

THE CHURCH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

by John Alber
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Our Baptist Heritage has been a long and wonderful thing in the eyes of the Lord's people. Unfortunately, many of us do not understand nor do we really appreciate what our "Fathers" have done for the cause of the Lord's Church. The History of True Baptists has been hidden from the eyes of the general



John Alber

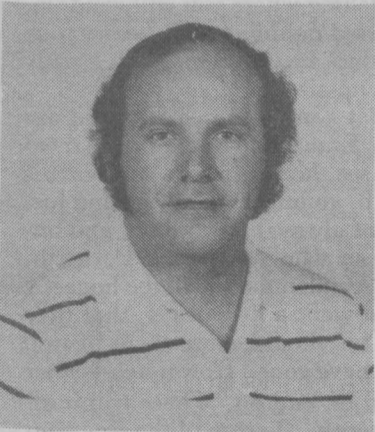
public — and that for far to long. Many who would write about our glorious heritage have never really heard the true story, or, if they have, would rather pervert the truth than tell it like it really was over the past two millenniums. Very few good books have been written on this subject and most so-called "Baptist Theological" schools do not recognize the truth that Christ started His Church (A

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GOSSIP

by Russell Shoemaker, Jr.

Lev. 19:16: "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am the Lord." Beloved, we should pray that God will put a harness on our tongue. This is a sin that we hear about and probably were



Russell Shoemaker, Jr.

involved in at one time or another. Gossip is a tool of Satan designed to hurt, and possibly to destroy, not only people but Churches as well, and to put enmity between Brother and Sister in Christ.

The tongue in our mouth is a great and powerful member that we cannot control without the power of the Holy Spirit. We can examine the power of the tongue in the Word of God. James 3:1-5: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they

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PREDESTINATION IN SALVATION

by Sam Wilson

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29).

Let me begin by saying, without apology or hesitation, that everything which occurs on the earth, in the heavens and under the sea, regardless of how magnificent or minute, is part of the predestinated purpose of a Sovereign God (Acts 15:18). The Word of God is clear from Genesis to Revelation concerning God's utter and complete control over His creation and His creatures. Prov. 16:4; Rom. 9:13; Eph. 1:4, 5; Acts 13:48. I am truly puzzled when I meet and read about men who have professed Christ, some even preached for long periods of time, have spent many years reading God's Word and cannot

see, even vehemently oppose, this blessed doctrine. I must question the attitude and results of their study. The only reason a person does not see this truth is,



Sam Wilson

I believe, that he enters the study of it with a biased heart, seeking only a knowledge that will help convince him of his present conviction.

Since the word "predestination" is mentioned in the Word

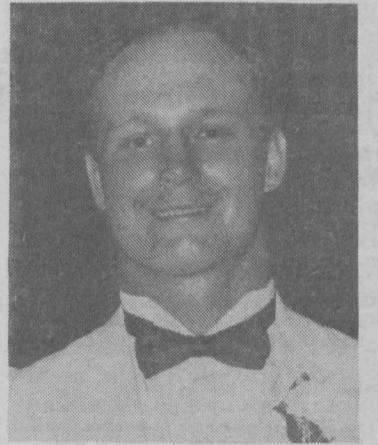
of God and Arminians don't want to be accused of completely denying the Bible, they profess to believe a form of predestination. I assure you that a form is all it is. Predestination being so prominent in God's Word that it could not be swept into a corner, the non-believers in this truth and to devise perversions of this doctrine in order to fit their mold of belief — it certainly does not fit God's Word. The Arminian first of all will profess to only a partial predestination, therefore limiting the power of God. Then — and this is one of their favorites — they teach a predestination according to foreknowledge. Let me say emphatically that predestination in salvation is according to foreknowledge, Rom. 8:29; I Peter 1:2. But, just as the Arminian belief on predestination is heresy, so is his belief on Bible

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PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

by Andy Proctor

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us



Andy Proctor

therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Oh, what a mystery and a privilege to come before the throne of a thrice holy God and that, boldly! Do we really consider it a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer? Prayer is so important that it will affect how strong a Christian you are and your rewards at

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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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LAZARUS AT THE RICH MAN'S GATE & THE DOGS CAME

by Sammy West
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My Text is found in Luke 16:19-26. The Scriptures teach us two things that are important. One thing of importance is man's weakness. There is no strength within man. Man cannot act apart from God. The other thing is that God is strong. Strength is with God. God acts independently from any other. Nothing or no one can assist God, it is impossible. Furthermore, God does not need any help or assistance from man.

Let's notice how our text teaches this.

There was a certain beggar.



Sammy West

Now the word certain has a special meaning here. This word would surely mean a sure thing is taking place. This man was surely a beggar and a particular beggar in God's view. Now a beggar is one who begs. He is in total dependence on another for his survival. This man is not fictitious but he is real in this passage of scripture. There was at this particular time a beggar. He no longer is in that position or condition. Something has changed.

Notice the position of this

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

"And the Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness... And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude... And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." (Gen. 16:7-13).

The doctrine of angels is a prominent doctrine in the Bible and would repay much study with great blessings. The word itself means messenger and is sometimes, but not frequently, applied to man. I am convinced that the angels of the churches in Revelation chapters two and three are the pastors of the churches. However, the word usually

refers to an order of created spirit beings. Some have fallen and are the angels of Satan, and I believe they are the demons of the Bible. Some are the elect angels who are preserved in the holiness of their original creation by the power of God.

Upon the pages of the Old Testament there are the footprints of a strange and mysterious being who is referred to as the Angel of the Lord. I desire to have us study together some of what the Bible says about this Being. Let us see if we can discover who He is and learn therefrom some lessons that should bless our souls.

The first Bible reference to this being, as well as the first Bible usage of the word "angel" is

found in the text in Genesis 16:7-13. There is a good law of hermeneutics, or principle of Bible interpretation known as "the law of first mention." It is that whenever a word or subject is first referred to in the Bible, usually and often there is much said then that helps in interpreting that word or subject throughout the Bible.

Let us look at this first Bible reference to the Angel of the Lord. This Being finds Hagar by a fountain of water as she flees from the hard dealings of her mistress, Sarai. I might suggest that this pictures how the Holy Spirit finds God's elect by and through the Word of God, but I forbear. But do note that

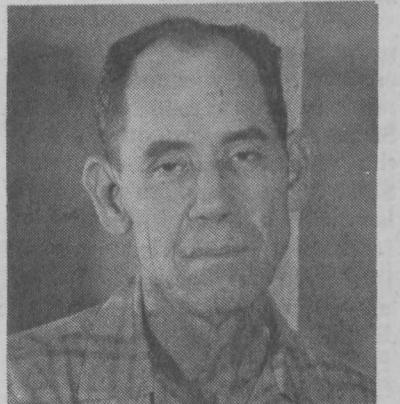
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MANNA

by James A. Pruitt
(Now in Glory)

Editor's note: Brother Alfred Pruitt was a long time reader of The Baptist Examiner. He was very faithful to the truths of God's Word. It was my privilege to know him only briefly. I visited him in the hospital a little while before his death. I met his family through Brother Pruitt's sickness. It was my honor to be asked to preach his funeral. Brother Pruitt left a great testimony behind of a good life and faithfulness to God's Word. Late in his life, he felt forced to leave the church where he had long labored in the service of God. The church had adopted Amillennialism, and Brother Pruitt could not support his false doctrine. I am glad that I had the opportunity to briefly know this dear brother, and become acquainted with his family.

Let us turn to the 16th chapter of the book of Exodus. The 16th chapter of the book of Exodus tells us about the "Manna."



James A. Pruitt

"And they took their journey (that is the tour of

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THE BAPTIST PEOPLE
JOSEPH M. WILSON, EDITOR

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ANGEL

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He finds Hagar and not that she finds Him. Now this Being knows Hagar's name and that she was a servant and that Sarai was her mistress. This Bible asks Hagar questions that only a divine Being has authority to ask. In verse 9 this Being makes demands upon Hagar that she obey Him implicitly in what He says. In verse 10 this Being makes promises that indicate that He is more than man and more than a mere created being. He says that He will multiply her seed exceedingly, and remember that life is in the hands of a sovereign God and He alone can give it. In verse 13 Hagar refers to this Being as the Lord and calls Him the God of Seeing.

Now look at Genesis 18:1-19:1. Verse one tells us that "the Lord appeared to Abraham." and verse two informs us that "three men stood by him." Therefore, one of the three was God Almighty. I pause to point out that whenever angels appear to men in the Bible, they always appear as men. No halo. No wings. Just as men. At least this is usually the case. In verse nine we learn that this man knew the name of Abraham's wife. In verse ten this Being promises to cause Sarah to have a son.

Now Sarah and Abraham were past the age of having children, and it would take a miracle for them to have a child. So Sarah laughed upon hearing this. This Being knew that Sarah laughed though she only laughed within herself, and He rebuked her for it. In verse 14 this Being asks the question: "is anything too hard for the Lord?" Thus identifying Himself and His promise with God and God's almighty power. In verse 17 and following, this

Being identifies Himself as the Lord and reveals to Abraham what He is going to do to Sodom. Verse 22 informs us that the two men who were really angels went towards Sodom but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. Verse 33 informs us that the Lord went His way as soon as He left communing with Abraham. Genesis 19:1 informs us that the other two men of 18:2 were angels and they came to Sodom.

Now look at Genesis 22:11-18 as we meet the Angel of the Lord again. Abraham, in what is probably the greatest human example of obedient faith in the Bible, has knife in hand and is about to slay Isaac. The Angel



Joe Wilson

of the Lord cries to Abraham, and upon Abraham's response, tells him to spare his son. What blessed words were these! This Angel of the Lord refers to Himself as God in verse 12. Abraham recognizes this fact and names the place Jehovah-jireh. In verse 15 the Angel of the Lord calls to Abraham again and in verse 16 calls Himself the Lord, and in verse 17 and 18 makes promises that only a Divine Being could make.

In Genesis 31:11-13, this strange Being appears again and is referred to this time as The Angel of God, and in verse 13 He calls Himself the God of Bethel. In Genesis 32 we have that mysterious night scene of wrestling match between Jacob and a mysterious Assailant. How the commentators wrestle with this wrestling match. Who was the man who wrestled with Jacob through that long night til the break of day? Jacob knew who He was for he named the place Peniel, which means "the face of God."

Now look at Exodus 3:2-6 and we meet this person again. Moses sees a bush burning with fire but not destroyed thereby. Moses turns aside to examine this strange sight. The Angel of the Lord is in the bush. He sees Moses turn aside. In verse 2 we read, "the angel of the Lord," but when this Being speaks in verse 4, we read, "The Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush." So the Angel of the Lord, the Lord, and God all refer to the same Divine Person. In verse 6, this Angel of the Lord refers to Himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. He tells of His knowledge of the condition of the Children of Israel and informs Moses of His purpose to deliver them.

Now notice Exodus 23:20-23. Here is the promise that an Angel will go with Israel in their journeys and give them leadership and victory. They are strongly warned to obey this Angel. They are told that the name of the Lord is in this Angel. "Name" refers to the Being and Attributes of Deity, and these are in this Angel.

Now look at Joshua 5:13-6:2. I do urge you to ignore chapter division as you read the Bible. So often they obscure the Scripture. Chapter 6 here continues the incident of the last part of chapter 5. Joshua is the leader of the Lord's armies. He is surveying Jericho and studying how to attack the city. Likely he is praying about the matter. A Man appears to him with a drawn sword. Joshua asks if the Man is for them or against them. The Man replies that He is the Captain of the Lord's hosts and orders Joshua to remove his shoes as he is standing on holy ground. Then continuing without a break this Man - this Captain of the Lord's host - gives Joshua the battle plan for the defeat of Jericho in chapter 6, and this Man is referred to in 6:2 as the Lord.

Now look at Judges 13:16-20. Manoah and his wife are without children, but deeply desirous for a child. The Angel of the Lord appears and informs them they are to have a child, and orders them how to act during the carrying of the child and how to deal with

the child after birth. Manoah asks the Angel of the Lord what is His name. The Angel replies that it is secret. This Hebrew word "secret" is the same as the word "wonderful" in Isaiah 9:6. We know who the Wonderful One is in Isaiah 9:6. Well, the same name is given to the Angel of the Lord in Judges 13:18. Furthermore, verse 19 tells us that the Angel of the Lord did wondrously. In verse 22 Manoah lets us know that he is aware of the fact that in seeing the Angel of the Lord, he has seen God.

Now these are but a small portion of the Old Testament teaching about the Angel of the Lord, but they are enough to teach us clearly the doctrine relative to this Being. And the rest of the Bible on this subject is in harmony with what we learn from these Scriptures that I have given. Now let us notice some lessons we can learn from these Scriptures and this subject.

We learn that the Angel of the Lord is a Divine Being. He is God. Now there is no possibility of doubt about this. If I have not proven from the Word of God the doctrine that the Angel of the Lord is a Divine Person, I should despair of proving anything. I tell you that you can as definitely prove the Deity of the Angel of the Lord as you can the Deity of Jesus Christ or the Father or the Holy Spirit. The Angel of the Lord is God.

From this we see and can easily prove that the Old Testament teaches a plurality in the Godhead. Many seem determined to make the plurality of the Godhead to be a doctrine confined to the New Testament. Not so, beloved. There is God the Father and there is a Divine messenger whom He sends forth known as the Angel of the Lord. There is the Sender and there is the Sent One with the message. From this truth then, we see plurality in the Godhead in the Old Testament. From other Old Testament Scriptures we learn that this plurality consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and all of this is clear Old Testament teaching.

But the main lesson I want you to learn from the Scriptures studied in this article is that the Angel of the Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, beloved, believe me, the footprints of the

Angel of the Lord on the pages of the Old Testament are none other than the footprints of our wonderful and adorable Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The appearance of the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is a Christophany. It is a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ in the form of a man. At His incarnation He joined His Deity with a human nature for the rest of eternity. But previous to that, He often appeared in human form as the Angel of the Lord.

