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

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THE DEATH OF THE CROSS

by Ray Brown
Box 203

Cannelton, WV 26376

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phi. 2:5-11).

Paul, in his writing here, is

giving a description of the Lord Jesus Christ from His humiliation unto His exaltation. This gives us a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul penned these words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and God doesn't



Ray Brown

make any mistakes and neither did Paul when he wrote fourteen books of the New Testament. God used this man greatly to set forth these wonderful truths.

When God repeats something we necessarily need to look into it more deeply. God doesn't repeat Himself because He has forgotten. God repeats many times to bring our attention to focus upon the Scripture repeated. In verse 7 it says "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Now, notice in verse 8, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross." We see the separation of Christ from the Father. He was obedient to death. This is a spiritual death. This is the death that is pictured and set forth in "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). He beggared Himself. He stripped Himself of all privileges and rightful dignity.

"And being found in

(Continued on Page 3 Column 2)

THE STAR OF JACOB

by John R. Gilpin, Sr.
(Now in Glory)

"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." (Num. 24:17).

"Saying, Where is he that is born, King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When they had heard the king, they departed: and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them,

til it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." (Mt. 2:2, 9, 10).

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." (Rev. 22:16).

In order that we might get a background for these three texts of Scripture, I would like for us to go back and study the context immediately preceding this first text in the book of Numbers. The children of Israel were traveling from the land of Egypt

over into the land of Canaan, it requiring them forty years to make the journey. They had to pass through various countries, particularly the land of Moab, and as they drew near the land of Moab, Balak, the king of Moab, realizing that he was no match for the Israelites and realizing that the only way that he was to get victory over them would be by some supernatural power, sent for Balaam, who



John R. Gilpin, Sr.

was supposed to be a prophet of God, and asked Balaam to put a curse on the children of Israel.

I might say in passing that I rather think of Balaam as a saved man. To be sure, he was one of those borderline cases. It would be hard to say whether Balaam knew the Lord or not, but I am rather of the opinion that Balaam was a believer even back in those dark days, for when he was invited by Balak's servants to pronounce a curse upon the children of Israel, he immediately refused to go. That in itself would lead me to believe that Balaam was a saved man in view of the fact that he put the honor of God above the praise of men — even above the money

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(USPS 042-340)

ARE YOU FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH?

by Andy Proctor
3805 Unique Cir.
Ft. Myers, FL 33908

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (I Timothy 6:12).

As an introduction, we shall examine this passage of Scripture clause by clause. First of all let us contemplate, "Fight the good fight of faith". Yes, we must do battle. As soldiers of the faith, we must fight the good fight of faith against all wicked spirits who are fighting against us. They fight in vain, for we



Andy Proctor

have the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ! Notice, beloved, the Scripture saith, "Fight the good fight of faith", not maybe, or if you feel like it, but God Almighty commands us to do so!

How can we do this without fear of death or defeat? We must, "lay hold on eternal life!" By the grace of God we are to trust, and hold forth eternal life boldly, as we encounter the enemy. For we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us. Fear of death is not in consideration when we have eternal life. Also fear of defeat has no place in the Christian's life, for we have the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. What a comfort it is to have confidence in the Lord God Almighty!

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ARE YOU SAVED?

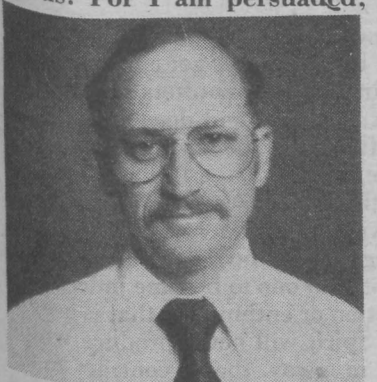
by John Pruitt
Rt. 2, Box 108A
Ellaville, Gal. 31806
Matthew 7:21-27

There are three things that we should notice about this text, that will perhaps help us to grasp the message, and apply it to our own hearts. For the sake of space I would be grateful if you would read the text from your own Bible.

