorder when an evil spirit troubled him. It is said, "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was

well, and the evil spirit departed from him" (I Sam. 16:23). "Refreshed" refers to his physical well-being. "Made well" refers to his mental condition. "The evil spirit departed from him" indicated his spiritual condition was restored.

Much of the rock and roll, jazz, and similar music which is so popular in America today, has much the same tunes and rhythms of that which the natives of Africa have used for years in the worship of the devil, and has no place in worship to God.

It has been observed that rock music has an effect on some that is very similar to the effect as that of drugs.

While rock'n roll advocates claim spiritual power for their music we must remember that, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but, — against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). The results produced by this type of music proves that this spiritual power is the power of "spiritual wickedness."

One of the greatest musicians of all time, Johann Sebastian Bach, has well said: "The aim and final reason of all music should be nothing else but the glory of God and the refreshment of the spirit"

"O sing unto the Lord a new song: for He hath done marvelous things — the Lord hath made known His salvation" (Psalm 98:1, 2).

"Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song" (Psalm 95:1, 2, N.I.V.).

SPIRIT

(Continued from Page 3)

for a king, he said to them: "...God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." (I Sam. 12:23). When we've preached the Word, may we water it with our prayers that the Lord would make it effective to those who hear.

Prayer and study go hand in hand. The phrase "ministry of the Word" in Acts 6:4 means more than ministering the Word to others. The word "ministry" means "attendance." The preacher is to give attendance to the Word: Wait on it; meditate on it. Paul encourages Timothy in this manner: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee... Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (I Tim. 4:13-15).

The preacher needs to study that he might find the right words. "And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd" (Ecc. 12:9-11). Acceptable word, not in the sense that he might please everyone (as those who by duplicity speak in such a way that what they say may be taken different ways by different folks), but rather words that ring out loud and clear the

specific meaning of the Word. Spoken in such a way that even those who pass by may understand.

Do we want the Spirit's stamp on our ministry? Then let us give ourselves more to the Word and prayer, and He that hears in secret will reward us openly.

SOVEREIGNTY

(Continued from Page 1)

have to offer. Having such evident and manifest abilities and capabilities, they have a ready entrance into the hearts and lives of those who are ready for deception and willing to be deceived. Many of these, of course, will be so effectual with their religious rhetoric that great hosts "will believe a lie" and suppose that it is truth.

How desperate are they? Let me count some ways!

It is no marvel that these, along with most other men in the earth, are evolutionists or theistic evolutionists. All such, needless to say, despise the sovereignty inherent in, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..." and "God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and God saw that it was good." Impossibly tragic, though it may seem, most of those who claim to believe that "God created the heavens and the earth" think so little of their supposed belief that they involve themselves — for political and religious purposes — in ecumenical relationships with those who despise such truth.

Babylon is born anew!

Similarly, it is no marvel that many men who speak of Jesus as "The Savior," in a sophisticated and sometimes educated manner literally despise truth such as, "And all they that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Such cannot abide "The blood of His Cross." That which they call "Slaughterhouse Religion" is something which they cannot countenance, and they forbid the teaching of such in the denominations, institutions, and so-called churches where they have responsibility. In the process, they become one with the late head of the Methodist Church who called "The God of Revelation a dirty bully."

These want nothing to do with a Sovereign God who "delivered His Son into the hands of wicked men to be crucified and slain." These want nothing to do with a God who omnisciently and sovereignly arranges for "the life is in the blood" or for the methodology, "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission." Though such may claim to be men of peace and men of good will because they say that they have "an aversion for violence," their Christless and Scripturalless religion is raucous madness and endless violence against the Word of God and the Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even more, as I have noted elsewhere at great length, they busily "crucify Christ afresh" in the course of their religious practices, and that while despising His Death, Burial and Resurrection, even the Gospel. They pursue and implement unabashed blasphemy with every power at their command,

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SOVEREIGNTY

(Continued from Page 4)

and yet they call themselves Christian and sometimes Baptist, as well. As Judas Iscariot of old, they are in league with the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they are not even aware of their plight.

Please do not marvel, then! These are obviously pagan!