This fact can be connected with Jesus being called "the Word" in John chapter 1 and other places. A word reveals. A word gives a message. I have something in my mind. You do not know what it is. I speak it forth to you in words. I reveal by my words to you what is in my mind. So God, in His supreme glory is unknown and unknowable. He has in His

mind what we can never know. But Lo, behold and wonder and worship, Jesus Christ comes forth. He is the "Word of God." He reveals God to us. He reveals the mind and purposes of God to us. He is the "Word." He is the "Angel." We see Him, we know Him, we learn of Him, we love Him, and behold, in so doing, we see, and know and learn of and love God.

This fact explains I Corinthians 10:4: "For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." What a mysterious Scripture! What on earth does it mean? The doctrine of the Angel of the Lord explains it to us. The Angel of the Lord is Jesus Christ. Seen or unseen, this Angel was with the Children of Israel in all their journeys. Did they have manna from Heaven? The Angel of the Lord

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FROM THE EDITOR

"...from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to His own place" (Acts 1:25). "...but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13).

Esau and Jacob saved. Wow! Would you believe it? Yet I was told personally by the "daddy" of the "Priesthood of the Church" doctrine that Esau was saved. I heard that another "Priesthood" man was teaching that Esau and Judas were saved. Now, I have before me a paper, "The Hardshell Baptists," in which I read, "I believe that Judas was a child of God." Frankly, I am amazed. I never thought that anyone except liberals and other out-right deniers of the Bible would ever imagine that these two men were saved children of God.

Of course, the two men were not saved. Esau was a reprobate, eternally the object of God's hatred. How anyone can image that he was saved is totally beyond my comprehension. If Esau was saved, then what did the love of God do for Jacob that the hatred of God did not do for Esau? Judas fell through transgression and went to his own place. Judas was not cleansed by the blood of Jesus, (John 13:10-11). Judas was a devil, (John 6:70). Judas was not kept by Jesus, (John 17:12). In the light of the clear and repeated teaching of the Bible, I say again that I am utterly amazed that anyone could even imagine that Judas and Esau were saved children of God.

However, these two things illustrate the fecundity and absurdity of heresy. I have often said that heresy breeds heresy. Heresy loves company and rarely, if ever, travels alone. The one who edits The Hardshell Baptist, and said Judas was a child of God, was once in our camp. He went anti-Sunday School. He joined the Hardshells. He went post trib, then Amillennial. Now he is saying that Judas was saved. Brethren, beware of heresy. Beware of going astray on a single truth. There is no telling where you will wind up. I am sure that, if when this man started dabbling with heresy, one had told him he would go as far as he has, he would have felt grossly insulted, and vehemently denied the possibility of such a thing.

Then the men who are teaching that Esau was saved started out post trib, then went priesthood, now Esau is saved. Some of them are also hardshell on the gospel. You see, heresy breeds heresy. It is seldom that a man will leave the truth, go into some error, and just stop at that. Usually (Thank God, not always) they go on, and on, and on. I would call on my brethren who have gone Post-trib, Priesthood, Hardshell on the gospel, Amillennial to tell me honestly if they ever dreamed, when they first went a little ways, that they would go as far as they now have. This should cause them to stop and think. Brethren, see how far you have gone? How much farther will you go? Many have gone on and on and on. Where will it all end? I warn you that heresy breeds heresy. Beware of the first step in that direction.

Then this new doctrine of "Judas and Esau were saved" shows us the absurdity of heresy. Not only does heresy breed heresy, but it breeds absurdities. Truly, it is simply absurd and ridiculous to teach that these two men were saved. It seems that there is something about heresy that attacks the common sense of men, and they go into the most wild and weird of speculations, setting forth such fantasies of their disordered imaginations as if they were the truths of God's Word. Look at some of the absurdities of some Hardshells. Agrippa was a saved man because he said "almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian." Felix was a saved man because he "trembled." Look at some of the Priesthood absurdities. One is a child of God if saved, but not a son of God unless in a Baptist Church. All believers are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The, "dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." who in Revelation 22:15 are without the city are saved people in glory who were not in Baptist churches. Wow! Would you believe a man could be so foolish as to teach that? Yet many have and do.

Heresy breeds more heresy. Heresy leads to the forsaking of common sense as well as the Word of God. Heresy leads to weird and wild absurdities. This new doctrine of "Jacob and Esau being saved children of God" is just another example and illustration of this fact. Brethren, beware of heresy. Don't take the first step down that road, for who knows where you might wind up?

ANGEL

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provided it. Did they have water from the rock? The Angel of the Lord gave it to them. Did they win great victories? The Angel of the Lord led them forth and gave them victory. Oh yes, every moment of time and every step of the journey — seen or unseen — the Angel of the Lord was with them, and the Angel of the Lord is Jesus Christ, and so Jesus Christ was with them and I Corinthians 10:4 plainly says so.

This fact helps explain Micah 5:2. This Scripture tells of the birthplace of the Messiah — the spot on the earth that shall be blessed and made famous forever by the birth of Jesus Christ. But Micah informs us that this one who shall be born in Bethlehem of Judah, is one "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." The Babe of Bethlehem has an eternal past. He has been going forth long before Bethlehem. How can we explain this. Well, it needs just believing more than it needs explaining. But it is partly explained by the fact that Jesus, long before Bethlehem, had been going forth as the Angel of the Lord in blessing to His people.

Now get this sentence if you forget all else. The truth about the Angel of the Lord as set forth in this article shows forth the eternal concern of Jesus Christ for His people and His activities on their behalf. Please read that again. The activities of the Angel of the Lord show forth the activities of Jesus Christ for His people. And please know that they are as great now as they ever were. What are some of those activities?

The Angel of the Lord was the Revealer of God and the ways of God to God's people. So Jesus Christ reveals God to us. I know, love, and worship Him. In so doing, I know, love and adore the Triune God of the Bible. I study the Bible about Jesus Christ. I get to know Him better through fellowship with Him. And as I do this, I learn more and more about the Triune God.

The Angel of the Lord was the Leader of God's people. Jesus is my Leader. He tells me through His Word what I am to do and not to do. He leads me through His ordering of the events of Providence. He leads me as He speaks to my soul, and He does speak to the souls of His people. The Angel of the Lord guided the children of Israel through the wilderness. Where to stop. How long to stay there. When to start out again. Where to go as they went forth. The Angel of the Lord was in the Cloud and in the Pillar of Fire. He was leading them. So does the dear Lord Jesus lead us today. Oh, to be aware of this! To look for and ask for that leading. And to follow it when it is given.

The Angel of the Lord was the Provider of the needs of the children of Israel. Two million people in a waste and howling wilderness. No convenient stores or supermarkets nearby. No clothing goods stores, no drug stores. What will they do? How can they possibly survive? The Angel of the Lord is there. He provides food. He provides water. He heals them of their sickness. He causes their clothes to last for forty years. He sees that all needs are met. So does Jesus supply the needs of His people today. He supplies all

their needs according to His riches in glory. They shall lack nothing that they truly need.

The Angel of the Lord was the Protector of Israel. He led them in battle and gave them every victory they achieved. It was not by might or strength they conquered. So Jesus protects us, and leads us and gives us victory in our lives and in our service for Him. Not always. Oh, not always. Not as often as it should have been and could have been. I say this to my shame. But to God's glory, I will say that I have known the victory. I have had victories in my life. I have had victories in serving the Lord. Oh, blessed hours! Blessed songs of victory over some problem, some temptation, some trouble. Yes, praise God! I have known some victories. And I know where they come from. Jesus is the one who is the Giver of Victory to His people.

The Angel of the Lord — unseen or seen — was the ever-present Companion of the children of Israel. I Corinthians 10:4 says that Rock followed them. That Rock was the Angel of the Lord. That Rock was Jesus Christ — always there — ever-present. And so it is with Jesus. He is always there. He is ever-present. He will never leave or forsake a one of His own. We may not be aware of His presence. We may not draw the blessings we could from His presence, but He is there. In the dark hours of the night, in the sadness, in the conflict, He is there. And, oh, how blessed it is when we become aware of His presence and turn to Him for leadership, for strength, for supplies, for victory, and yea — when there is nothing else, no special need — just to turn to Him for companionship! Oh, no earthly joy can compare with the blessedness of just having companionship and fellowship with Jesus Christ! Yes, He is always there.

The Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament — Jesus Christ in the New Testament. One and the same Being. Doing the same wonderful things for the people of God. I hope that from this day forth, you will never be able to read the words "the Angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament without there discerning with Spirit-taught discernment the wonderful person of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless you all!

MANNA

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Israel) from Elim, (and we're told in the margin there that the word Elim means trees) and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month (that is May) after their departing out of the land of Egypt (v. 1). "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:" (v. 2). (We see here a rebellion of the people, because they begin to murmur.)

"And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, (they did not only murmur against Moses, but they murmured against God, because when they murmur against God's servants, they were murmuring against God Himself. They not only murmured and complained, but they also took the name of the Lord in vain

because they said, "Would to God." In the ordinary frame of mind they were not taking the name of the Lord with any reverence of manner). Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, (see they had all forgot to show that God had delivered them from the fear of bondage of the Egyptians) when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; (they lied there, of course, because they were slaves in Egypt and there's no indication in the Word of God that they sat by the flesh pots and that they ate bread to the full. As a matter of fact, their food was the fall of their spirit) for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (v. 3). (See they had already forgotten that God had promised that they would worship Him in Mount Sinai, and of course they had not come to Sinai yet, but they forgot that God told them that they would worship Him in this Mount, that is, in Mount Sinai).

"Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you;" Well, we see the Reverend God saying what He said here, that He would rain bread from heaven. It would seem, if we had our way about it (for our thoughts are not God's thoughts), that we would have not rained bread from heaven, but we would rain down fire and brimstone and devoured them. But God says, "I will rain bread from heaven for you; (and here you see a great manifestation of Grace) and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily: And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: (v. 6).

And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord; for that He heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? And Moses said, This shall be, when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against Him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord" (verses 4-8).

"And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the Lord: for He hath heard your murmurings" (verse 9). (Well, they were like us, or rather we are like them in many ways. We murmur and complain about the smallest thing, because we so soon forget the Grace of God, the mercy of God, and the love of God that we have extended to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. We murmur about insignificant things and those murmurs are against the Lord. We ought to bear in mind that when we murmur and complain about things in this life, we are murmuring against God, because all things are ordered of God Himself. Romans 8:28 says that "all things work together for good to them that love God..."

"And it came to pass as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud" (verse 10). (So there is the promise that they would see the glory of the Lord was fulfilled, because they did see His glory in a cloud).

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, Speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not (or knew not) what it was. And Moses said unto them. This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses" (verses 11-22).

Now just a few thoughts in regard to the Manna as it concerns or rather, somewhat of an analogy respecting the Word of God, that is both the written Word and the Word Incarnate. The Manna, the definition of Manna of course is, What is it? They didn't know what it was. Certainly it was something of a surprise to them that God rained down Manna from heaven for them and it was a strange looking thing. They did not know what it was. The same applies in the natural world, that is, among the unregenerate people of this world, concerning the Word of God. They don't know what it is. We hear much said about the Bible, but unregenerate men, really don't know it in the same way that the regenerate world does, because the unregenerate man is not able to discern what it is. Although, on the other hand, the regenerate man is able to discern what it is, able to understand it in a Scriptural sense, that it is the Word of God.

I know you could ask almost any unsaved man, any unregenerate man, if he believes that the Bible is the Word of God and he would no doubt

answer, yes, he does. But I say he doesn't, because if he did, in the spiritual sense and spiritual form of view, his regard for it would be much greater. He would treasure it from his heart, as God's people do.

Let us notice first of all that the Manna was a supernatural gift. It was a gift from God because in the fourth verse it says, "Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you;" Not fire and brimstone which, of course, they deserved, not to consume them for their murmurings and complaining, but God manifested His Grace here, just as He manifested His Grace for you and me, when we were dead in sins, with no regard for God, no use for Him, taking His name in vain, trampling His Mercy under our feet. God did not consume us, though He could have done so, and that justly. But instead He manifested His Grace to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, and we're saved by His Grace. "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no" (v. 4).

Now, there's one way, and I think only one way, that any man can prove that he is a Christian, that he is a child of God. And that is his attitude toward the Word of God. We hear a lot of people claim to be Christians, a lot of people profess to be Christians, a lot of people hold a lot of different views concerning the Word of God. It's very, very few people who hold a true view of God's Word concerns His absolute Sovereignty. You'll find very few that hold to that, and believe that and love that. The majority of people talk about Grace, and to some extent they admire Grace, but even so they actually don't believe in Grace for they try to mingle Grace with their own works. Grace and works do not mix any more than oil and water will mix. And so, in that way, they make null and void the Word of God insofar as they're concerned. They do not see the Grace of God as a supernatural gift, they do not see the Lord Jesus Christ as a supernatural gift, and Jesus Christ, of course, was God's supernatural gift to His people. We have no better Scripture to stress that than is found in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave..." (He gave) and when God gives something, that implies it's being received, when God gives something that is a gift. And so, John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," and Jesus Christ was God's supernatural gift to His elect people.

Also, in the sixth chapter of the gospel of John in the 47th verse, we hear our Lord here as He speaks and says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Verse 48 says, "I am that bread of life." Now He's comparing Himself also to the Manna. Verse 49 says, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." Verse 50 says, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, and a man may eat thereof, and not

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He that believes almost, believes not, but doubts. A ship which is almost sound cannot keep the water out.

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

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

Is the way a Christian lives as important as giving the gospel to the unsaved?

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Affirmed. Let us not be so unwise as to think people will believe oral testimony concerning Christ if it is not supported by effective action. It has been aptly stated: "We tell more by our walk than we do by our talk." The life of the gospeler should be consistent with his message, lest he be rebuked with the words: "Your life speaks so loud, I cannot hear what you say."

Eph. 1:6 "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Christ has redeemed His people to the glory of God, and His redemptive purpose shall be realized in this present evil world, as well as in the next world. Paul said speaking of the here and hereafter: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). The briefest reflection of the spiritual mind and the exegesis of this text becomes apparent. "...Christ liveth in me..." (Gal. 2:20), that is, in and out of the pulpit.

I think it is the consensus of the forum readers that the Apostle Paul was one of the greatest, if not the greatest gospel preacher of New Testament times, and I am sure it is agreed by the same that Paul's preaching was made all the more powerful by his godly life. For a God honoring effect the gospel witness must be balanced or underwritten by a godly life. Hence, Paul says to the Thessalonians: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe" (I Thess. 2:10).