I. Just because you think, feel, or say that you are saved does not make you saved. Jesus said, "Not every one that sayeth unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." II. Salvation is not only believing the gospel, but also doing the will of the Father. Jesus said, "...but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." III. Works without faith is dead, and faith without works is also dead. Jesus said, "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

This message is intended to reaffirm the hearts of you who have been truly saved, that your soul might be supplied with wind-braces from the Word of God which will strengthen your doctrinal understanding, shore up any doubting heart, stir your spiritual emotions, intensify your hatred for sin, and minister peace and assurance to your soul.

Let me begin by saying that salvation is wholly of grace, wrought in the heart of God's elect through His sovereign will. Salvation is eternal. No one, nor thing can take away what God has so graciously, mercifully, and lovingly given. "Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded,



John Pruitt

that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

HOW TO GO TO CHURCH

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psa. 122:1). We need to understand that the house of God for our age refers to the true churches of Jesus Christ. What the Tabernacle was in the Old Testament, and what the Temple was later in the Old Testament; that true churches are in this age. There is much as to attitude, activity, and principle which refers to the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament that can be applied to true churches of this day. So, we can apply this statement in my text to the proper attitude one should have towards the church today.

Let it be understood that I am talking about a local, visible

church. The Bible knows nothing of this horrible heresy of a universal, invisible church which is so prevalent and popular today. One certainly could not be glad when requested to go into such a church. I have often said, that if there is any such thing as a universal, invisible church, it is the most useless thing that ever existed. Such a church can do absolutely nothing that a church is commanded to do. The universal, invisible church has no officers, it never assembles, does not receive, exclude, nor restore repentant members. It observes no ordinances, has no services, receives no offerings, and sends out no missionaries. It just cannot do one thing that a

true church is to do. I am sure one must admit that any reference in my text to a church must be to a local, visible church.

Let it be further understood that I am talking about a true Baptist church. I have no desire to improve attendance at the false institutions of men that call themselves churches. I have no concern as to whether members of such institutions attend or not. The truth of the matter is that it would often — if not always — be best for members of such institutions to not attend at all. They go and hear false doctrine. They support such with their presence and their means.

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The Baptist Examiner

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THE BAPTIST PEOPLE
JOSEPH M. WILSON, EDITOR

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HOW

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Let me say a few things about true Baptist churches. Jesus started a true Baptist church in the days of His earthly ministry. He commissioned that church as the only properly authorized agency for the doing of His work in the world today. He baptized His church in the Holy Spirit. This is the only Holy Spirit baptism known to the Word of God. There is no such thing as the baptism of the Holy Ghost as an experience for believers to have in this day. Jesus baptized His church in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and the only way a believer can participate today in the benefits of that Baptism of the Holy Spirit is to be a member of the true Baptist church that has descended by link-chain succession from that first church. Jesus dwells in His true Baptist churches in a special way. He does not dwell in false, man-made churches. Jesus gets special and proper glory through His churches. Jesus Christ will take His bride from among those who are members of true Baptist churches.

The church is very, very important. It is important to the member. It is important to the world, though the world realizes it not. It is important to the Lord. Since it is so important, I believe it is important as to how one goes to church. I desire to say many things as to how to go to church.

One should go to church properly clothed. One should dress neatly and dress as if going to a special place. One should, of course, be clean. One should not dress in party type, showy clothes in going to church. You should not look like you were going to a dance (you shouldn't go to such anyway) when going to church. Of course one should dress modestly in going to church. Men and women should dress in a way that is becoming to such an occasion and such a place.

One should go to church

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

JUNE 29, 1985

PAGE TWO

regularly. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Heb. 10:25). One should be very faithful in church attendance. You should be there every time the doors are opened unless you have a good reason: one that will stand up when you face the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember, dear friend, that you must stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ and give account some day. You say that the preacher is not going to tell you what to do. You really don't care if the preacher is satisfied with your excuses for missing churches or not. But remember, that you must yet face the Lord. When you give Him your silly, stupid, absurd, little excuses for why you were such a poor church member, why you missed as much or



Joe Wilson

more than you attended: how will you feel then?