Such walk in a darkness that the faithful, Bible-believing, local-church-conscious Christian or Baptist, hopefully, will never know. One who realizes that God has already done the saving is aware that otherwise one would not be believing. So, when one believes, the truth strikes home, as it were, "I'm saved"! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! "Salvation is of the Lord!"

It is that reality which Saul knew on the Damascus Road when he said, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" If every lost person is locked into "No man seeketh after God" — and he or she is — then NO LOST PERSON is going to pray the so-called "sinner's prayer."

We need to do as Isaiah suggests, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." In this, there is no indication or evidence of a man's ability to get himself or anyone else saved, and certainly there is no indication or evidence that man can help save himself. It may "take two to tango" on the dance floor, but, beloved, God is not on the dance floor, and He certainly is not indulging in the tango.

Rather, it is Isaiah who explains most dramatically and most graphically — if we can understand the terminology in its contextual meaning — "All of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." There is no question in his mind but that God is sovereign in salvation. I am certain — eternally certain, in time, if you will — that Paul and Isaiah have compared notes and found that what Isaiah was saying in the above the Apostle Paul was saying in, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins."

Great confusion has arisen among God's people because they do not abide by the teaching of the Apostle regarding, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." As a result, some have supposed that Jesus was dealing with the matter of salvation in, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." There is, however, no scriptural justification for such a conclusion. On the contrary, both were "praying" to the Lord.

One simply recognized and realized that he was a saved sinner and that God was sovereign. Whereas the other was still operating on the thesis that he, the saved sinner, was "something" in God's sight. All "Primitive Baptists" or so-called "Hardshell" or "Two-seed Baptists," as well as all "Protestants" and "Catholics" of whatever brand are as the "boasting prayer." No publication ever leaves any denominational headquarters and no "worship service," so-

called, of any "denominational church" — whether parachurch or suprachurch — ever takes place but what there is "boasting." Such "boasting" has no effect whatever on the salvation of any of those who are saved, but it precludes any rewards — they are "saved, yet so as by fire."

Most of us at some point in our Christian life and in our Christian walk are more like the man who bragged in his praying than we are like the one who was humble and thereby "justified." Any pastor who "boasts" of the number of people in his congregation or of the number of those whom he has "won to the Lord" does not go down to his house "justified." He may impress people, but he is out of touch with God. Whether saved or lost is not mine to say, and I am happy that I cannot judge in such matters. Every radio and television evangelist gives himself to boasting rather than humility. There is no exception!

Perhaps if Hebrews 11 could be read by all saved folk once in the morning, again at noon, and then e'er sleeping, the "Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ" — ecclesias, assemblies of the faithful — would be serving the Lord rather than serving other men or indulging in mutual admiration religious societies of godless, pagan, and demonic activity.

Then, too, from the human perspective, I may be "whistling in the dark," as it were. That is, when men discover that God is sovereign, and that "no one can come to" Jesus "unless the Father draws him" — makes it possible for him to do so — they come to the conclusion that "this teaching is too hard" and "many of his followers turn back and follow him no more." Such is the plight of the great majority and perhaps most all Christians today.

They may be saved "by grace through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" — the only way anyone is ever saved — but they cannot live with the reality or accept the reality of this truth. Thus, they turn aside from the Lord and the true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ and seek fellowship at any cost among those of the world, indulging whatever compromise is necessary in order to maintain that fellowship.

Bring on your "Christmas" and "Easter" programs, they say, and your paganisms, despite the fact that all such are blasphemy against the Lord Jesus Christ. Bring on your "Mariolatry" and your "Lottieolatry" and your "Annieolatry," almost and infinitum, they insist, despite the fact that every such device is blasphemy against the holy Word of God. Bring on your denominational schemes and programs without end and ever renewed and your "worship of days," they demand, though the Lord very explicitly teaches, "Now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

Never forget that the Apostle Paul, by the ministration of the Holy Spirit of God, was preaching to saved men, born again men, men who had experienced, "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the

Heaven hides itself away within the gospel.

gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast." He says, "But now that you know God — or, I should say, now that God knows you — how is it that you want to turn back to the weak and pitiful ruling spirits (the weak and beggarly elements)?..