"A bishop must be... of good behaviour" (I Tim. 3:2). But let it be understood, it is not only the "behaviour" of a bishop that must be good, but of all those who would honor Christ. The qualifications of bishop given in I Tim. 3 and Titus 1 can be applied to all mature Christian men with the exception of holding office in the church, i.e. Pastor or Teacher. God does not have one standard of holiness for the Pastor, and a standard which demands less holiness on the part of other members of the church. It was to the church collectively, Paul said: "...We should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4).

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling symbol" (I Cor. 13:1). Gospel orthodoxy void of

love for the household of faith is a detriment to the church rather than a benefit. For what good is an orthodox Sunday saint who is an ornery Monday scoundrel? Christ said: "...Love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34, 35). Our martyred Baptist forefathers were not fanatics, but examples of Christ, and the faith they died for is in our day worth living for.

Gospel witness apart from godly living is the ultimate exercise in futility. To be effectual in our gospel witness we must be an antagonist of whatever is evil. Simply, God will not adorn the gospel witness of a hypocrite with success, no matter how orthodox it may be. The devil is the arch-hypocrite, and he can transform himself into an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14), but I am persuaded God does not use Satan to call out His elect. Clean drinking water must be borne in a clean vessel in order to stay clean, lest it do more harm than good.

The word of Christ should not be merely the rule of our gospel witness, but also the rule of our life or conduct. Precept without practice, is like arming a traitor and sending him into battle, he will soon go over to the enemy.

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It most certainly is. One cannot give the gospel to the unsaved in an effective manner if he is not living a godly life. There is more in the Scripture about godly living than there is about witnessing.

We are constantly warned to not yield to the old fleshly nature. We who have been saved are told to "...put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). We have been taught to "...put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24). Passages such as this could be multiplied as we look through the Scriptures. We are constantly admonished to live godly and not allow ourselves to sin. ALAS, WE FAIL SO MUCH. Paul said: "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I

find not; for the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. 7:15-19). Paul is pointing out that when we sin we do things that we hate. (Many people find it difficult to believe this.) Now, brethren, if Paul acknowledged this, how can any of us say that we are immune to doing anything against our godly nature? Our Lord made provision for us when we sin. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Thank God, He did not qualify or limit that statement.

At the beginning of my answer I said we cannot be an effective witness if we are not living godly. This is seen in David's prayer for forgiveness. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Ps. 51:12, 13).

In closing, let me remind you that we have the Holy Spirit within us. We are the temple of God, yet we can, and do, sin. When we do we grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). "Quench not the Spirit" (I Thess. 5:19). We do not lose the Spirit — nor lose our ability to serve God. David was used in a great way after he sinned. Paul, acknowledged his failure constantly and yet was used. Peter denied his Lord and lied and cursed about it and yet was used in a great way. When a man sins and asks for forgiveness, don't write him off. He can still be used.

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"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God" (I Peter 2:15, 16).

These passages as well as many more which could be quoted show the importance of the way a Christian should live. Paul wrote the church at Corinth and told them, "ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (II Cor. 3:2). Some have well said that the only Bible that some men will ever read is the life that we Christians live from day to day. We do as much witnessing for our Lord by the lives we live as we do by what we say.

Yes, it is just as important for us to live lives that glorify God as it is to present the gospel to the unsaved. Our lives should be a true witness for Christ. As the world looks upon us, they should see some of the patience of Christ, the meekness of Christ, the purity of Christ, as well as something of the love of Christ. In I Peter 2:21, 22, we are told, "—Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:—". If our lives show forth some of the characteristics of Christ, then we may effectively present the gospel to the lost. If our lives do not show forth a life that is different from that of the world, what we say will not be heard. The old saying, "What you do sounds so loud that I can not hear what you say" is too often true in our witnessing.

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Galatians 2:14: "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, if thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

The point Paul is trying to make in our text is, don't try to tell other people to live one way, if you are not doing so yourself. To me, this question should be easily answered by even a babe in Christ. I refuse to put one commandment of God's Word against another. I hope that no one would try to justify their failure in living right, by saying they witness to lost souls; and I hope no one would justify not witnessing to the lost by saying they are living right. To do either of these is to make mockery of God's Word.

Let me say most emphatically, that the way a Christian lives is of the utmost importance. We live in a day when practically everyone claims to be a Christian. That which separates, in the eyes of the world, those who are truly saved and those who are not, is the way they live. We should always be conscious of the fact that we are God's representatives on this earth and should live like it. We should strive to live as Jesus lived when He was on the earth. I wish God's people would get back to living good, holy and righteous lives. I had a preacher in Gladwin tell me that if he preached much on holy living they would run him off. He should not have to be run off, perhaps he should just leave such a church (so called). Please do not slight in any way, shape, or form the fact that according to The Bible we are to live godly lives.

The question asks is this kind of living as important as giving the gospel to the lost. My answer to this question is yes: but it is a qualified yes. As far as I am concerned, you can not live right as a Christian unless you give the gospel to the lost. Witnessing is a very important part of living right. If you do not live right, then you should start. Your wrong living could have a very negative effect on the Gospel you give out. In summa-

tion; yes, the way a Christian lives is as important as giving the gospel, but giving the gospel is as important as living right. May we do both. God bless you all!

MANNA

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die." Verse 51 says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." So our Lord Jesus Christ, like the Manna that He rained down from heaven for the children of Israel, is the bread that came down from heaven for the people of God. It is a life-sustaining thing that God has given for His people, both in the written Word and in the Word Incarnate. And the Lord Jesus Christ is, of course, the Word Incarnate as we're told in the first chapter of John, verse 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, He was the Word Incarnate. He was God's supernatural gift to His people.

Notice, again, that the Manna came right to where the people were. They didn't have to labor for it. A lot of people today, resting under a false delusion continue to try to work their way to heaven. They continue to do those things that they believe would be acceptable to God. They're not realizing that there's only one thing that can be accepted by God, and that is the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only one sacrifice, and Jesus Christ is God's sacrifice for us, because He was sacrificed in our place and having been sacrificed in our place, He became our substitute. But men don't see that today, they think that there's something that they have got to do. As a matter of fact, there's nothing that man can do whatsoever. There is, however, much that man can do after he is saved, and much that he should do, because when God saves us, He does not save us to simply sit idle, God saves us for service.

In the Church that service is not always uniform among God's people. Some serve in a greater capacity, some in a lesser capacity. Nevertheless, I believe that God saves His people for service. And that's exactly what we ought to do. If we do nothing more than come to the Lord's house, at the appointed time and participate in the worship service and sit under the preaching of the Word of God, then we are in that degree serving God.

But the manna came right to where the people were. In the 13th and 14th verses, "And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." So God rained it down from heaven and it came right to where they were. They didn't have to go out and labor for it, they did not have to labor to bring it down from heaven. All they had to do was go out and gather it. It was true that that constituted a certain degree of labor, but the labor that they put forth in the

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The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

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

What does the word "naked" mean in I Samuel 19:24; Isaiah 20:2; and John 21:7?

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Technically, naked means without clothes or covering. The word has different shades of meaning in the original tongue, from being completely uncovered to partially or poorly clad.

I have heard people say... "I feel naked without my watch," or ring, or some other item they were used to wearing and had forgotten to put on. Depending on the place, public or private, one would be considered naked or not while having on their under-garments.

I Samuel 19 is describing the aciton of those sent by Saul to slay David. They were so affected by the prophets prophesying "the spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul..." (v. 20), that they forgot their assignment. Therefore, Saul himself decides to go to Naioth to do the job they were unable to accomplish. The Spirit of God intercedes on David's behalf, and in verse 24 Saul is also spell-bound. He discards his armour and weapons and his bulky outer garments and lies naked in comparison to those normally dressed for warfare. I believe he was partially naked.

Isaiah 20 is a continuation of the account of the defeat of Egypt and Ethiopia by the Assyrians from chapter 19. Their shame, fear, and helplessness is symbolized by Isaiah in taking off his shoes and sackcloth, an outer garment worn by mourners, while retaining his tunic or undergarment. But, the Egyptians and Ethiopians shall be led away captive... "naked and barefoot even with their buttocks uncovered..." (v. 4). More shameful even than Isaiah's illustration as he walked about and declared... "Behold, such is our expectation..."

In John 21 Jesus appears once again to His Apostles who were offshore in the sea of Tiberias, fishing all night but catching nothing. Jesus standing on the shore unrecognized by His Apostles, instructed them to cast their nets on the other side of the ship. Doing so, they miraculously filled their nets with fish. The Apostles then realized Jesus was on the sea shore about 300 feet away. (As near to the shore as the larger boats could approach without grounding.) Peter who had taken off his fisherman's coat, no doubt to work the nets more easily, was naked down to his vest, (a knitted vesture that covered the body something like our long underwear) and upon being told that Jesus was on shore, he put on his coat and jumped into the water to wade to shore, not waiting for the smaller boat launched by the

other Apostles to reach the shore to greet Jesus.

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One who is a king usually wears kingly clothes. This was the case with Saul. I do not think Saul disrobed himself of his entire clothing but only that which pertained to him as king. Thus he disrobed himself of kingly apparel. This is the sense in which he was "naked" before Samuel. "Naked" so far as his kingly authority went.

Isaiah 20:2. The instruction from the Lord for the sackcloth to be loosed from the loins was for a sign. This sign was that the Egyptians and Ethiopians would be led away destitute, lose everything, be carried away under embarrassment. It is said that Isaiah walked "naked" and barefoot three years for a sign. I cannot believe that he went this length of time without any clothes whatsoever on his body, but that he went without his outer covering, his sackcloth.

The case of Peter in John 21:7. Peter put on his fisher's coat. This was an outer piece of clothing they wore while fishing, particular in this type of fishing. No doubt it was used as a protection to the other clothing or an aid in their work in fishing. Peter was possibly ashamed because he was caught without it.

I do not believe that these Scriptures have reference to the fact that they were void of any clothing whatsoever. "Naked" here means that they did not have on the proper clothing that was suitable to their work or office, such as the fisher's coat for the fisherman. The king's robe, or what garments they wore distinguished them from others.

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The Hebrew word "naked" in I Samuel 19:24 is used sometimes for nude, and other times for partly nude. Saul was jealous of David and tried to kill him. David was a man after God's own heart, and was God's anointed, to be King at His good pleasure, therefore, no man could touch his life. God brought shame to Saul. Saul, who hated David and lied before God, was seized with the spirit

of prophecy and his mind was turned from David to prophesying before Samuel. He went into a trance and stripped off his royal robe and his outer clothes. Leaving on, no doubt, his under garments and was in this condition a day and a night. It does not mention just what took place when he came to himself, but I'm sure that he was embarrassed. Imagine a King lying half naked, and without his royal clothes. Without his uniform of royalty, he was considered naked. This was the price paid for trying to touch God's anointed.

In Isaiah 20:2 God told Isaiah to loose the sackcloth from his loins, and put off his shoes. He did so, walking naked and barefoot. The word "loin" is the part of the body between the lower rib and hip bone. Sackcloth was commonly worn as an emblem of mourning. However, it was worn by some prophets and was regarded, in some degree, as their appropriate dress. This garment was made of the coarse hair of the goat, and was worn as a girdle around the loins. The third verse tells us that he walked naked and barefoot three years. Now we know that God would not ask His prophet to walk around three years naked, when He teaches us that we are to dress modestly. The word here does not mean nude. Isaiah was naked as far as his usual dress, he was not dressed as a prophet, but dressed in a way to be a sign to Egypt and Ethiopia. Verse four shows this. Egypt and Ethiopia would be led away captive by the Assyrians, either stripped or in rags, as Isaiah was in stripping down to bare essentials.

Now let us look into the New Testament concerning Peter being naked. Look at John 21:7 "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fishers coat unto him, for he was naked, and did cast himself into the sea." Peter had been fishing all night, and, no doubt was very hot and tired. Therefore he shed his fisher's coat leaving only his under garments. In a sense he was naked, because he was not fully dressed. Vine, a Greek scholar said, A person was said to be naked whether he was without clothing, or had taken off his outer garment, and was clad in a light undergarment. When John said, "there's the Lord," Peter quickly put his fisher's coat on and swam to the shore to meet the Lord.

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Any effort to define words requires the use of some reference materials such as a dictionary or concordance. I am using two sources in my attempt to define the word "naked." They are Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies and Vine's New Testament Dictionary. Wilson's defines the word in the Old Testament as being without clothing or stripped of the outer garment designating rank. Vine's defines the New Testament word as being unclothed or the outer garment laid aside.

In the three instances given in the question, the word naked should be taken to mean physically unclothed or physical nakedness. This would be the primary meaning of the word.

There is the outer or secondary meaning given for his word which I believe will give us an insight to a relationship with God relative to man's spiritual condition. Read Genesis 3:7 "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." The word naked is the same and has reference to the condition of Adam and Eve. This is the meaning that speaks to us of nothing being hidden from God and all things being open before his eyes. In Hebrews 4:13 it states "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked (New Testament definition) and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." In the three instances given, each man was physically unclothed and with the clothing went any designation of their rank (King, prophet, apostle). They are then seen spiritually as God sees all men, without respect of person.

MANNA

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gathering of the Manna, had nothing to do with bringing the Manna down from heaven.

In the same way, God has provided us with the Word of God, we have free access to it. We are blessed above that that we can even imagine in having the Word of God. The responsibility lies upon us to make proper use of the Word of God. We do not make proper use of God's Word without a certain degree of labor. We must go out and gather it up. We must study the Word of God. We must read the Word of God in order to learn of God. So, the Manna came right to where the people were. On the other hand, when our Lord Jesus Christ came down to this earth, He came to the people. The people didn't go to Him. You'll notice if you read through the four gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — that gives us the record of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ, from the very time that He was born, until the very time that He was crucified, you'll learn that He always sought out His people. They did not seek Him. He sought them out, because He said that He came to seek and to save that which was lost. But a man lost and dead in trespasses and sins, being absolutely unthinkable as to his deep need, could find no reason for seeking the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither does man today, he does not seek the Lord. I know the Word of God says in the book of Isaiah, to seek the Lord while He may be found, but I think that applies to God's saved people, not to lost people. The Lord

Jesus Christ always came right to where the people were. He sought them, they did not seek Him.