Many church members just don't care much about their church. Anything and everything is more important to them than the church. It takes a mighty little arm-twisting to get them to miss a service. Dear friend, you do not have any obligation in life that is as important as your obligation to your church. What are you doing about this? Did you know that places of employment expect their employees to be there every work day? Did you know that they will not even pay you if you are not there? Isn't that a terrible thing? You will say, no preacher, I understand that attitude. Did you know that schools expect students to be there every school day and demand a proper reason for any absences? Is not that a terrible imposition by the schools on their students? You say, no preacher, I understand that. Then, pray tell me why you feel like the church has no right to make any demands as to your attendance.

Some very foolish and sinful people will say, "Sunday is the only day I have." Wrong! Wrong! Sunday is the only day you don't have. Sunday is the Lord's Day. God gives you six days to do all your work in, to use for your personal desires and needs. Sunday is the Lord's Day, it belongs to Him. You are not to use Sunday for recreation, for visiting, for personal things. You are to use it for and in the service of the Lord. The man who does not tithe is a robber. He steals God's money. The person who does not use Sunday for the service of the Lord is a robber. He steals God's day.

Faithful attendance at church is very important. It is important to you. You need it. Brothers and sisters, one of the reasons you are such poor Christians is because you are not faithful in church attendance. You cannot grow, live properly, be strong and healthy as a Christian and not be faithful to your church. This is a major reason that so many Christians are so ignorant as to God's

Word, so unhappy in their Christian lives, so defeated by sin, so worldly minded, etc. A thousand and more ills in many a Christian's life can be traced to their failure to be faithful in church attendance. Church attendance is important to every part of your Christianity. You can not be what you ought to be and be a poor church member.

It is important to the church. Here we are. We are having a church meeting. We are hoping and praying for a good service. We look around. So many of our number are missing. Where is...? I wonder what is wrong with...? Oh, I was hoping...would be here. Missing members hurt the church service.

Faithful attendance is important to the preacher. I say adamantly that no virtue on the part of a church member is as important to the preacher as that of faithful attendance. Many are very talented — but they are not there. Some have much money — but they are not there. Many could be such a great help — but they are not there. The preacher has been in the closet. He has prayed, Oh, God please give me a message that will be a spiritual help to my members. He has prayed long and hard about this. The preacher has been in the study. He has worked long and hard trying to get a message ready for the service, hoping it would be a great blessing. He stands up to preach — and you are not there, and you are not there. The preacher's sermon can do no good to the member who is not there. Even God Himself cannot make a service a blessing to the member who is not there.

Faithful attendance is important to the world — to your testimony and influence with the unsaved world. Your neighbors know that you are a member of ... church. He knows that it is church night, that your church is having a service. He knows that you ought to be there. But he knows that you are at home. My friend, what kind of influence can you have with an unsaved neighbor who knows that you are not faithful in church? None at all, is the answer. Why should your unsaved neighbor bother about going to church when you will not go yourself? I dare you to go to your unsaved neighbor, tell him that you are not going to church next Sunday. Tell him that you are going fishing, or visiting, or just going to stay in bed. Then invite him to go to church, tell him that he needs to go and ought to go. I dare you to do this. Do it and see what good it does. Brethren, it is very important as to your influence with others that you be faithful in church attendance. Now, I am not unreasonable. I know there are some good excuses for missing church. One is if you are dead. Another is if you are dying — then you might be better off to be in church. I do not now if there are any others or not. I do know that there are very few. Listen, if the farmer would farm like some people go to church, what would happen? If you treated your job like you treat your church, how long would you have it? If the athlete worked at his game like some of you work at church, how many games would his team win? Yet, the church is more important than any of these things. I do not know of many things that are doing more harm to the work of the Lord than the way many church members treat the church.

Go on time. Yes, this is very

important. You are on time for work. You are on time for school. You are on time for your meals. Why should you not be on time for church? It is very disrupting and hurtful for church members to be always, or most of the time, late for the church service. It is a very poor testimony for you to be late for church. It testifies that the church does not mean as much to you as it should. Being frequently late for church is an act of disrespect for the preacher, for the church, and for the Lord. Now, it might be barely possible that once every four or five years you might have a good reason for being late — it might be. But most of the time, you are late getting there because of late starting. Very seldom does one get ready and start to church on time, and something happen that causes them to be late. Most of your excuses for being late are just that — excuses. They are not reasons at all. Usually it is the same people who are late all the time. Isn't it strange that something happens to the same people all the time to cause them to be late, and that this rarely happens to others who are almost never late. Yes,

you ought to go to church on time. If you have the love and respect for your church, your pastor, and your Lord that you should, you will do this.