Notice, if you will, that the perspective of salvation was not any easier then it is now, "Now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God..." The blessing comes to the one who "goes down to his house justified," rather than the other. The bragging one must ever seek something new about which to brag. If you doubt what I say, just check the new "denomination schemes" with which the people are approached each week, each month, or each year. Or, if you prefer, check "the new schemes" which the radio and T.V. "evangelists," so-called, devise each week or each month.

All of this, perhaps, should alert us to the truth that some of the so-called "wisest of men" are the greatest of fools, and that some of the most "unlearned of men" are the wisest. Most explicitly, God says, "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God." Again, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God... God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and the things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence."

By now, I am certain that you are grasping the emphasis, "That no flesh should glory in His presence." Yet, and this is the tragedy from the human perspective, this is the truth that men cannot accept! This is the truth that men cannot abide! This is the truth which men cannot endure! This is the truth that men cannot promote! It relates to "the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." And it relates most exactly to the truth that men cannot abide or endure, even the fact that God is Sovereign in Salvation!

"That no flesh should glory in His Presence" is truth which graphically and demonstratively shows the folly of institutionalized denominationalism and all denominational activity. All denominationalism — whether parachurch or suprachurch — is designed to oppose the truth, "That no flesh should glory in His Presence." For the whole tenor and emphasis of denominationalism is to boast.

Those denominationalists who are out to make a mark in this world or a buck in the market place in the educational milieu will not speak to you thus. Those who have some denominational axe to grind will not speak to you so. Therefore, whatever you do for schooling will relate to human purposes. Men are not serving God in the earth, they are serving other men or some particular group of men.

Thankfully, however, being "learned in the wisdom of the

OUR SUFFERING SAVIOUR

He agonized in the garden in bitterest agony, He prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me:" Nevertheless, He drank the cup, 'twas His Father's will above, He drank it to the bitter dregs because of His great love!

His apostles, being weary, slept on in deep repose, Never fully realizing their forth-coming woes; With great sweat drops of blood, He prayed on without remiss, Until the hour that Judas came and betrayed Him with a kiss!

They took Him and bound Him and carried Him away To the palace of the high priest to await the coming day; Then the Jewish council held a trial and 'tis so very odd. They sentenced Him to death because He said that He was God!

They beat Him and spit upon Him and did shamefully entreat, And said that He must now be tried at Pilate's judgment seat; But Pilate found no fault with Him and he told them so. Nor indeed did Herod, for to Herod He did go!

Once more Pilate would release Him, but got nowhere with them, For they cried vehemently, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Then Pilate gave the orders, it should be as they required, Released Barabbas to them, sentenced Jesus to be crucified!

Pilate scourged Him and called together the whole soldier band, They clothed Him with a purple robe, placed a reed in His hand; Crowned Him with a crown of thorns and then they bowed the knee, Smiting Him upon the head in satanic mockery!

Now when they had finished the torture which they began, His visage was so marred, more than any man! Then they led Him up the hill to darkest Calvary. Crucified Him between two thieves upon the cruel tree!

The mocking crowd passed by with jeering taunts and sneers, While the thieves on either side cast the same in His ears; But one thief suddenly believed that Jesus was the Christ, And Jesus said, "Today you'll be with Me in Paradise!"

Now as He bore His peoples' sins in His body on the tree. He cried with a loud voice, "Father, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" For the Father is so pure and holy, sin He cannot look upon. And so He turned His back upon His precious, holy Son!

Thus His soul was made a ransom for His very own, For them He suffered, bled and died, and bore it all alone; And then He cried, "Tis finished" and His Spirit He dismissed, An earthquake rent the rocks, the Son of God was this!

They took His body from the tree and laid it in a tomb, And for the ones who loved Him, this was a day of gloom; But after three full days and nights, their sorrowing was o'er. For He arose from that dark tomb and lives forevermore.

Now He ascended into heav'n, sat down on the Father's throne, And now each day He intercedes for those He calls His own; Oh blessed hope, He'll come again, that forever they may be Joint-heirs with Him and live with Him throughout eternity!

Mrs. Frank Parrish
Courtland, Virginia

Egyptians" does not preclude one serving the Lord fully. Whether you attend the schools of the religious or the irreligious is really not too important if you have some knowledge of the Word of God and sufficient Spiritual insight and strength to preclude your "being moved by every wind of doctrine." Both the religious and the irreligious educational systems in America are structured on Satan's, "Yea, hath God said?" Therefore, men encourage doubting — both concerning the Scriptures and whether there really is any truth available to men — rather than directing you in the service of the Lord. In the process, they attempt so to "indoctrinate" their students to be completely anti-God in secular areas or to serve "slavishly" in some denominational milieu.