Let's notice again that the Manna was small in size. In verse 14 it says, "And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." Well, there's a lesson to learn here I think, in regard to the written Word of God. The Word of God can be compressed into a book so small, that they can put it in their pocket, and that is the whole revealed Word of God, in the book we call the Bible. So small that we can put it in our pocket. Now, man could not write such a book. He would have to write volume upon volume, more volumes than you can imagine. But the whole revealed will of God is compressed into such a small book, so small that they can put it in their pocket. So, we see an analogy there, it was small in size, a small round thing. And notice again that the Manna was white in color, the white in the Word of God is always an emblem of purity. The Word of God is pure, absolutely pure, and God says so. In the book of Psalm chapter 12, verse 6, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Notice what David says in Psalm 12:6 regarding the Word of God. We're talking not only about the written Word, we're talking about the Word Incarnate as well. Psalm 12:6 says, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Verse seven says, "Thou shalt keep them. O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

In the 119th Psalm, the 140th verse, "Thy word is very pure:" and when he says pure, he's speaking in the strictest sense of the word, that is, tried or refined, "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it." And in the 30th chapter of the book of Proverbs, notice here what the Preacher says, in Proverbs 30 and 5: "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him." So, the Manna was small in size. I think there's a lesson, too, that we can learn from that. I think that can indicate the purpose of the symmetry of the word. The Manna was round, a small round thing, it had no rough edges, it had no angles, and so the Word of God is perfect in its symmetry. It is an absolute complete Word. It is all that man will ever need to know what he ought to know, or wants to know about God. Everything that we can ever desire to know about God in his life, is in the Word of God, because it's absolutely complete, perfect in its symmetry.

In closing, I'd like to point out that the Manna, was to be eaten. We, of course, compare that with the Word of God, that is the written Word, and also we can compare it with the Incarnate Word. The Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples that except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you — that concerns the Incarnate Word of

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QUESTION: — Who fell off a seat and broke his neck?

ANSWER: — Eli, First Samuel 4:15, 18. "Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see... And it came to pass, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy..."

MANNA

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God. That concerns the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Then, on the other hand, we consider the written Word. The Word of God is to be eaten and to eat the Word of God is simply to carefully study the Word of God and to learn about the Incarnate Word of God, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. so, the Manna could be eaten as a means of sustaining life, because remember that the people were on the verge of starvation, looking at it from the human side. But looking at it from the Divine side, they were not, because God had already made provision for their relief. God had already determined that He would rain down Manna from heaven for them and this Manna was given them to eat in order that their strength might be sustained and their well being. And so it is with God's people! Unless we eat, as it were, The Word of God, study The Word of God, learn of Christ from The Word of God, we'll have no spirit, we'll starve to death!

May God Bless You!

CHURCH

(Continued from Page 1)

Baptist Church) during His earthly ministry.

Because of "Higher Education" and their quest for new and better knowledge, they often do more harm to the truth than one realizes at a glance. An example can be given from the book, "Handbook of Denominations" by Dr. Frank S. Mead. "Baptists constitute one of the major Protestant forces in the United States... It is often heard among them that they have no founder but Christ and that Baptists have been preaching and practicing from the days of John the Baptist. That is true in a limited sense; there were certainly men and women holding what have come to be considered distinctly Baptist principles all across the years. But as a church, or as organized churches, they began in Holland and England."

Dr. Frank S. Mead continues in his book talking about "Landmark Baptists" and has this to say: "Landmarkism among Baptists is a position held by some concerning the nature of the church and certain details of church practice. The name originated with the writings of Dr. James Madison Pendleton and Dr. James

Robinson Graves in Kentucky and Tennessee, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, though Landmarkers insist that their concepts go back to the apostolic period.

"There are four distinguishing tenets of Landmarkism: 1. The church is only Local and visible... 2. The commission was given to the church... 3. Baptism to be valid must be administered under church authority... 4. There is a direct, historic succession of Baptist churches back to New Testament times..."

About eighteen years ago this preacher was told that you could not find Baptists as we know them before the Reformation Period. Because that person had earned his degree in Theology and held a Doctorate from one of the leading institutions of the day, it was assumed that he knew what he was talking about. Two years ago, a friend of mine who teaches for a well known Theological Seminary stated that one of the men on staff of that school has successfully proven that "Baptist Perpetuity" is just a myth. No wonder most of us no longer send our young people away to these "Theological Schools of Non-sense."

Thus for the first time in "Church History" we are finding men in the pulpit who have never been taught the truth regarding "Baptist History." Consequently, far too many of our present day Congregations are of the general opinion that Baptists are Protestants. Their pastor does not know the issues. How can you expect the people to know if their pastor doesn't have the answers?

Dr. James R. Graves once wrote these words, "Nothing can be more becoming a Christian than a general knowledge of Church History." Bless God, he was absolutely correct in his thinking. Our Public Schools believe that it is very important to educate the child and teach them where they came from and a little bit about their past heritage. Unfortunately our "Baptist Churches" have failed to educate their own people regarding their "Baptist Heritage." For that we are far too much the loser.

Our Baptist Heritage is there—all we need to do is uncover it with a little bit of hard work. The key to this whole issue is found in the Word of God: Matthew 16:18. "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." Three things should be noted right here before we go any further. (1). The Lord Jesus Christ was talking about "A Local Congregation" not a so-called "Universal, Invisible Church." (2). The Lord Jesus Christ said that HE was the builder of the TRUE CHURCH, not the Saints of God. If nothing else, the Saints of God are the material out of which the Lord will take and build His Church. (3). The Lord Jesus Christ never gave the job of continuing His Work to the various Denominations. It is my personal opinion that the Denominations are nothing more than human inventions and are unknown to the Holy Scriptures.

Elder Roy Mason, Th.D. wrote many years ago his book, "The Church that Jesus Built" and asked this question, "If the church that Jesus established has not been perpetuated, then His promise

has failed. If His promise concerning the church has failed, then is it not possible that His promises concerning our salvation and destiny will in like manner fail?" Beloved, even if there were not one thread of evidence for us to consider, would not Bible believing folk still be forced to accept the premise that our Lord promised perpetuity to His Church? Of Course So!

That brings us down to the record of most denominations and when they were formed and by whom. The Christian Science — Founder, Mrs. Eddy — 1879. The Mormon Church — Founder, Joseph Smith — 1830. The Christian Church — Founder, Alexander Campbell — 1827. The Methodist Church — Founder, John Wesley — 1730. The Episcopalian — Founder, Henry VIII — 1533. The Presbyterians — John Calvin — 1532. The Lutheran Church — Founder, Martin Luther — 1521.

There is only one group of people that can trace their history all the way back to the times of our Lord Jesus Christ: The Baptists. History will bear that out and forever close the doors of doubt and fear. How can such a Doctrine be hid from the World? The Apostle Paul wrote and I believe answered that in First Corinthians 2:14.

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Furthermore, the Unholy Roman Catholic Church has suppressed and covered up the truth so far as her role in church history. Religion has always been of man and has thus sought to destroy the truth in one way or another since the days of Cain in Genesis Four.

I. The Formation of the Church! To the immediate followers of our Lord Jesus Christ the Formation of God's true church was no real problem because they were there for the most part. They had the wonderful privilege of walking with the Lord where ever He went, and they listened very closely to what He had to say. But many years have come and gone and so many have lost the heart beat of the truth concerning the formation of God's true church.

With the rise of "The Roman Catholic Church" and their claim to be the only "True Church," the history of the Church has taken a beating. Furthermore, most Protestants are convinced in their own mind that she was once the "True Church." But that is not what the early believers thought. Dr. James R. Graves wrote these words, "All Pedobaptist historians have recognized the impious claims of the Catholics to be the church, and have written her history for the history of the church of Christ, down to the sixteenth century, and then reformed the churches of Christ out of the bosom of the mother of harlots!... It is no longer strange that the world is so profoundly ignorant of church history. It is not strange that the people are disgusted with the books that purport to be church histories, and have "wandered after the Beast," with whose history they have been surfeited. But our standards declare the Pope to be Anti-Christ, and that his ministers must be excluded from the Christian ministry. Let us not shrink from the conclu-

sion which flows from this principle; the Scriptures have declared this thing: Rome is the scarlet harlot, riding on the beast with seven heads and ten horns. This church is drunk with the blood of saints."

Dr. Earle E. Cairns writes, "Ignorance of the Bible and the history of the Church is a major reason why many advocate false theologies or bad practices." So far as the formation of the church is concerned, Dr. Cairns is absolutely correct in his thinking. The Foundation of all other truths concerning the church begins right here.

The world is not concerned with the origin of the church, but the theologians have listed several possible solutions to that question. Several things need to be answered regarding this question. First, the meaning of the word. Second, the one who was to start the church.

The Meaning of the word "church" (Ekklesia). (1). Dr. Roy Mason gives this short definition. "My first reason is that the meaning of the word 'ekklesia' used in Matthew 16:18 irresistibly leads one to believe that the local assembly was meant." (2). Dr. B.H. Carroll gives this statement. "What, then, etymologically, is the meaning of this word? Its primary meaning is: An organized assembly, whose members have been properly called out from private homes to attend to public affairs. This definition necessarily implies prescribed conditions of membership." (3). Dr. Louis Entzinger in his book, The New Testament Church spends some 150 pages to prove that the church that our Lord started was local and not universal, invisible. (4). Wm. M. Nevins wrote and defended the idea of a "Local" church over against the false ideas of a "Universal, Invisible" church. "What and which is the church that Jesus Built? This is the big question. There are those who contend that when Christ said, 'I will build my church,' He was not speaking of the local, visible church, but the universal, invisible church, composed of all believers. Such an interpretation is impossible... No, clearly, Christ was speaking of the local, visible assembly or congregation." (5). M.R. Vincent makes this comment on Matthew 16:18. "Church (ekklesia), to call or summon. ...Originally an assembly of citizens, regularly summoned... The Septuagint uses the word for the congregation of Israel, either as summoned for a definite purpose (1 Kings 8:65), or for the community of Israel collectively, regarded as a congregation (Genesis 28:3), where assembly is given for multitude in margin... In the New Testament the term is used also in the narrower sense of a single church, or a church confined to a particular place. So of the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla (Romans 16:5); the church at Corinth, the churches in Judea, the church at Jerusalem, etc." (6). Dr. A.T. Robertson gives this brief definition. "It is the figure of a building and he uses the word ekklesia which occurs in the New Testament usually of a local organization, but sometimes in a more general sense. What is the sense here in which Jesus uses it? The word originally meant 'assembly.'" (7). Thomas Paul Simmons gives this meaning: "It came to mean any assembly of people or gathering or throng of men, even when gathered by chance

or tumultuously... The resultant meaning is "assembly."... It always implied that the called out ones would gather or assemble." (8). Dr. Richard V. Clearwaters gives this definition: "In its primary meaning a 'church' was an organized assembly, whose members were properly called out from their private homes or business to attend to public affairs; in all of its usages prescribed conditions of membership are implied, inferred, or expressed." (9). A Pastor friend of mine who wrote his College Thesis and then presented it to a "Baptist Seminary" for the Degree of Master of Arts in Biblical Education had this to say: "The meaning of the word church explains what the church is... if it were allowed its proper meaning most of the confusion as to what the church is would be cleared up."

"The word (ekklesia) means 'a called out assembly.'... The word church is placed in the translations of the Bible instead of its literal meaning, 'assembly.' If the word assembly had been used in every instance as it was rightly used in Acts 19:32, 39, 41, then no doubt the proper connotation of a local assembly would predominate. This would have given a more Scriptural understanding of the church in the translation."

"When Jesus said to His disciples 'upon this rock I will build my church...' they had no reason to believe but that He was using the word in its plain, ordinary, usual, literal sense — that of an assembly." (10). A former Landmark Baptist gave this definition twenty some years ago: "What, then, is the meaning of the Greek word 'ekklesia' the word which is translated 'church'? The meaning of the word is to be determined by its usage by the Holy Spirit in the inspired Scriptures. So far as etymology is concerned, Greek scholars tell us that the word is formed by 'ek' (out of) and 'kaleo' (to call). But the meaning of the word is not established merely by its etymology. Usage establishes its meaning. If God the Holy Spirit had used this word to mean any of the aforementioned ideas about the church, then that would be at least one of its meanings. After all, we are interested in what God means by the word 'ekklesia.' But let it be clearly understood, the Holy Spirit used the word in the same sense the Greeks used it, else how could He convey to them what He wished to? According to Thayer, the Greeks used it to designate 'a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly' (Lexicon)."

The general teachings of the New Testament regarding the Church (ekklesia) the Greek word is used some 115 different times. The word means "To Call Out." As one begins to read over the various references, it becomes very clear that they refer to a local church and where there is some doubt, the usage and etymology of the word ought to control its meaning. Most Baptists are agreed in placing the major emphasis of the Greek word (ekklesia) upon the Local Church. The following list of Scriptures given should give to us some kind of evidence of support to the local church position. Matthew 16:18 — "I will build my church." Matthew 18:17 — "Tell it unto the church." "But if

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STUDIES IN EZEKIEL

Willard Willis, Monroe, Ohio

"The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel" (Ezek. 18:1-3).

The proverb before us was another way of saying that God's judgments upon Israel were the result of the sins of the fathers. It was a way of passing the blame from themselves to some one else. They were saying that the fathers had eaten sour grapes, or sinned. The result being that they, the children, were now suffering the consequences.

We should note first of all that the partaking of evil is like eating sour grapes. Sour grapes appear to be good and sweet as far as their appearance is concerned. It is only when we eat them that our teeth are set on edge. Sin may also appear to have no ill effect upon us. We, however, learn otherwise after partaking of it.

I have had very little experience with sour grapes, but I am familiar with unripe persimmons since we had a persimmon tree on our property at Andis, Ohio. I learned on different occasions that an unripe persimmon can pucker one's mouth in the worst way.

Sin, as is true of sour grapes, may look good enough in the temptation, but sooner or later, the result will be felt. Sin, in fact, will set the sinner's teeth on edge. The conscience will eventually be awakened and the relish of one's comfort will be spoiled.