Go to church wide awake and prepared to get all you can out of the service. Let me say to you now that the time to start getting ready for Sunday morning church is Saturday night. Yes, Saturday night. Go to bed in time to get a good night's sleep so you will be wide awake for the morning service. Most people go to school or work much earlier during the week than they go to church on Sunday? You will say, "I must get to bed early as tomorrow is a school day." Why is it that you do not feel the same way about Saturday night? Why do you and the children need a good night's rest when the next day is a school or work day; but if tomorrow is church day it does not matter. Yes, you need to start getting ready for church on Saturday night. Get home early. Go to bed early. Turn off that television and go to bed. You probably should not be watching that program anyway. It is probably not fit even for an unsaved person to be watching.

(Continued on Page 3 Column 1)

FROM THE EDITOR

"And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints... Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:32, 33, 40).

I recently had two editorials on "Enthusiasm." I have had several comments on these. I do not intend by this one to retract anything I said therein. I do most adamantly believe that we need more feeling in our church services and more zeal and enthusiasm in our service for the Lord. However, there is a danger that I may have been somewhat misunderstood in those articles. I desire to correct any misunderstanding. I feel that the above Scriptures will do this.

One of the basic rules for interpreting the Bible is to compare Scripture with Scripture. All the heresies in the world today have come about by ignoring this rule. Men will take one Scripture and interpret it in the light of what it could, by and of itself, mean and ignore all else that the Bible says on the subject.

Now we are, as I previously said, to have zeal and enthusiasm and emotion in our service for the Lord. However, we are not to exercise this in a way that will disrupt or disturb the church service. We are to exercise such in a way that obeys the other Scriptures on the same or kindred subjects.

One may feel a deep emotion and desire to express that in some way, but he must understand that he is to never get out of control. He must understand that the "spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets." When one just "lets go" and does not exercise control, he becomes liable to the influence of the devil taking over or to becoming over-emotional in the energy of the flesh. We are to always behave in a proper way in the church service. We are not to do things that will disrupt the service in any way.

We are to remember that all things are to "be done decently and in order." The Holy Spirit will not lead one to become indecent or disorderly in the expression of emotion or enthusiasm that is a work of the Spirit within us. The Holy Spirit will never produce within one an emotion, or lead one to act in a way, that is contrary to the Word of God. The Holy Spirit will never lead one to act in a disorderly way.

Let me illustrate. The Word of God says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak..." (I Cor. 14:34). Now, the Holy Spirit will never produce an emotion in a woman that would demand her to act in a way that would be contrary to this Scripture. The Holy Spirit will never lead a woman to disobey this Scripture. The Holy Spirit would never lead a woman to speak out and praise the Lord or express her emotions in speech in the church service. If a woman should think this it would but show her misunderstanding of the Word of God and of what "spirit" was leading her.

Yes, I am advocating the having of more emotion, enthusiasm and zeal in our service for the Lord. Our services are mostly cold, cut, dry, de-hydrated, stiff, formal, etc. But I am not advocating the women getting out of order and disobeying the Word of God. I am not advocating that either the women or men get out of order, run up and down the aisles, or disturb the services in any way. I am not an advocate of that old Holy-Roller saying that "we had such a good service that the preacher did not get to preach." I do believe that we can have more zeal, emotion and enthusiasm in our church services and in our daily lives and working for the Lord without getting out of order in any way.

Oh, how wily is Satan! If he cannot get us to be so cold, stiff, formal, dry and nearly dead so that our services are a burden, a chore, and a bore; he will try to get us to act like a bunch of heathen or holy-roller fanatics and thus bring a reproach on the work of the Lord. Let us endeavor to show that we are not ignorant of Satan's devices. Let us have and manifest a Holy Spirit produced enthusiasm, but let us also manifest such decently and in order. Let us seek to obey God's Word in all things. Let us compare Scripture with Scripture and seek Holy Spirit wisdom to order our lives and activities according to the true teaching of the totality of Scripture. May God give us all wisdom to do these things.