In particular, Denominationalists must have doubts as to whether the Bible is the Word of God, whether it is infallible, whether there is any truth that men can know, and, therefore, whether Jesus knew that He was God, and whether He knew what He was saying to be truth. Needless to say, all Denominationalists — whether parachurch or suprachurch — must have some doubts as to the "nature" of Jesus' death, the "character" of His burial, and the "reality" of His resurrection.

Though all such are faced with doubts in the above direc-

tions, and in other Scriptural contexts, as well, such Denominationalist are very positive regarding "Denominational" perspectives, programs, and promotions. Within the perimeters of their Denominational "wineskins," these have no qualms about being quite absolute. It is with such "assurance" that they keep those in their Denomination satisfied as to their "Authority" as religious leaders! It is by such an unholy device that they keep the "enslaved churches," so-called, and the "deceived people of God," so-called, contributing to Denominational Causes.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Missionary Fred Halliman has been seriously injured in a car wreck in New Guinea. He is not critical and now out of the hospital recovering slowly. Pray much for him. More news in next issue.

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER
MARCH 12, 1983
PAGE FIVE

by Willard Willis

"There is no mystery attached to when and how Christians assumed power in the Roman Empire. The year was 324, and it was Emperor Constantine the Great who gave them that power. At the beginning of the fourth century the Christians were the largest single religious body in the empire, though they still were a minority. This large, cohesive plurality could have a stabilizing effect in propping up his (Constantine's) tottering empire. He followed the axiom "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em." Accordingly, he not only recognized Christianity as a legal religion, but also made it the only legal religion in the land. The Christians at this time did not number over 20 percent of the population. The establishment of the papacy in the sixth century gave the church a strong central rallying point. The last of the old dissident sects were stamped out; the last of the pagans in the former western half of the empire were converted. The church could now afford to breathe more easily, and to survey its domain in tranquility. The Jews, who had been virtually ignored by the Christians for six centuries, were now rediscovered. Why was this so? The answer has already presented itself. Until their recognition by Constantine the Christians were far too busy saving them from the Romans to bother much about the Jews. In the ensuing three hundred years after the death of Constantine, the Christians were far too occupied fighting the battle of heretical creeds and godless barbarians to pay much heed to the Jews, who minded their own business. This rediscovery of the Jews presented the Christians (Catholics) a king-size problem. The Jews were the only undigested remnant of non-Christians in the sea of Christianity which engulfed them. What should the Christians do? Baptize them, forcibly if need be, as they (Catholics) had done with non-believing pagans? Exterminate them as they had done with those barbarians who did not accept the true faith? This dilemma of the Christians and the precarious position of the Jews became the paramount Jewish problem in the middle ages. Generally speaking, in the three centuries from 300 to 600 four sets of laws were passed containing discriminatory provisions against the Jews in the Roman empire — the laws of Constantine (390 A.D.), forbidding intermarriage between Jewish men and Christian women; the laws of Theodosius II (439 A.D.), prohibiting Jews from holding high position in government; and the laws of Justinian (531

"Constantine, a follower of Mithraism, became interested in Christianity, seemingly associated it with his triumph over his rivals for the emperorship. According to a story which may be legend, in 312 Constantine, having defeated lesser contenders, was about to engage in the battle of Milvian Bridge against his chief rival Maxentius when he saw the words "In Hoc Vince" (In this I have conquered) embossed on a fiery cross in the sky. Interpreting this as an omen of victory from the Christian God, he had the name of Christ inscribed on the shield of his soldiers, and he carried the day. To express his gratitude to a faith which he perhaps regarded as instrumental in giving him victory, Constantine had the Greek letters Chi Rho (Christos) put on military and civil emblems and coins, granted freedom of worship to Christians in 313, permitted the church legally to hold property, and, in addition, took a personal interest in the Christian faith. He had his children reared in the faith, gave preference to Christians for imperial offices, concerned himself with problems of doctrine, and finally was baptized. Historians dispute as to why Constantine became a Christian, some arguing that he had a genuine religious experience, others that he underwent a profound psychological trauma, and still others that he embraced Christianity because it was emerging as the dominant faith and would contribute imperial unity. What is indisputable, however, is that Christianity became the favored and predominate religion of the empire; it won its final victory in 392 when the emperor Theodosius proclaimed it the sole legal religion and ordered all Roman subjects except Jews to become Christians. To be a Christian henceforth was a matter of law, not of religious conviction. It is important to note that while the empire in the west declined, the Christian church (Catholic) continued to grow and to remain dynamic..." Lyon, Rowen and Hamerow, "History of the Western World," pp. 91, 92.