The Jews, in the proverb before us, were actually complaining against God in that they were saying that it was not right for them to suffer for the sins of the fathers. God, of course, resented their accusation and decreed that this proverb would be forever silenced.

One aspect of this proverb was that the people, by blaming their judgment from God on others, were not being humbled by God's rod. They were condemning others when they should have been condemning themselves. It boils down to the fact that they were striving with God, and, as a result, making their sinning to be greater and greater.

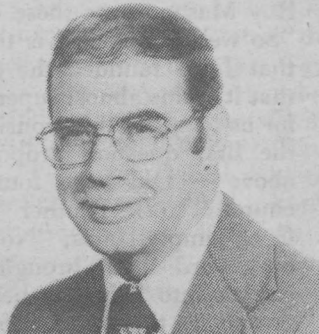
God's question to Israel, as noted in verse two, was, "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb?" Do you hope to cloud the issue and throw off God's judgments. God's reply, in essence, was, let it be known by one and all that your final doom is near as well as the end of your proverb. This fact is stated clearly in the following passages:

"In those days they shall say no more, The Fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge" (Jer. 31:29, 30).

"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4).

This passage looks back to the previous passages where the sons were blaming their

judgments from God upon their fathers. God, however, in the passage before us, sets the record straight by advising all concerned that the soul that sinneth, whether it be the son or the father, shall die. All souls belong to God. He, in fact, has made each soul and sustained each soul until the allotted days expire. It is at this point that the flesh dies, but the soul lives on. God, then, as the Father of our soul, has the right to do as He



Willard Willis

pleases with it, and none dare question him. It is as stated in the following passage:

"Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" (Romans 9:20).

The fact that our souls belong to God means that we should see to it that they are obedient to their maker. We should be obedient by repenting of our sins toward God and believing on His Son as our personal Saviour. We should then proceed to be obedient souls in that we hear and heed His word as set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

"But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbor's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman, and hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 18:5-9).

Those who had walked contrary to the above standards were those who had eaten sour grapes and were subject to having their teeth set on edge.

It should be pointed out that the above passages are not dealing with requirements for regeneration, but only with a standard of conduct during our stay upon the earth. Most of these requirements, in fact, will fit within the frame work of the ten commandments. That, for example, which is taught in verse six, falls under the second commandment which states:

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Ex. 20:4).

The passages which are

before us show clearly that the ten commandments cover a much broader scope than that which first meets the eye. "Thou shalt not kill," for example, according to Matthew 5:22, also means that we are not to be angry with our brother without a cause.

A close look at Exodus 20:1 will show that the ten commandments were given to all people upon the earth. I make this statement because of the name "God" in verse one and the name "Lord" in verse two. You will note that verse one states that "God spake all these words." He, as our creator, spoke these words to all that He had and would create. Verse two proceeds to say, "I am the Lord thy God." One can see clearly that reference is being made to two classes of people and not to Israel only.

The law, in fact, was in effect long before there was an Israel. Cain, for example, was condemned for killing Abel. How could he have been condemned if there had been no law against murder? God's laws were written in the hearts of men long before they were written on tables of stone.

The reference in our text (18:6) to eating upon the mountains is a reference to having communion with heathen gods. The eating, in fact, was the eating of that which had been sacrificed to idols.

Those who had not lifted up their eyes to the idols were those who had not given them a favorable look. They, in fact, were those who had no regard for them.

Those who had not eaten sour grapes were also those who, according to verse six, had not defiled their neighbor's wife. They, in other words, had not broken the seventh commandment which states:

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

They were also guided by another law in Leviticus 18:19 which governed uncleanness. The passage reads as follows:

"Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for uncleanness." The reference is to a menstruous woman.

Those who would have their teeth set on edge as the result of eating sour grapes, were those, according to verse seven, who had not oppressed any and had paid their debts. The reference is also to those who had not spoiled any by way of a violent act. It was necessary that they had been kind and merciful and that they had manifested the same by giving bread to the hungry and clothing to the naked.

God, in verse four, states that the soul of the father and the son belong to Him. It becomes obvious therefore that God had and has the right to set forth His standard for the soul which He has given to each individual.

We, at this point, should point out that our God is always the same. This fact means that the rules He set forth in the Old Testament, if they have not been set aside, are still binding upon all souls today. This fact is clearly stated in the following passages:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I

was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee? and the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Mt. 25:35-40).

The balance of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew reveals those who will have eaten sour grapes, and, as a result, are to have their teeth set on edge.

The business of the souls of men is also expressed in Isaiah 58:6, 7:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh."

The first work of the Lord's people, of course, is for them to be baptized into a New Testament Baptist Church. We, through the Lord's church, are to give the bread of God to the hungry, that is, those whom the Lord has made to be spiritually hungry. We are also to use every opportunity to help those who are in a real need of physical help. We are also to pay our debts and live so that there will be no occasion for any one to be able to question whether or not we are genuine followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"If he beget a son who is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things, and that doeth not of any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:10-13).

We have here an example of an upright father who begets a son who was the complete opposite of his father. The question relative to such a situation relates to whether or not the son can claim immunity from judgment because of his upright father. Can he, in other words, draw from his father's good works. The answer, of course, is no!

We have examples in the New Testament where people believed all was well with them simply because they were Abraham's children. It was pointed out to them that the physical blood line is not enough. This fact is pointed out in the following passage:

"They answered and said

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unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39).

"Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife, Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury or increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live. As for the father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity" (Ezek. 18:14-18).

The example which these passages set before us does not occur too often, that is, that the son is upright even though his father is a renegade. The usual procedure is that the son follows in the footsteps of the father. It follows that every father and mother should be extremely careful relative to the example they set for their children. Children step in the foot prints of their parents. Parents, therefore, should be very careful regarding the foot prints which

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EZEKIEL

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they leave for their children to walk in. We should be sure that our steps lead to God's house every time the doors are open. We should leave a beaten path to God's Word.

"Yet say ye, Why? Doth not the son hear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked shall turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Saith the Lord God: and that he should return from his ways, and live" (Ezek. 18:19-23).

We have observed the consequences for a father and son who were upright and for a father and son who were renegades. We come now to another situation. It is a situation where the transgressor repents and returns to the Lord. The record shows that the transgressions, in such cases, are never even mentioned again. All is forgiven so that the transgressor walks away with a clean record.

This example should remind every believer relative to where he was and where he is now that the blood of Jesus covers his or her sins. The condition of every believer, as far as the past is concerned, is spelled out in the following passage:

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 1:2).

"But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die" (Ezek. 18:24).

It is only the righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ which deserves to be mentioned, since all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We, in fact, know from Romans 3:10 that there is none who are righteous. It becomes obvious therefore that the righteousness to which our text refers is a human righteousness which results from hearing and heeding God's word, yea, in the case before us, the reference relates to hearing and heeding God's requirements for Israel. The death to which the above passage refers, is physical death.

The subject of regeneration is not being considered.

"Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth and turneth away from his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal?" (Ezek. 18:25-29).

Let us, in conjunction with the above, suppose that a man walked upright for twenty years and then became a renegade. Let us also suppose that there was another man who was a renegade for twenty years at which time he began to walk upright. Israel was saying that both of these men had equal rights to life. They were saying that one's present condition should not be a basis in determining judgment. God, on the other hand, judged them on the basis of their last conduct.

God, of course, was fair and equal. One main reason for God's fairness was the fact that the man who walked upright for twenty years threw away a good thing. He said, in essence, when he turned from good to evil, that the evil was better than the good. He therefore embraced evil in preference to good. The other man considered (v. 28), or he weighed the two choices and chose good over evil. He turned (v. 28) away from the evil and embraced the good.

"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 18:30-31).

It needs to be pointed out again that the destruction of Jerusalem was at hand. This has been the primary thought all through the previous chapters. Eternal life or eternal death have not been the subjects and neither are we dealing with the same in the chapter which is before us. It was their physical lives which were in danger of being destroyed. This fact is proven further by the fact that we are not saved from the second death by our good works. This fact is sealed forever by the following passages:

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for

righteousness" (Rom. 4:1-5).

All of the renegades, according to Ezekiel 18:30, were admonished to "repent and turn." They, by so doing, would have had their sentence revoked. Their transgression, in fact, would never have been mentioned again. Here is another reason for the fact that God was equal with the upright man who became a renegade at a later date. The renegade had every opportunity to consider his action, repent and turn. He knew God's will on the matter. He therefore walked straight into the fire of God's wrath without an excuse.

"For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye" (Ezek. 18:32).

God is saying, in essence, I'm not playing games with you people and leaping with joy when I see one of you die. I, however, have set down a standard of conduct which I expect you to live by. I have also determined the judgment which is yours if you fail to hear and heed. I will not take pleasure from your death, but I assure you that my court of justice will not be found to be weak when it comes time to deal with you.

CHURCH

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Ye neglect to hear the church." Acts 2:47 — "The Lord added to the church daily." Acts 8:1 — "The church which was at Jerusalem." Romans 16:1 — "The churches of Christ salute you." I Corinthians 1:2 — "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth." Galatians 1:2 — "Unto the churches of Galatia." Ephesians 5:25 — "As Christ also loved the church." Philippians 4:15 — "No church communicated with me." Colossians 1:24 — "For His body's sake, which is the church." Philemon 1:2 — "To the church in thy house." Hebrews 2:12 — "In the midst of the church." James 5:14 — "Call for the elders of the church."

Many more references could be given in support of the idea that the English word "Church" means "An Assembly." Is it not interesting that from the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ local churches were established and were the centers of all activity so far as the Lord's Word was concerned? One could make a list of all the New Testament references and they would only find a handful of references that need some explaining.

Thomas Paul Simmons sums up the matter by writing, "This fact is borne out by B.H. Carroll, who made a collation of all the occurrences of ekklesia in the LXX finding them to be ninety-two; and finding that in not a single case was there given to ekklesia a broader meaning than an actual, literal, bonafide assembly. Now what does all this mean?"

Five things ought to be said about the meaning of the word (ekklesia) before we move on to the One who started the Church. (1). The Word "Assembly" is the true meaning of the original Greek word — "ekklesia." (2). The usage of the word in the

"Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. (Mark 7:1-4).

Greek does not permit anything else by an assembly. (3). The use of the word "ekklesia" by our Lord Jesus Christ indicates that He was referring to a local church. (4). It is apparent to the student of the Bible that the Holy Scriptures are completely and totally silent so far as teaching that there is more than one kind of church. (5). Lastly, the "Church Historians" would indicate to us that there was no other kind of church thought of until after the apostolic times.

Who started the church? We know that our Lord said that He would. Matthew 16:18 — "I will build my church." (1). Roy Mason wrote these words: Roy Mason wrote these words. "So well established is the fact that Jesus founded the church that it seems almost superfluous for us to spend time considering the first question propounded above — Did Jesus found the church?" (2). Brother E. G. Cook simply states, "Now that our Lord had brought His church into being he began to give her the instructions he wanted her to have." (3). Buell H. Kazee wrote these words, "There have appeared from time to time some books and booklets under the title, 'The Church That Jesus Built.' The mention of these works is not for criticism, but to raise a question: of what church are they speaking? Did Jesus actually build a church? If so, what church?... Just what do brethren have in mind when they say, 'The Church That Jesus Built.' Mr. Kazee then continues, 'The church was founded the day the Lord called the twelve apostles and set them apart to be witnesses of His death and resurrection. This was about two years after He began His ministry. He called them to Himself to be trained for the inauguration of His work through the church. With the New Testament prophets, they were to become the foundation of the church, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20)." (4). Wm. M. Nevins wrote, "Christ built His church, committed to it the ordinances, and since that day the authority to baptize and to administer the Lord's Supper resides in the church that Jesus built, not in any priest or preacher on the face of the earth, but in the church." (5). Dr. Louis Entzminger wrote these words, "The Church was built before Pentecost because: Jesus said He would build it. Matthew 16:18, 'I will build my church.' The Holy Spirit 'filled' it — couldn't fill what didn't exist. Acts 2:1-4." (6). Thomas Paul Simmons wrote, "Jesus did not say: 'upon this rock I will found my church.' He used the word 'build' instead of the word 'found.' And the Greek word here translated 'build' means to build the superstructure. The same word occurs in Acts 9:31, and is translated 'edified.' Christ was then still building His church just as He said He would do in Matt. 16:18." (7). Elder H.L. Tully wrote these words, "The Church of Christ was not founded with Adam or Abraham as some claim. The word 'church' in Acts 7:38 should be translated 'congregation,' referring to Israel. The Old Testament does not give a single direct reference to the Church. It discusses the Jew and Gentile, but not the Church. In Eph. 3:1-11 Paul states that the church is a 'mystery, which in other ages (O.T. times) was not made known unto the sons of men as it

is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." This passage states that the church was unknown before Christ.

Some claim that the church was instituted on the day of Pentecost. This view is unscriptural. In Matt. 16:18 Christ states, "I will build my church." He left it not to man to build. The church was in existence when Christ gave a rule of discipline in Matt. 18:17 when He said, "Tell it unto the church." The two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper, were given during His earthly ministry. Do you think He would give the church ordinances before He instituted the church? The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) was given before Pentecost. Jesus sang in His church during the supper on the night before the Crucifixion (Hebrews 2:11, 12). When did Christ sing among His brethren (disciples)? Mark 14:26 says, "And when they had sung a hymn they went out into the mount of Olives." The church was in existence on the night of the supper which was many days before Pentecost.

The record of the institution of Christ's Church is found in Luke 6:12-16. After praying all night Jesus selected twelve apostles. Here His Church began. The apostles were first added to the church. In a sense they are the foundation of the church and Jesus is the chief corner stone.

So important is this question, that the answer will tell us a lot about the person who gives to us an answer. The various positions on the question has come about over the years by the Theologians. Dr. John R. Rice placed the beginning of the Church with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Over the years, this preacher has heard many a "Baptist" preacher indicate that John the Baptist started the church and turned it over to the Lord. It ought to be noted, John the Baptist did not start the church of God, but was used of God to gather the disciples out of which the Lord developed His Church during His Earthly Ministry. The Apostles — all of them — had the Baptism of John and were never re-baptized. John's baptism was of the Lord and accepted by our Lord, and His first disciples had Christian Baptism. The most accepted position today is that the Holy Spirit started the church on the day of Pentecost. Dr. Lewis S. Chafer gave four reasons why that had to be the case. Over the years, one by one, the Theological Schools have adopted that position. Very few schools that are in existence today recognize that our Lord started His Church during His earthly ministry. Consequently, most of those men who are graduating from Bible College and the Theological Seminaries have been sold a bill of goods and have never been taught the truth. No wonder the average church member has never been told that Jesus Christ started His Church! This preacher ought to know, he was schooled and trained in these modern day schools and our position was not accepted as the plain teachings of the Word of God.