HOW

(Continued from Page 2)

It certainly is not going to put you in a frame of mind to be spiritually receptive for Sunday's sermon. I cannot make too much of this point. I am firmly convinced that many people's failure to get what they should out of Sunday's church service is because of how they spend Saturday night.

Go to church after having a time of prayer for God's blessing upon the service. What could be more important than this. Brethren, we must have the blessings of God upon our services. We need good singing. We need good preaching. Yes, we need these things, but more than all else we need the blessings of God. Now, the blessings of God come in answer to prayer. Therefore nothing can be more important on my subject of how to go to church than the fact that we should go after having a time of prayer for the services. Let me give you a mathematical proposition. The blessings of God upon the church service you will be in proportion to the previous week's prayers of the members of the church. Will you receive this truth? It is as certain as any mathematical proposition you can come up with. As surely as two plus two equals four, so surely will the blessings of God upon the services be in proportion to the prayers of the members. Can we not find here the reason for the serious lack of God's blessings that we have on most of our services?

This is a matter of concern for the whole preceding week. We are to get ready for church services on Sunday by praying earnestly all week long that God will meet with us and bless us greatly. We are to pray for ourselves that we will be in a proper spiritual condition. We are to pray that God will bless our members during the week and send them out on Sunday. We are to pray that God will send us some visitors for the services. We are to pray for the preacher. Oh, do pray for the preacher, pray that God will bless him during the week and bring him to the pulpit on Sunday filled with the Spirit of God to preach that which will bless our souls.

Then, let me make a suggestion. Get up Sunday morning in time to have a season of prayer before going to church. I do not know many things that could be a means of greater blessings on the services than this. You get up late (because you went to bed late Saturday night), you rush around, you are in such a hurry, you are going to be late if you don't hurry, you rush off to church in an agitated frame of mind, hardly fit for entering into the presence of God Almighty. How much better to get up a little earlier, have plenty of time to get ready, then some time for prayer for yourself and for the service. My friend, you are not ready to go to church until you have had a season of prayer about church service.

Go to church gladly. That is what my text says, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." We are not to go with the attitude of boredom, or drudgery, but to go gladly. How do you feel, my friend, when it is time to go to church. Do you say, oh, it is time to go to church again. I guess I ought to go. I don't want to go, but I guess I will. What is your attitude when church time rolls around. The

Psalmist said, "I was glad." How is it with you? Many people act like they are going to a funeral as they go to church. Many people act as if they can hardly stand the thought of going. Many act as if they expect to be bored to death by going. Brother, you ought to go to church as if it is the one place you would rather be going than anywhere else.

"For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psa. 84:10). The Psalmist is saying here that it is a thousand times better to be in church than anywhere else. He is glad to be there. He would rather be there than anywhere else. I ask you a question. Where should one be more glad to go than to church? People go many places with the attitude that they are so glad to get to go. They can hardly wait to get there. That is how we should go to church. I read somewhere that the Jews taught that one should hurry to the Synagogue, as if they could hardly wait to get there; but should leave very slowly, as if they could hardly bear to leave. That is how we should go to church. Brothers and sisters, this attitude towards going to church is very important. What we get out of the church service will depend greatly on the attitude with which we go. I plan to continue this subject in our next issue.

CROSS

(Continued from Page 1)

fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:7). He made himself of no reputation. He died as a bond slave. He died as a criminal on the cross of Calvary.

In Colossians chapter 1, verse 20, it says: "Through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself." God said through Him, that is, His lovely Son, all will be reconciled. All things will be brought into union with the Father through His Son. Thus God made a way for His elect people to be reconciled through Jesus Christ's suffering spiritually, physically, and mentally on the cross of Calvary.

We are not speaking of the cross make like a T. We are talking about a wooden stake. God said His Son died upon an upright pointed stake with His hands above His head and His feet together. There were only two nails, one was driven through both His hands, and the other was driven through both his feet. There were not three nails.