"It was soon believed in the various communities that the ordinary man and woman were incompetent to administer these sacraments. The belief evolved, therefore, that such mystical powers had been reserved to a select group of men who formed the clergy and who had attained this elevated status by virtue of the sacrament of ordination. This sacrament rested upon the belief in Apostolic succession. According to this theory, Christ had laid His hands upon the apostles and conferred upon them divine authority to continue His work of salvation. The apostles in turn commissioned others, and they others, and so the succession continued and still continues according to Catholic doctrine. Such men composed the ordained clergy and were entrusted with administering

"For a long time many of the clergy had argued that Christian tradition had been handed down by the apostles and guarded in the churches they had established in such towns as Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. Furthermore they believed that Rome held a superior rank over other towns, even Constantinople, because it was here that the Apostle Peter and Paul had suffered martyrdom and here that Peter had been the first bishop of the church. The defenders of this belief developed, from the Gospel of Matthew, the Petrine theory, which supported the supremacy of the bishop of Rome as Pope. According to Matthew (16:18-19), Christ had told Peter: 'Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My church... And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' The bishops of Rome and their supporters interpreted this passage as conferring supremacy upon the bishop of Rome and as initiating the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. Despite the appealing argument of this theory, and despite the repeated claims of the bishops of Rome to Supremacy, other prominent bishops bitterly contested such a claim. Only slowly did a number of able bishops of Rome elevate their position above other bishops to eventual supervision over the

“Besides these doctrinal problems, the church inherited others when it became a legally recognized institution and when it became sole faith. No longer was composed largely of socially and economically downtrodden who adhered their faith even though driven underground by persecution. When looked upon with favor, Christianity became popular in aristocratic circles, and men entered clergy because there were fine opportunities for social, economic, and political advancement. All sorts of privileges, immunities, bequests of money and land were lavished upon church. By the late fourth century all men except Jews were compelled by law to embrace the Christian faith. In the rural areas, however, the inhabitants remained pagan at heart and in ritual for long time; the church had to compromise and adopt numerous pagan ceremonies and mystic beliefs in order to make itself appealing to simple rustics nurtured on soil that had been pagan for thousands of years. Even the educated and sophisticated classes often embraced Christianity more formally than out of real faith. In the fifth century Christian was one by tradition rather than by belief. The church consequently had to be practical, to relax primitive discipline and doctrine, and to accommodate itself to the masses of people.”

(Continued on Page 8 Column 3)

How can a soul make progress if it is evermore changing its course? Do not sow in Beersheba and then rush off to reap in Dan.

BRIEF STUDIES IN REVELATION

By The Editor

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1). This is the last of this series of studies in Revelation. The studies have been brief. They were not designed to go into great detail, but only to give an over-all picture of this great Book. It is my sincere desire that they have been a blessing to the reader. I do feel that, if one will study carefully the Book itself, and just use these studies as a help and guide, they will be helpful.

I cannot urge you too strongly to carefully study 1:19 as the inspired outline of the Book, and to fit the whole book into that outline. I do insist that, in order to understand this Book, you must just read it and believe it. Interpret literally except where there is definite proof of a figurative meaning and intent. Learn the chronology of the Tribulation as I have given it. That time is moving along during the seals, trumpets and vials, and that the rest of the Book is parenthetic giving period by sons and events of the Tribulation. Remember that the seven seals cover the entire Tribulation. The seventh seal is the beginning of the seven trumpets. The seventh trumpet is the seven vials of wrath. I believe these things are very helpful in studying this Book.