The Theologians place the church at Pentecost. They give four basic reasons. They say that the Church could not exist without (1). The death of the Lord Jesus Christ for by that even the Lord purchased His

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church; (2). Nor could the church have existed without the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for by it the church was given resurrection power; (3). Furthermore, they declare that the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ is essential first for by it the Lord is interceding in behalf of His body, the church; (4). Lastly, the advent of the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential to the birth of the church. Men like Dr. Lewis S. Chafer, Dr. Earl D. Radmacher, Dr. Emery H. Bancroft, Dr. William Evans, Dr. Kenneth Good, Dr. John R. Dunkin, and a whole host of men defend the Pentecost theory. The above arguments are for the most part their only line of defense. It sounds good and most of these men are highly educated and are brilliant scholars in their own right — more so than this writer. But they have come to the Holy Scriptures with preconceived ideas and this has overshadowed their thinking. These men are sound so far as some doctrines of the faith are concerned. No one would ever suggest otherwise. But they come to the issue of the beginning of our Lord's church, and they just don't seem to understand the plain meaning of the Word of God. They speak about being literal in their Bible interpretation, but spiritualize the words of our Lord in Matthew 16:18.

Immediately one is going to say, "What kind of a Baptist does that make you?" A Landmark Missionary Independent (unaffiliated) Baptist. Does that mean that I am a "Baptist Bride?" Yes. Listen, if the Lord Jesus Christ promised His church would never fold but would always be in existence, then you must ask the question, "What Church is here today that has been here since the days of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Beloved, there is only one that can trace her "History" back: Independent Baptists. Every other group can and does point back to a human leader or founder. But the Baptists have never claimed any founder other than The Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Baptist Are Not And Never Have Been Protestants. Dr. Frank S. Mead would attempt to make modern day Baptists nothing more or less than Protestants. Many have unfortunately without any further thought on the subject accepted what men have taught as Gospel fact. Two thousand years ago our Lord started His church and it is still here today. On that account will you note with me several things about the church that our Lord started during His earthly ministry. (1). It was local and visible; (2). Jesus Christ was the Founder; (3). Jesus Christ was also the pastor of that work; (4). Jesus Christ instructed His church in all things and thus gave to her His marching orders to win the lost and to Baptize the converted; (5). That church was a "Baptist Church" and its first members all had John's Baptism which was accepted as "Christian Baptism"; (6). That church was not a "universal — invisible body" as some have claimed over the years. That false doctrine has caused a great lack of reverence and respect for the Lord's local church and a greater misunderstanding of the ordinances that He gave to His body. But with the rise of this false anti-biblical system, comes

not only a lack of understanding of "Church Authority", but a denial of a precious truth. Beloved, very few preachers today ever speak on that subject and that is because they do not know any better themselves. How can you speak on a subject that you know nothing about? Listen, Jesus Christ gave the authority to His church and no one else. This preacher has no authority other than that which my church gives me. That is the way it should be.

Baptists are not Arminian or Calvinistic. We are Baptist. Those different theological positions have come about because of men who interpreted the Word of God in a certain way. There are very few churches around today that are totally independent (unaffiliated) Baptists. There are even fewer churches around today that are not only Independent, but take a strong stand on the doctrines of grace. There are even fewer churches around that are totally independent in nature, taking a stand on the doctrines of grace. There are even fewer churches around that are totally independent in nature, taking a stand on the doctrines of grace and use the proper and Scriptural elements in the Lord's Supper. We are set apart because we have attempted to follow the pattern that our Lord established two-thousand years ago. Many say we go too far. If we do, then you must remember, so did our Lord. I would rather be in that crowd and know that my Lord approved of my actions and beliefs than to have appeased the people in order to get a crowd on Sunday morning.

Baptist have always received their doctrine from the Lord Jesus Christ. You will not and can not find where Rome or any other group gave to us our statement of faith. Our doctrine has been and is pure and that is because we have received it from the Lord Himself. Listen to me, beloved, that can not be said of the Roman Catholic Church or the protestant movement. Our Baptist heritage is great. It has been stained with blood down through the various centuries. One only needs to pick up the history books and there they will find the record etched in blood. Baptists died rather than compromise their belief or way of living. God give to us some "old fashion Baptists" today!

LAZARUS

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beggar, Lazarus. A special thing has happened here. Lazarus was in a certain position where he could not go inside the gate. Also we can see that he was laid at the gate. He did not even have the power to get to the gate by himself. He was taken there and laid there by someone else. Oh! Now we can see ourselves in a lost state can't we? Lazarus knew he could not go there on his own power. It was an impossible task. But now, yes now, he saw the gate! Now there is hope, real hope!

See now his position. He was laid, in the past tense, we can truly say. But now he is no longer outside the gate. There is no gate for Lazarus. He was laid at the gate, now notice... Lazarus was carried to Abraham's bosom by the angels, all the way inside the gate.

Jesus Christ opened the gate for Lazarus. Only the strength of the Lord can open the gates of death and release us to life eternal. Psalm 24:7-10. The gates here represent the tempestuous

sea of this life. The Lord is seen here as a fierce wind that breaks open the gates of hell. Oh listen... Luke 16:25-26. There is torment and evil and for ever and ever.

All who are saved by the Lord Jesus Christ can go into the gates of glory. Lift up your heads from this stormy life. "Open up ye everlasting doors." Split yourselves wide open for nothing can hold our King back. Our King has entered, "The Lord strong and mighty," "The Lord mighty in battle" "Who is the King of glory!" "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!" The One who directs the angels that took Lazarus to glory. Our Lord our King has done everything. He is all in all. The King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the strong one. It is His strength that takes us from beggars to all Heaven affords. Will you trust Him now?

THE DOGS CAME

My text is in Luke 16:19-25: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 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, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

We have to take our thoughts to the actual thoughts of our text. In Matt. 15:26-27: "But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table," and Mark 7:28: "And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs," we have a thought of the attitude a person needs when the Lord is approached. The Syrophenician woman who was a Greek by birth probably had some Greek philosophy in her mind in answering the Lord. We will take this woman's view in her reply to the Lord, "Truth Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table" and unfold another mystery of God's Word.

The first question we will ask is what does the word dog denote? Dogs were probably the first domesticated animals, coming from wolves. They are wild and ravenous creatures by habit. Dogs were feared in that day because they are vicious by nature. They were prowling the streets day and night killing anything they could overpower. Dogs are also vulturous by their nature. They eat anything that they can find, even their own vomit. Prov. 26:11. Dog is also a word used in the scriptures to describe a male prostitute (Deut. 23:18). This gives us a little background of what the word dog meant to the Jews.

Why would the word dog be used here? A Jew being referred to as a dog was the worst curse that could be imagined. Referring

to a person as a dog also meant he was your worst enemy. Psalm 22:16. Goliath when approached by David said, "Am I a dog?" The reed David used to whip the sheep dog was in his hand. Christ Jesus was smote upon His head with a reed. This showing forth that He was an enemy to these people. I am one of these.

I know that I am not worthy to be here with this church I am in. Nor am I worthy to eat at the Lord's table with these, God's people, and to be fed from the Lord's table. I am nothing!

One of the great truths found in this text. The dogs in our text are found still needing to be fed by others. Matt. 15:26-27; Mark 7:28. But the position of the dogs was the same place Lazarus was, under the table eating crumbs. Now, we can see where we all fit in can't we? The Gentiles were the enemies (dogs) of the Jews, an outcast. The Apostle Peter did not even want to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Lord gave Peter a vision showing all the unclean animals. This led Peter to open the Gospel to the Gentiles. They were to hear and believe the truth! Praise God! Praise God!

The dogs can be useful when tamed and trained. In like manner we are saved to be used of God. In other words we are changed. We no longer want to run wild in the streets of this world doing the wicked deeds of the world. The dogs now licked Lazarus' sores. They were not an enemy to be hated and feared, but a kind compassionate friend!

The great mercy and grace found in this text. The Lord turned to the Gentiles with the Gospel. The most undesirable person that has ever lived now can be saved by the mercy and grace of our Lord.

In the dog we can see no help, but in Lazarus there we see, yes, there we see grace! The dogs died and their wretched lives ended, but Lazarus went to be with the Lord! You are nothing and have nothing to offer, but look unto the Saviour who is King of kings and Lord of lords!

SALVATION

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foreknowledge. As A.W. Pink said, "When trying to understand a Biblical word, you do not look at the word and apply self-deduction, neither do you run to Webster's dictionary, but you look at the Biblical usage of the word." Such a study will prove that the Biblical doctrine of foreknowledge is not foreknowledge of things and events as some take it to be. Bible foreknowledge always pertains to whom (persons) and not to what (things).

Let me also add that predestination being a Bible doctrine makes it a true N.T. Missionary Sovereign Grace local visible Baptist Church doctrine. In a day when so many societies wear the name "Baptist," I deem it necessary to use the preceding adjectives, for only such institutions are true Baptist churches. Predestination is not a new doctrine but has been believed by Baptists since Jesus started His church during His earthly ministry. The disciples, being Baptists, believed in predestination. Paul was a strong Baptist and a solid believer in predestination. Here is all the proof one could ask for that old time Baptists believed in predestination. It is a Baptist doctrine.

Let us find out just what predestination is. The London Confession of Faith says, "That God hath decreed in Himself from everlasting, touching all things, effectually to work and dispose them according to the council of His own will and to the glory of His name." That is a Baptist definition. However, the unbiased Winston Dictionary says, "In theology, the doctrine that from all eternity; God has ordered whatever comes to pass, especially with reference to the salvation and damnation of souls." Concerning the latter part of the preceding definition "damnation of souls," let me say that it is as surely taught in the Bible as the "salvation of souls." There are many Sovereign Grace believers who frown on the teaching, or at least the usage of the terminology "predestinated to hell." Though it may not be as comforting a doctrine as predestination for salvation, it is as surely and definitely taught in God's Word. This doctrine is that part of predestination known as reprobation, while election is that part of predestination which concerns the salvation of souls. You cannot be a believer in the doctrine of absolute predestination if you do not believe in "predestinated to hell." It is all according to the sovereign will of God. Had God wanted to, He could have saved every individual of mankind. God did not run out of power. He just willed to save a multitude and willed not to save the rest. Predestination is not a harsh, brutal doctrine, but is the only hope for a poor, helpless sinner. Sinners need to give up all hope they have in self, and be brought to faith in the sovereign mercy of God.

The Arminian will accuse us of teaching that God made people simply to damn them. Not so; we believe that God made man for His own glory, and that, in the reprobate, God glorifies His power, justice, sovereignty, and holiness. Rom. 9:17. Reprobation is a doctrine that, when understood, causes our salvation to take on more beauty, and our loving Saviour to become more precious. Surely, the realization that a Thrice Holy God chose you though undeserving, and rejected others, should make our hearts burn with love for our God.

Now let us look at who is the predestinator. The word itself shows that it could not have been man and that God must be the predestinator. The word means to determine beforehand. Only the Triune God was in existence when our salvation was determined. Therefore, it was determined by God. His plan was not based upon anything He saw in man, such as good works or foreseen faith. This would not show forth a Sovereign God. Ephesians 1:5 tells us that God predestinated His elect to be saved according to the pleasure of His own will. Let us say with Jonah, that salvation is of the Lord.

Next, there are some qualifications that a person must have in order to be a predestinator. One of these is omnipotence. Though many seem to think they have this attribute, it is one that belongs solely to God. The Arminians have robbed God of this attribute. Their beliefs deny the

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It is hard for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is not the having, but the trusting.

SALVATION

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omnipotence of God. They picture God as one who is doing all He can to save people, and picture man as more powerful than God — who won't let God save him. Is this the God taught in the Bible? Nay! Beloved, Nay! I feel that it is a terrible sin to believe and teach Arminianism mainly because of its portrait of God. Read Job 23:1; Isaiah 14:24, 27; and Daniel 4:35. If these Scriptures describe an Arminian God to you, you are blind and ignorant about God's Word. The majority of Arminians are Catholic in their practice. They seem to think that God only gave light to their preacher when it comes to understanding God's Word.

The Arminians believe in a partial predestination, therefore, in a partial god. Why do they allow God the power to create, control nature, life, death, and wealth, but deny Him the power to save? I give you two famous Arminian statements. "Hell is a monument to the failure of God." "God cannot justly send a man to hell unless He has done all He could to save him." This is blasphemy against God. No lost sinner is ever saved until and unless God exercises His almighty power in that salvation. God's power proves that He is the predestinator.

One cannot be a predestinator unless he is immutable. Immutable means one that cannot change. All creatures are mutable. A predestinator must be immutable, so that no matter what happens, His love, mind, and plans cannot be changed. Daily we are accused by Satan for evil, yet God's love and plan does not change. Daily we sin and fail our God, but His love and plan does not change. Thanks be unto God.

Salvation itself shows God as the Predestinator. It stands to reason that the person who carries out salvation must have determined it in the beginning. Salvation is altogether a work of God. Salvation is a gift and is by God's unmerited favor. Since salvation is of God from start to finish, He has to be the predestinator. The salvation of all the elect is in the hands of God.

Who are the predestinated? The lying Arminian will readily call us "Hardshell" and say that if they believed this they would not preach. Well, praise God! The world would be better off if they did not preach their free-will lies. Let them leave the teaching of God's Word to those to whom God has graciously revealed the truth. There is not an Arminian preacher alive today who can qualify to pastor one of the Lord's churches because his free-will preaching and practices dishonor the Lord and give glory to man, but true churches give the glory in salvation to the Lord God.

The Arminian cannot rightly pray to God for sinners, for according to his doctrine, God has already done all He can do and the rest is up to man. Therefore, the Arminian should pray to man to do his part. In fact, Arminian preaching is simply praying to man, especially when they give their invitations. Arminians cannot see the absurdity of their own beliefs.