Death by crucifixion originated sometime during the time of Alexander the Great, who learned it from the Persians. Rome borrowed this means of execution for her enemies. God brought it in this way because this was the way His lovely Son must die and give His life for many. This was the way He must redeem His people from their sins, for the Bible says that they shall call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins.

This kind of death was reserved for robbers and assigned for those of general crime, those that tried to overthrow the government of Rome. Yet Jesus Christ, who had done nothing wrong was put to death in this way because it was appointed by God.

Upon receiving the sentence of death, a condemned person was flogged with a leather whip loaded with metal or bones. Sometimes they were beaten so cruelly it resulted in death. It was required of the condemned person to carry the cross on which he was to be hung between heaven and earth. He was to carry it to the place of execution. He wore about his neck a placard naming his crime and the execution site. He was stripped and nailed to the cross. Many times they hung for days before they died.

In Matthew 27:36, the soldiers who crucified the Lord Jesus Christ sat down and watched Him there. They beheld one of the most marvelous and glorious events this world has ever known, the crucifixion of God's lovely Son. This was more revealing of divine power than His creation. How God shamefully exposed Him to the world and manifested Him on the cross of Calvary. Death was slow and painful, except in the cases when they broke their legs.

Crucifixion was considered a curse of God in Deuteronomy 21:22, 23. Galatians 3:13 says that He became a curse for us. He was under the curse and the sentence of death. Paul writing in Galatians 6:14 said "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." In Colossians 2:14 it says that they nailed the ordinance to His cross, The Lord Jesus Christ's cross. Paul is saying that the cross is a literal cross. God does not demand or call upon His people to fall under the burden of the weight of the literal cross. We do not have that kind of a cross to bear. But, Jesus Christ bore His cross.

The New Testament word "stauros" has both a literal and a figurative meaning. It means the cross was the physical instrument on which Jesus Christ died. We see that in Colossians 1:20 when it talks about His cross. "And having made peace through the blood of his cross." It was His personally. In Hebrews 2:9, it says that by the grace of God tasted He death for every man. It was literal death upon the cross of Calvary. Jesus Christ entered into death just like going through a door. He tasted it like a man who sits down and consumes a delicious meal. Jesus Christ tasted the bitterness of death, the bitterness of sin, and the anguish of God turning His back upon His lovely Son.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:1, 2).

God exhibited His Son openly and shamefully on Golgotha's hill nearly two thousand years ago. He did that for the sins of God's people. He was put to death after being flogged. He was left on Golgotha's hill to die the death that He anticipated and the death which He could not escape. Obedience to the Father and love for them whom the Father had given Him in the halls of eternity kept him

there. It wasn't the nails driven into His hands and feet that kept Him on the cross, it was the love and design of God.

God doesn't love us because Christ died, but Christ died because God loved us. The pains and the tears and the sobs of all those cries from the cross couldn't move God. You see, that wasn't what saved us. It was His death and the shedding of His blood.

Let's look at it figuratively. What is the instrument of the cross? How does it work? What does God do with it? We talk about it, we sing about it. Let's read a verse of Scripture. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." (Rom. 1:16). This instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit which is known as the gospel of Jesus Christ is the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ back to the right hand of the Father. This is the saving power of God that brings salvation to everyone that believeth.

Figuratively, the cross of Jesus Christ in the glorious gospel becomes the power of God unto salvation. It was the means of God releasing into this world the power sufficient to save His elect from their sins. God said, in effect, "I am going to release my power into this old earth and I am going to release it in the person of Jesus Christ in what He did on Calvary. This is going to be the instrument of the Holy Spirit, and He will use this. By this instrument I am going to release My power sufficiently to save My elect people."

I don't know any other way God is going to save His people. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." (I Cor. 1:18). To the natural man, the unregenerated man, to the wicked man, to them who perish, it is foolishness. It doesn't mean anything. It is so simple to the heart and life of God's elect people, but the world cannot comprehend it. God designed it so a small child could understand it. You don't have to be a genius to understand it. God made it plain.

When I went to Appalachian Bible Institute, they would give us these big long words and try to tell us what they meant. How smart I am and how dumb you are. God isn't like that. God in His infinite wisdom and by His great power opened our eyes that we might see.