Chapters 21 & 22 tell us of the eternal state. Beginning with chapter 19, the Book moves forward chronologically. I do not believe that 21:9-27 reverts to the Millennium. Man is an eternal being. There is an eternity. Man must exist consciously, knowingly, feelingly somewhere eternally. There is a heaven, there is a hell, that's all there is. Every individual will exist eternally in one or the other. These last two chapters of Revelation tell us of this eternal heaven for the saved and eternal hell for the unsaved.

21:1-4 tells us of the new heaven and new earth and some blessings of the saved therein. I have great difficulty deciding whether there will be an annihilation of this heaven and earth followed by the totally new creation of a new heaven and earth. Or if there will simply be a renovating of the present heaven and earth so that it could be called new. I lean mostly toward the first of these views, but just am not certain for a faith. Any help will be appreciated. It seems to me that the majority of commentators take the latter position. I do take the position that there will be no more sea literally. In the eternal state of the saved as here described, God will dwell personally and visibly with His redeemed people. I am thoroughly convinced that the eternal dwelling place of the saved will be on this earth (newly created or renovated). God will wipe away all tears forever. I do not believe there will be any tears for the saved following death, but that this is just the Lord's way of saying there will never be such. I do not believe He will at this time wipe away any tears. I do not hold the theory of "tears in heaven." There will be no death, sor-

row, crying or pain among the blessed in the eternal state. Some of the chief blessings of heaven are described in the negative. The sad, hurtful and sorrowful things of earth will be no longer. Praise the Lord! I have stood by a grave in Big Stone Gap, Va. where lies the body of my oldest son and read these words "no more death" and praised God for them.

In verses 5-8 we learn that these glorious words are not a myth or fairy tale but inspired Word of God and are faithful and true. We are told "it is done." This is the wind-up. We are in the eternal state. However, inserted in this description is a glorious invitation and promise to give salvation to anyone who wants it. If these descriptions of the eternal state should cause one to desire to be saved, such a one is invited to take the water of life freely. Verse 8 describes the character of those who will spend eternity in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. Dear friend, if you are not saved from these sins — from this kind of character and behaviour — you will never be saved from hell. Be assured that salvation makes a difference in the way a man lives. That which does not change a man's life will not save him from hell.

In verses 9-27 we have a description of the New Jerusalem. Study carefully verses 9, 10, 24 and 22:14. These verses make it crystal clear that the New Jerusalem is the home of the Bride of Christ and not the home of all the saved. John is told that he will be shown the Bride. What he is shown is the New Jerusalem. Therefore, this city is the home of the Bride. Verse 24 is clear beyond any successful controversy that there will be those who will not live in that city. 22:14 reveals that those who live in that city are those who keep God's commandments. Surely, these commandments include Scriptural Baptism and church membership and faithfulness in the church. I say without hesitation that only the Bride of Jesus Christ will call the New Jerusalem her home. I do believe that all the saved will be privileged to visit this city and spend time therein, but they will not live in the city continually as the Bride will. See how important it is that one is sure they are in the Bride of Christ!

This New Jerusalem is over 1300 miles square and high. This makes it over half the size of the United States besides being that high. It will be of size, magnitude and magnificence such as no city has ever before come close to being. We can only read in astonishment and admiration of such a city. The city has twelve foundations, each made of a precious stone. The wall of the city will be 216 ft. and made of jasper stone. The twelve gates of the city will each be made of a pearl. They will never be shut, for there will never be any danger to the inhabitants of this city. Sin is forever banished from this new heaven and earth. The city itself is pure gold. The streets are not paved with gold, but are pure gold. This shows us the beauty and glory of the city. It also

shows us the insignificance of that gold which men think so highly of in this life. The glory of God and of the Lamb give light to this city and what brilliant and glorious light that will be. The nations of the saved (those saved but not in the Bride) will walk in the never ending light of this city, and there will never be any nighttime in the new earth. Nothing which defiles, or maketh a lie, or worketh abomination will ever enter this city. The name written in the Lamb's book of life is the passport for entrance into this city. The Bride will live continually in this city, but all the elect will be able to enter the city.