Predestination is not an excuse for laziness, but a serious

call for evangelism. Only God knows who is elect and who is reprobate. What an encouragement to witness and to preach! We learn from God's Word that some of the most unlikely have been saved. Rahab, the harlot, Jacob the deceiver, Moses the rich who was raised in polytheism, Saul the persecutor, and I urge you to think about your own salvation in this respect. Who are the predestinated? They are the fore-loved and unconditionally elected ones. They have been redeemed by the Son. They have or will be called by the Spirit. These — no more, no less, and no other — are the predestinated ones who will be eternally saved. The Arminian will say that we believe that only a handful will be saved. But it is God's handful, and He has a mighty big hand. The predestinated ones are those who are enabled and caused to trust in Christ and not those who trust in works, baptism, or any other way of salvation.

Unto what are we predestinated? In preparing this article, I checked on what some famous (?) theologians (?) had to say on this point. One of them I will call Rice Krispies and the other Gift-Offe Green. One wrote a book called "Predestinated For Hell, No." It is a work of blasphemy, not only against sound N.T. Sovereign Grace Baptists, but against the Triune God of the Bible. These two theologians seem to think that predestination has nothing to do with salvation, but that it only pertains to eternal security and glorification. How absurd is their belief and how degrading to the sovereignty and power of God! If man can manage to exercise enough of his own power to get saved, according to their doctrine God has predestinated to keep them saved and eventually glorify them. A dead man will rise from the grave by himself before a dead sinner will cast off the bonds of depravity. The key to understanding God's way of saving His people is to understand the dead and depraved condition of man by nature. If the Arminian was not blinded by his belief in his own goodness and ability, he would see the absurdity of his "man doing his part in salvation" doctrine.

Salvation and glorification cannot be separated. Glorification is the culminating point in salvation. It is not separate from salvation, but is a part of it. Salvation is not just the experience of repentance and faith, but includes all God does in taking a lost sinner from depravity to glorification. This includes election, atonement, prevenient grace, effectual calling, justification, sanctification and glorification. And praise God that He planned it all and brings it all to pass. What does the Bible say that we are predestinated unto? Rom.8:29 says, "to be conformed to the image of His Son." I long for the day when I will be like Christ. I will be satisfied when I awake in His likeness. It is hard to imagine such, but it shall be done. I long to be done with this sinful nature and its wicked desires and to be conformed to His image and to please and glorify Him forevermore. Be of good cheer, brethren, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh when we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.

Ephesians 1:5 teaches us that we are predestinated unto the adoption of sons. Oh, God is good to us! In regeneration we

receive the nature of children, in adoption we receive the position of sons. There is no family like the family of God. Oh, I am so glad that I am a part of the family of God. God my Father; Jesus Christ, the firstborn among many brethren, my elder brother. The Holy Spirit, my comforter. All the saved, my brothers and sisters in Christ. Oh, what love has been bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. The most glorious part of it is that in God's eye, I have always been His son. My adoption papers were signed by the election of the Father, the blood of Jesus, and the effectual call of the Holy spirit. And praise God, there are no legal loopholes by which Satan can change or defeat this. It was signed with the everlasting ink of Jesus' blood. Regardless of how I may fail Him, and Satan accuse me, God is still my wonderful, loving Heavenly Father. Nothing can ever separate me from His love. Let me give a few more verses proving that predestination is unto salvation. Isa. 42:1; Acts 13:48; Eph. 1:4, 5; II Thess. 2:13, 14; I Thess. 1:4; John 15:16. There are many more. If these do not make you believe in predestination unto salvation it is because you just do not believe the Bible.

Not only did God predestinate us to be saved, but He also predestinated the means whereby He would save us. What are these means? First, there is the death of Christ. Christ did not leave the adoration of glory and descend to the abuse and death on this earth on a preadventure. He came for the purpose of saving His elect from their sins. Arminianism makes Christ to be a partial failure in His mission to seek and to save those who were lost. Hebrews 12:2 tells us that it was for the joy set before Him that He endured the cross. Now, there is no joy in being a failure. According to the Arminians, Jesus is a sad and defeated saviour because so many whom He loves and died to save are in hell in spite of all He could do. We learn that, though many thought they had defeated Christ when they crucified Him, they were simply doing the will of God. Acts 2:23, 4:27; I Peter 1:20. God turns the folly and sin of man into the doing of His own predestinated purpose. Joseph's brethren meant what they did for evil, but God meant it for good. Genesis 50:20. We know that Satan tried with all his might to destroy Christ and His atonement. When Jesus was born, Satan tried to have Him killed. Many babies of Bethlehem died, but not a hair on Jesus' head was harmed. Many times during His earthly ministry, Satan sought to destroy Christ, but all in vain. Satan tempted Christ with many temptations, but Jesus, using God's Word, defeated the devil. There are still those who fight the death of Christ and the truth about His death. Any person who denies the death and resurrection of Christ in salvation is lost.

The next means that God predestinated is that the elect should hear the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. I most emphatically believe that the hearing of the gospel is as necessary to salvation as the death of Christ. Without either of them, there would be no salvation. The Bible teaches that true Baptists are Missionary Baptists and witnessing Baptists. Romans 1:16, 10:14-17 and many other Scriptures plainly

teach that a person must hear the sweet, melodious story of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. How this should dictate to every saved person to witness for Christ in hope that God will use it to save a lost one.

The sending and the withholding of the gospel also proves predestination to heaven or hell. If the gospel is necessary to salvation, then those who never hear the gospel must be reprobated. We find in Acts 16:6 that the apostles were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel in Asia. I will add that I believe that the gospel must be heard and not read. Faith cometh by hearing. If reading the Word is sufficient, let us bring our missionaries home and send Bibles and tracts to the mission field. The Ethiopian eunuch is a prime example of the necessity of hearing the Word. He was reading from Isaiah 53 which is surely the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet he said in Acts 8:31 "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Then Phillip began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus, and the eunuch was saved. The fact that God has predestinated a people to be saved through the preaching of the gospel is a tremendous responsibility to be faithful witnesses for Jesus Christ to lost men and women.

The irresistible work of the Holy Spirit is the next means God uses in bringing to pass His predestinated purpose. I have heard many people say they had resisted the Spirit numerous times before they were saved. If they did, it was not the effectual calling of the Spirit. I have asked many Arminians who have made the preceding statement if they could have resisted the Spirit the time they were saved. I have yet to find any who say they could have. They always reply, "wild horses could not have stopped me," "all hell could not have stopped me." If this is true, then that is the first time they were called by the Holy Spirit. The Arminians dishonor the Holy Spirit. They have a spirit who is begging, trying to do all he can to get them saved, but big strong man won't let the Holy Spirit have His way. Mr. Arminian Blasphemer: is not the Holy Spirit also God, possessing the omnipotence of God? If so, why do you claim that man can resist His power? Sir, you are reputed as nothing but a drop in the bucket, yet by your doctrine and practice you claim to be more powerful than God. You will say that God will not force anyone to be saved (amen, He does not have to). Psalm 110:3 tells us that the elect will be willing in the day of God's power. Jesus said that the natural man could not come to Him, (John 6:44) and that he would not come (John 5:40). But, praise God! there are an elect people and they will come, however, it will not be by their own power or the preacher's power, but it will be God's irresistible power that makes them willing. It takes a special work of the Holy Spirit to bring a sinner to Christ. Romans 8:30 teaches that the predestinated will be called effectually to Christ.

In conclusion, let me say that predestination assures the accomplishment of God's will. I thank the Lord He does not leave my life to my own free choice, but He has ordained whatever comes to pass in my life and has purposed it for my good. There is much against

God accomplishing the complete conformity He has purposed and promised. Satan is always trying to overthrow God's purpose. The world fights against God's purposes. The flesh within us battles against the completion of God's purpose. Yet God's predestination assures us that He will bring us unto perfect conformity to Jesus Christ. May God bless you and use this message to your good and, most of all, to His glory. Amen.

PRAYER

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the Judgment Seat of Christ. So, dear reader, please examine yourself, as I have, concerning this urgent matter. The act of prayer denotes our acknowledgement of God's sovereignty when done according to the Word of God. When prayer is not practiced at all, or improperly, this denotes our pride, as if we think we can handle certain situations without the help of God Almighty. Thus we do not acknowledge God's sovereign and omnipotent hand! It's a shame that Sovereign Grace Landmark Missionary Baptists, those who belong to the Lord's true churches, do not manifest our sound doctrinal beliefs as we ought to by laboring fervently in prayer to an Almighty and Sovereign God! The Lord commands us to pray and has ordained prayer as a means to bless His people. One may say why pray, if God knows our needs even before we pray, and another may say why preach the gospel if God has predestinated those who will be saved? The answer is because the Lord God Almighty has commanded us to pray and commanded us to preach the gospel! God has ordained prayer as a means to bless His people and God has ordained the preaching of the gospel as a means to save His people by His Spirit.

Still, another may say that I am not worthy to come before the Lord. But, beloved, we are made worthy through the Lord Jesus Christ to come boldly to our Lord. Praise be to God for this privilege to commune with Him!

Now, we know we must pray because God commands us to pray (I Thessalonians 5:17). But let us look at some other reasons why we should pray: 1. So that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. 2. So that others may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. 3. So that we may please our God with sweet-smelling incense. Our prayers, filled with thanksgiving, praise, and holy requests unto the everlasting Father.

Do you need God's grace in your life? The answer is yes; it doesn't matter who you are. The wiles of the devil will zealously affect you, but not well, if God's grace does not intervene. For without Him we can do nothing! Beloved, the fiery darts of the wicked will weaken us unless we put on the armour of God with fervent prayer. We do not find grace sometimes because we do not come to the throne of grace boldly. We have not because we ask not! What's wrong with Christianity today?! We are so cold, cool, indifferent, and full of pride that the love of many has waxed cold! Now, don't look around you, but look at yourself. How can you behold the mote in thy brother's eye when a beam is in your own eye? Let us examine ourselves

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PRAYER

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first, as we as individuals must answer to God, who is just. I don't know about you, but I certainly want to be in prayer and communion with the great God who has saved me from my sins and the awful torments of hell. Prayer is part of showing your love to your Lord, to communicate and to know Him better, for we should love God more than anybody or anything, especially after all that He has done for us. If we want a revival, which we should, prayer is a vital ingredient. Do you pray as you ought?

The Apostle Paul stated many times in the epistles which he wrote under the inspiration of God, "Pray for us." How we must pray for one another! The Holy Scriptures say, "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you..." (1 Samuel 12:23). Oh, my brothers and sisters, how many times have we sinned against our Lord in this matter of prayer for each other, and not showing our love toward God and one another? Instead of backbiting each other and gossiping about each other, let us love each other and pray for each other. Jesus prays for us. Even at this very hour He maketh intercession for His saints! The Lord Jesus Christ also gives us divine examples of prayer throughout the Word of God. In the book of John the 17th chapter, we are instructed through the perfect example of Christ Jesus, that we are to pray for the elect of God who were chosen before the foundation of the world to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, our Family, our brothers and sisters in the Lord!

With this in mind, let us dwell on brothers and sisters who differ with us in doctrine, whether they be a member of one of the Lord's true churches, Sovereign Grace Landmark Missionary Baptists, or some false church. It's a shame but, instead of, "Be ye angry, and sin not..." we sometimes get angry and sin! How we should pray for those who practice false doctrine and even those who despise us. I feel sorry for them, for they will have to answer to the Lord God Almighty for their false doctrines, practices and bad attitude toward the brethren! Why don't we make a prayer list of such folks and be determined by the grace of God to pray for these brethren who err in the truth. May God enable us to even pray for them daily! Know ye not that, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."?! (James 5:16b). A duty such as prayer can be a laborious chore when Satan intervenes to discourage us. To combat this we must discipline ourselves. One way which has worked for me and many others is to make a prayer list and break it into categories,

such as: your church members, those who despise you, preachers and their churches, those who are sick or injured, etc. May we by the grace of God, and I pray He will cause us to be always labouring fervently for one another in prayers, for we all need grace to help in time of need.

Now, for a point which is most important concerning whether our prayers are pleasing to God or just vain repetition or words. Are our prayers pleasing to God or just vain repetition or words? Are our prayers pleasing to God? Are they as sweet smelling incense, which motive and intent is to please, glorify, and exalt our Lord, and Him alone? One may say that it doesn't matter as long as you just pray. This is a lie of the devil. Let's see a, "Thus saith the Lord" on the subject. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). "O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?" (Psalm 80:4). So, you see, beloved, that all prayer is not acceptable to the Lord, for He heareth not sinners nor prayer stained with sin. We must be very careful that we do not sound like the hypocritical Pharisees who prayed long, repetitious, and vain prayers filled with pride and self-righteousness. If Satan does not attack us as to how much we pray, then he will attack us concerning how we pray or our motives behind our prayers. Could it be that the incense that we offered up before the Lord be made manifest at the Judgment Seat of Christ, as not a sweet-smelling savour, but a pile of wood, hay, and stubble to be consumed by the fire of judgment?! Brethren, we had best examine ourselves because we will be responsible to the Lord of heaven and earth and of all, as to our prayer life and our motives behind our prayers. We will not be heard when iniquity and selfishness are in our hearts, and therefore coming before the throne of grace boldly will not find you grace to help in time of need! Let us look at a passage of scripture which also contrasts proper and improper motives behind prayer. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when we pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matthew 6:5-7).

This passage of Scripture connects the giving of alms and praying of prayers and the proper motives thereof. As we see, the Lord Jesus Christ puts much emphasis and importance on proper motives behind prayer. May we take heed to His commands.

As we close, I urge you once again to pray effectively and fervently, so that strength of your spiritual life will flourish and produce much fruit. Many times the command to pray is neglected because being in the closet no one sees us, save the Lord, and we think we are fooling someone into thinking we are spiritual. If someone knew

how much you prayed would you be ashamed? Well, beloved the Father knows how much you pray and you will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and give an account as to how much you prayed! Consider what a privilege we have by being Baptists. With all the doctrinal knowledge that God has given us, we can more properly apply the practicality of prayer. Therefore we must take heed, for to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required! Truly, we have been blessed abundantly in spiritual things. Let us show our appreciation by praying to our Creator. When we don't use our privilege to commune and pray to our great God, we become cold and indifferent to ourselves, others, and especially the Lord. We have been rebuked concerning coldness before, isn't it time we pray as we ought?! May the Lord God Almighty cause us all to be more prayerful is my prayer.