Chapter 22:1-6 continues this description of the New Jerusalem. Let me say that I do not subscribe to the theory that this city will be suspended in the air over the new earth. I have no idea where this supposition comes from. The city will be on the new earth. Further, I do not subscribe to the theory that this city will be suspended over the earth during the Millennium as the home of the glorified saints during that golden age. I do not know where that theory comes from. If this city is in existence before the eternal state begins (which I seriously doubt), it will be hidden from view, and will only come to view when it comes to and is set upon the new earth in the eternal state.

In this city there is the river of the water of life, clear as a crystal, proceeding from the throne of God. The tree of life will be along both sides of this river. They will bear twelve manner of fruit, and the leaves will be for the continuing good health of all the saved — not that there will be sickness to be healed — but that perfect health will be continued eternally by means of these leaves. No one will ever refuse to use these leaves, and no one will ever have bad health. There will never be any curse in this city for there will never be any sin therein. God will sit as sovereign ruler of the city. Who of the redeemed would want it any different! His servants will serve Him eternally and perfectly and without any weariness. The greatest joy of time or eternity will be to perfectly, unceasingly serve the Lord. They will also see Him face to face, and what glory that will be! There is no night in this city and no need of any natural light, for the Lord is the light thereof. Again, in 22:6 we are reminded that these things are faithful and true. They seem almost too wonderful to really be true, so the Lord reminds us again of this matter.

22:7 is inserted to remind us again of the coming of our Lord. Oh, this is a prominent theme of this Book as well as of the whole Bible. We have in this verse another beatitude — a blessing upon those who keep the sayings of this Book. John is again so overcome with awe that he starts to worship the angel who was telling him these things. He is told again not to do this, but to worship God. We and the angels are fellow servants in the service of God. We should never idolize a mere creature. Only God is to be worshipped. How this condemns the Roman Catholic worship of idols, statues, Mary, the so-called saints, and the pope. All true Catholics are guilty of idolatry in many forms. Let us beware of allowing any creatures to compete with the one True God as to our worship.

22:10 tells us several important things. This book of Revelation is a prophecy. It is

not a sealed Book. The Holy Spirit gives us this Book as a revelation (not a concealing) of future events as predestinated by the sovereign God of the Bible. The time is said to be at hand. I would say that the time to study this Book and to understand and believe its prophecies is at hand. Also, that to God who dwells in eternity, and to Whom all time is an eternally present "now," these things are always "at hand."

Verse 11 describes the fact that there will be no changes in men's character in the eternal state. Salvation is a matter of time. In whatever condition one enters eternity, one will remain forever. Oh, friend, be warned, turn to God in repentance and faith now. There is no salvation beyond the grave.

Verse 12 tells us that Jesus is coming quickly, and that He is going to reward His servants at His coming. You see, following the rapture of the saints, there will be the judgment seat of Christ where all the previously saved will be judged as to their works and will receive rewards or suffer loss of rewards. The One who is soon coming is the eternally existing one — He is God as well as man.

Salvation is by the free grace of God and will bring all the saved into the eternal blessedness and glory of what we call heaven. But obedience to the commands of the Lord is necessary to being in the Bride of Christ and to living in the New Jerusalem. Being an ardent fan of the Textus Receptus from which the K.J.V. was translated, I do not accept the A.S.V. rendering "wash their robes" of v. 14. Salvation is by grace, but rewards are for obedience; and being in the Bride of Christ is the highest of the rewards given by God. All the unsaved are without the city, and will never have the privilege or know the joy of even entering into that city of God.

Now for verse 17. The truth about this verse, not the Arminian perversion thereof, nor the heresy they base upon that perversion. Sovereign Grace Baptists do believe and preach Rev. 22:17. Salvation is compared to the water of life because it is essential to life, and because it brings great refreshing and joy to its possessor. All who are hungry and thirsty are invited to come and take this water freely. Now, I believe that and preach it. Any sinner who wants to be saved is invited to come to Jesus Christ and be saved. The question is not if the thirsty are invited to come. The question is, how are unthirsty and unwilling sinners — which all are by nature — made thirsty and willing? That is the question. Arminianism has no answer for this question. But we sovereign gracers know the answer. God has elected a people and predestinated them to be saved. Christ died for their sins. The Holy Spirit works effectually in them and causes them to be willing and thirsty. They do come and take the water of life and are saved forevermore. Oh, what a glorious gospel is this! All men are "whosoever won'ts" by nature, and Arminianism theology has no means of making them into "whosoever wills." This invitation is not — I challenge any Arminian to contradict this — is not to all men everywhere — it is to any who are thirsty and willing. Will the Arminian tell us that all sinners are willing to come to Christ and are thirsty for salvation. No, he will not tell us that. Then why

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does he insist that this verse means all and every sinner?

Verses 18-19 tell us of the completeness, authority and infallibility of God's Word. I believe this applies to all the Bible and not just to Revelation. We see here the extreme danger of tampering with the Word of God. Don't take from it. Don't add to it. The Roman Catholics added the Apocrypha to the Bible in 1546, and now want us all to accept their man-made addition. We will not do that. We do not want to share with them in the curse upon them for doing this.

Verse 20 gives us the last promise and the last prayer of the Bible. It is another promise of the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare verses 7 & 12 of this chapter. Oh, how the Lord seeks to impress this wonderful truth on our hearts! I daresay it is the most frequently repeated promise in all the Word of God, and yet, there are preachers and churches which never, or almost never preach on the prophetic teachings of the Bible, and rarely mention the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Lord has given this promise again and again, but would give it one more time before He closes up the canon of Scripture.

Then there is the pre-tribulation prayer of pre-tribulationist John. He desires and prays for the coming of the Lord. He has seen what that coming means to the child of God, and he is desirous thereof. Had he been a post-tribulationist, he could not have intelligently prayed this prayer, for he would have believed that Jesus could not come til after the Tribulation. But being a pre-tribulationist, and believing that, so far as we know, Jesus

(Continued on Page 8 Column 3)

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BRIEF

(Continued from Page 7)

may come at any time, he prays this prayer.

Verse 21 gives us one more reference to the wonderful and amazing grace of our God, and then the Bible is closed, or rather, finished and complete. Note that the last word of the Old Testament is the word "curse." Nearly the last word of the New Testament is the word "grace." The only way one can be saved from the curse revealed in the Old Testament, and dwell in the blessed glory of the closing chapters of the book of Revelation is by the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Not that grace is not revealed in the Old, and not that curse is not revealed in the New, but that, apart from the person and work of Jesus Christ revealed in the New Testament, there could be no salvation from the curse of God's broken law.

May you study this wonderful book of Revelation, and may it be a blessing to your soul. May you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and be saved from the curse your sins deserve. May you even be obedient to the point that you might have a home in the New Jerusalem with the Bride of Christ. God bless you all!

TRAIL

(Continued from Page 6)

who swarmed into its folds. When the church began tailoring its doctrine to meet the demands of the majority, it offended those who yearned for the primitive faith and simple social organization of the original apostolic Christians. These men, firm in their belief that the church had become too secular and materialistic, turned to a way of life devoted primarily to worship and meditation." Lyon, Rowen, Hamerow, "History of the Western World," pp. 129, 130, 131, 132.

May our God have mercy upon us if that which I have just quoted (above) is the history of the true church — the church our Lord built during His personal ministry upon the earth. I, of course, am positive that such is not the history of the Lord's church, but of the Devil's church. It is the history of those "grievous wolves" which Paul refers to in Acts 20:29:

"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. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:19-31).

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BOOK REVIEWS

We offer a new book through our book store. It is in the Kregel Reprint Library which should recommend the book highly. It is a commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude. It is by Martin Luther.

Now, I am not an avid fan of Martin Luther. I am a Baptist and believe all saved people should be Baptists. However, I do believe there are many saved people in other so-called churches. I do believe that non-Baptists do know and teach much that is true to the Word of God. Certainly, Martin Luther was a good, strong advocate and teacher of many of the truths of the Bible.

This commentary bears the marks of all Luther's writings.

It is strong, clear and deals with many great and true doctrine. It is very practical in its dealing with the duties of the believer in life which are set forth in the epistles. This book is one of Luther's better productions.

This book will be a valuable addition to the library of any preacher. It could be a help to any child of God in his study of these epistles. I recommend it to you. It can be purchased from our bookstore for \$12.99. Remember the profit goes into the ministry of God's Word. Preachers and churches who receive a 20% discount on this book, as well as most books we carry. Let our book store serve you in the matter of spiritual enriching your home and your lives with good books.

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