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may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth." Don't you see? That those with greater knowledge should not exalt themselves, using the power of the tongue to bring about their own design of certain situations. We see that the tongue is a small member and is compared with the helm, a small part of a ship. We know that the helm or rudder guides the great ship. So the tongue is capable of guiding situations or thoughts of other individuals and possibly greater matters. James 3:6: "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature: and is set on fire of hell."

Don't you see? The tongue is an instrument of sin if not kept in control. It is a fire and we all know that fire will spread and consume if the situation is right. The same thing is true of gossip, it will spread and consume. As the fire destroys and changes the physical properties, we see in the last part of the verse that the tongue is greatly used and instigated by the power of Satan himself. Now the born-again child of God is capable of sin, but he will be convicted by the Holy Spirit that God gave us. The Holy Spirit will reprove us. The born-again elect of God will know, thru the conviction of their heart by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Some of us have probably seen the affect of the burning fire of gossip. Many of us have felt the flame of it. This sin has caused preachers to leave churches, membership to dwindle down, caused more problems with men and women trying to control church matters for their own self-righteous reasons, which do not follow church doctrine and authority according to the Word of God. Most of the churches in our area are social clubs. Everything under the sun is talked about. They may be talking about a member with a personal problem. Gossiping about things which should not

be talked about in church or out. It's just gossip.

Now, concerning a problem with a member, there is a right way of confronting the problem. Let us see what God's Word says. Matt. 18:15-17: Jesus said, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast 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 it be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

We are commanded to try and help our brother, if he will let us. We are not to put him down for not living a righteous life, like some people think they are living. Some people will judge others according to their lives. There is a warning for this: James 4:11: "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge." Beloved, the tongue can be a very lethal weapon. James 3:7-8: "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is unruly, evil, full of deadly poison."

Don't you see? There is no control over this member of the body. Man cannot control his own tongue. It is controlled by one or the other, evil spirit or the Holy Spirit. There are many warnings in the Word of God against this evil. Psalm 34:13: A direct command: "Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile." 1 Peter 3:10-12: "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

Women are warned against this sin of the tongue. Titus 2:3: "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things." Ministers wives should take great care to avoid this: 1 Tim. 3:11: "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." If you hear this evil or if someone comes to you with gossip, you are not to listen to them, and not to repeat this hear-say. Jesus said: Matt. 12:36-37: "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by the words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Now we know that God's elect will not stand in judgment on that day. The child of God should take heed to these warnings and listen to God with readiness of heart. The child of God should know that they

should be convicted by the Holy Spirit when this sinful notion or temptation comes about. Most of the people that say they are the children of God, and do this evil, feeling no conviction, should examine their hearts. Luke 6:45: "A good man out of the treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

Beloved, the world is full of people that gossip and slander. We should pray that none of us should fall into this evil sin. Most of these gossips are not saved. They go to church to have a social gathering. This sinful folly is done to the tune of self-exaltation or to put themselves above another individual. These so-called Christians exalt themselves more than God, with their self-righteous, reprobate form of disobedience to God's law. They should be hearing Spirit-filled preaching by a called man of God. Instead they are listening to crackpot theologians. Most of these men are appointed by the Council of Churches instead of being called by God. Most of these men preach a social-gospel, not the Word of God, or they preach what their congregations want to hear. They love to preach on "free-will" or some other heretic theme that they call gospel. If the preachers preached the whole Word of God, there wouldn't be these hypocrites with their tongues flapping in the breeze, seated amongst the elect in the Church. Proverbs 11:9: "An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor; but through knowledge shall the just be delivered."

Beloved, the last sentence in this verse gives us a reason why this goes on in many churches. All of God's Word is not being preached or read. The New Testament as well as the Old Testament. Often good people will say, we are living in New Testament times. That is true, but there is no excuse for not reading or hearing the Word of God in its entirety. What kind of Christian is it that doesn't want to hear all of God's Word. To a true Christian the entire Word of God is his food and water for everlasting life.

The Christian must have the Word of God to live. We are commanded to live by every word of the Bible. It is the Word of God. Matt. 5:17: Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill."

Don't you see? Jesus Himself endorsed the law and the entire word in the Old Testament. Often these so-called Christians will say I don't think I am supposed to hear that, or they say they don't want to hear, or they say it's too condemning. These people should understand, that they, as well as everybody on the face of the earth are sinners and no good in the sight of God. We all deserve hell. The only righteousness we have is not ours anyway. It is God's righteousness thru the shed blood of Jesus Christ, His only Begotten Son, that saved us. Not by putting down your neighbor or brother or sister in

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TUNE IN TO THE CALL TO CALVARY

| Station | Time | Dial: | Watts: |
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| WEEM, Huntgn., W. Va. | Sun.—7:30-8:00 a.m. | 107.9 | 50000 FM |

GOSSIP

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church to exonerate your selves. These so-called Christians act like their father Satan, who loves this folly. Let's look at Rev. 12:10: "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

God's Word gives record of this evil tongue from the beginning to the end. Gossip and slander was always wrong for God's people as well as people of the world. Even when our Lord was on the earth, He was accused falsely, blasphemed, and gossiped about. God didn't leave their sins go unanswered. He required payment for sins, thru sacrifice. Before Jesus came He required animal sacrifice, and if no sacrifice was made for the sinner, God would deal with that individual. Just think, to come face to face with God without forgiveness or remission of sins. The sacrifices in this period of time were of the same sacrifice that we have today. The ultimate sacrifice is Jesus Christ our Lord. In those times they looked forward to the coming of Christ, and their sacrifice was a simulation of the death of Jesus Christ. The sin of the elect at that time as well as the sins of the elect now, are on Jesus Christ our Lord.

We should be humble and not proud or high-minded. We don't have anything to be proud or high-minded about. Beloved, Jesus paid it all, all to Him we owe. God hates pride. Pride is of Satan, that is what caused his fall. If we are proud that is evidence of Satan's influence in our lives. No one was created better than another individual. We are all sinners according to the Word of God. And the only thing that sets us apart from the world is the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. Our sins cannot be seen of God because of this blood. We are saved by God's grace, thru the blood of His Son Jesus Christ.

I. Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"

We have nothing, we are nothing. We would never be anything without our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We have nothing to boast about. Psalm 52:1-4: "Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue."

Now the Christian knows this evil by the convicting power of

the Holy Spirit that dwells in us. All these scriptures are law and the Word of God. Jesus was baptized of John and then led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Jesus told Satan in Matt. 4:4: "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

You can see that you will live by every word that is in the Bible. This is a commandment by Jesus Christ himself, and also will be held responsible for the law or the Word of God. Most self-righteous Christians don't think this. Most of them will quote, Romans 3:19-25: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

These people that quote this Scripture think they can do anything and get away with it. They say to themselves that this is sufficient without reading the rest of God's Word. This is wrong. Let's look at Romans 3:30-31: "Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

Now when God says that He forbids, that is exactly what He means. As for establishing the law, we read or hear the law through preaching, and it is made manifest in our hearts by the power of the Holy spirit. If one of God's elect falls or is tempted with the sin of gossip, he will be convicted of this, if he is of the right heart and mind. You may want to ask yourself, how strong is my love for Jesus? Beloved, we see in God's Word concerning Peter's conversation with Jesus, after the resurrection in John 21:15-17. Each time our Lord asked Peter if he loves Him, he also gave him a commandment. Beloved, do you love Jesus in that He first loved us enough to bare our sins, and that He was put to death for an undeserving people as we are. Then we should do His commandments and do them in love. All those born-again want to keep His commandments because of the indwelling of the Holy spirit, which gives guidance and conviction. II Cor. 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are

become new." Beloved, we being born-again see that the old sinful ways of the world just don't have that zing anymore in our lives. But some folk will justify their sin. Man is always trying to change or sway from God's Word. Did you ever take notice that what man says and thinks is entirely the opposite of what God's Word says. Most of the gossip we hear, slanders people that are regular church goers. Many think they are righteous enough without examining God's Word. Most may say, I think that God allows a little gossip or some will say, I know that God will forgive me because He is so good. Beloved, any true believer would know or should know better than to say anything like that. God is just not good. He is perfect. He doesn't let our sin slide by without punishment. If you think so and are not saved by Jesus Christ, God will let you slide right into hell. God is sovereign, He does what He will to suit Himself. His Word will stand after the world is gone. The Word was before the world was and will stand when the world is gone. It will stand for eternity.

Beloved, if you are around gossipers and slanderous people in the house of God, rebuke them, and if they keep this up, stay away from them. They should have respect for God's house, and also for God's people in church or out of church. If the matter persists, it should be brought to the attention of the Church for discipline, according to the situation and by the instruction of the Word of God.

Beloved, the tongue is a destroying instrument. It will cause the end of friendship. Psalm 41:6-9: "And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity; his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it. All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt. An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more. Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

Beloved, this sin has been a thorn to many of God's children. Take heed, my friends, put on the whole armor of Christ. Stop this evil tongue dead in its tracks. Obey God's commandments. That old devil behind the gossipers' tongue may be closer to us than we think. Jeremiah 9:4: "Take heed everyone of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders." This may be a hated commandment for folks, but it's the Word of God. Most of the gossipers have their place in this world. Jeremiah 9:6: "Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord." Beloved, this brings a picture to mind of a great mountain and the name of that mountain is called righteousness, and on the mountain there were meadows of grass and springs of water. Also there were sheep and goats. Now there was a shepherd on the mountain who owned the sheep and took the best of care of his flock because he loved them. But the owner of the goats dwelt in a far lower place. Now the sheep and the goats eat of the grass and drink of the water. Now the grasses were THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, and the water was the

Word of God, The water of life.

But the goats just couldn't stand this. They liked what their owner was feeding them. So all the goats decided to leave the great mountain. At the bottom they formed a trail, and the name of this trail was gossip. They went a little further and started to bunch up forming a large lane called self-righteousness. They went further and started to herd together and formed a highway named slander and they became a thundering herd together and formed a highway named slander and they became a thundering herd and started a

boulevard with many turn-offs and side streets. The name of these turn-offs and side streets are these: envyings, wrath, strife, backbiting, whisperings, deceit, murder, lies, fornication, blasphemy, and unrighteousness. Now the goats liked this food very much. So they proceeded further and all these roads led to one place. Matthew 7:13 tells us where these roads lead: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat;" Yes, beloved, these roads lead straight to hell!

BRIEF STUDIES ON THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

by The Editor

"The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it" (Psa. 68:11). We are studying the Sunday School. We will study it in detail. I am a defender and promoter of the Sunday School. I am not ashamed of this. I have long been such. I have not changed. I do not plan to change. One of the greatest hurts I have had for several years is to see the many changes among our brethren.

I have established the following. The Bible does not say we must have a Sunday School. The Bible does not say we must not have a Sunday School. I have established the fact that: 1. The Bible does not set forth all the details of our service and activities for the Lord. 2. The Bible lays down certain principles. 3. As we order the details of our service, we must be careful that we do not go contrary to any of the principles of God's Word. Applying this to the Sunday School question: 1. We are at liberty to have or not have a Sunday School. 2. If we do have a Sunday School, we must not violate any principles of God's Word in conducting such. I do not adamantly state, just suggest the following: Be sure you do not violate any principles of God's Word in not having a Sunday School. I feel like nearly everyone will agree with what I have established. I feel that the anti-Sunday Schoolers will not disagree with what I have said, but will say that the Sunday School does violate Biblically established principles.

Now, let me clearly state one other matter before I proceed. The Sunday School Class is not the Church. I know that this statement will cause many to raise their eyebrows, and others to draw back in shock. But a little thought on the subject will make this very clear. The Sunday School Class is a church authorized activity, but it is not the church. This becomes very clear when we realize that none of us would allow a Sunday School Class to observe the Lord's Supper as a class, or to vote as a class on church business. The Sunday School Class is a church authorized teacher, teaching a group of individuals The Word of God. Please understand what I am saying. The Sunday School Class is not the church. The total Sunday School is not the church. It is a church authorized and church controlled activity.

This leads me to a very important point. The Sunday School is to be absolutely and totally controlled by the church. The Sunday School, class or total, has no authority whatsoever. The Church is to establish the Sunday School, class or total, has no authority whatsoever. The Church is to establish the

Sunday School as to time and place. The church is to elect the teachers of the Sunday School. The Sunday School is not to have any treasury of its own or to do anything on its own. All is totally under the authority of the church. The church is to control who teaches and what is taught in the Sunday School. The teacher has no authority. The class has no authority. The church may allow the class and teacher to decide just what portion of God's Word will be taught, but the authority is with the church. The teacher is not to teach contrary to the doctrines and practices of the church. The church is to maintain a very strict supervision and control over all the activities of the Sunday School. The Sunday School is not to have any teaching or social activities apart from the authorization of the church.

Now I think that a major reason many have turned against the Sunday School is that this principle has not been strictly maintained. Sunday School Classes and teachers sometimes get out of hand and rebel against the pastor and against the church. This has often caused great trouble to the pastor, and often divided the churches. A Sunday School teacher can be a great blessing to a pastor and church, but can also be a great and sore trouble. Many a godly pastor has suffered much at the hands of a rebellious, heretical Sunday School teacher. This has led some of them to turn against the Sunday School altogether. The answer to this problem is for the church to maintain very strict control over the Sunday School: the teacher, the teaching, the taught.

Now, listen to this statement. The Sunday School question is not primarily a question of "if", but of "why" and "what". I believe that, if you will think this statement over and consider my comments, it will help us to come to an understanding and agreement on this subject. For my part, the question of your having or not having a Sunday School is not overly important. But there are two further questions I want to ask that are important, "why" and "what".

Why do you have a Sunday School? Is it simply a desire to have large numbers no matter what the quality? Is it a desire to please the flesh? Is it a desire to provide social atmosphere and entertainment? We must confess - that many churches have Sunday School for a wrong purpose. Or do you have a Sunday School because you desire to teach the Word of God, as effectively as you can, and to as many people as you can. Praise the Lord! That is it. Go to it, brother.

(Continued next issue)