Paul talked about it in I Corinthians 2:14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." It doesn't say he doesn't receive the things of God. The sun shines on the just as well as on the unjust. God sends food and grateful harvest to the just as well as to the unjust. God gives the unjust power and strength to work and to provide for himself and put a roof over his family. God does all these things through His providence.

They cannot receive the instrument of the death of the cross of Jesus Christ, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, and as the power of the Holy Spirit opens their eyes. You who were dead has He made alive, the Bible says in Ephesians 2.

If just one person could come back from the burning pit, what a testimony he would have and what a message he would have to the lost world. But one has not come back. Jesus tells us in Luke, chapter 16. It says that if they hear not Moses and the

prophets, neither will they hear though one rose from the dead. You cannot scare Jesus Christ into a man, you cannot beg salvation into a man.

You do not hear me begging and pleading when I give the invitation. Why? Because I have preached the gospel. Because I have done what God told me to do and it is up to God to save. If the gospel reached the heart of that old sinner, he would go forward. You do not have to beg and get him by the arm and drag him up to the front. It is the power of the Holy Spirit who takes the message to the heart. The sinner is made alive unto God. The Bible says that the sinner cannot know these wonderful things concerning salvation. He cannot know he is a hell-deserving sinner, and he does not know that he is in need of a Savior. He doesn't know this because he is spiritually blind.

Why did I go on for 35 years and live like I did for so long? I don't know those things. God hadn't opened my eyes. The cross is the means of God saving His people. It is sufficient to save His elect people from their sins.

The cross also stood for God's purpose and was Jesus's supreme mission. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts 2:23, 24). It was not possible that death could hold Jesus Christ as a victim in the grave. He was in the heart of the earth three days. Not his soul but his body.

Jesus said in John 10:18: "I have the power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my father." In Luke the angel said: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen." (Luke 24:5-6). He is raised from the dead. He came forth victoriously from the grave. The cross was both a mission and the divine will of Christ. He voluntarily submitted to the will of God. He bowed His head and gave up the Spirit. He voluntarily died, He yielded Himself unto death, He entered into the darkness of death, and He tasted death for the sins of God's people.

The cross is also a symbol of shame and humiliation. We are to bear the cross. We are to share in the suffering of Christ that we may share in His glory. If any man wills to do so, Jesus said, let him come, take up his cross and follow Me. Let us deny ourselves daily and take up the cross and follow Jesus.

JACOB

(Continued from Page 1)

which Balak's servants offered to him.

Then at a later date, Balak sent more honorable servants unto Balaam and asked him if he wouldn't reconsider and come to him post-haste and pronounce a curse upon the children of Israel. Then it was that Balaam answered:

"If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of

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The devil, like the false mother that came before Solomon, would have our hearts divided, as she would have had the child; but God, like the true mother, will have all or none.

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

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Please explain Matt. 24:20.

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"But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24: 20, 21).

Christ is here telling of the persecution of the children of Israel during the time of the great tribulation. This time is referred to by Jeremiah as the time of Jacob's trouble, "Alas! for that day is great so that there is none like it. It is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer. 30:7). Daniel also spoke of it, for it is said, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation, even to this same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. 12:1).

According to the prophecy of both Jeremiah and Daniel, God's people (the elect Jews) will be saved from physical death at this time of tribulation. Christ is here telling His disciples how this is to be done. He tells them, "When ye see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, — Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains; (Matt. 24: 15, 16).

They are to take off, leaving clothes and goods behind. They are to pray that this would not take place in the winter, as that would mean much suffering in the cold and wet. They were also to pray that their journey would be not on the sabbath day. A sabbath day's journey is only around a mile and that would not let them get very far from the trouble from which they were fleeing.

A study of Revelation 12 shows that this is to take place in the last half of the seven year period, known as the great tribulation.

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Matthew 24:20: "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day."

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We break into a partial description of the horrors of the Tribulation Period, the preceding verses deal with there being such terror that those living in cities will flee to the mountains to try to escape the wrath of God as it is poured out on this earth. We know from Revelation that this will become a reality. There will be those who flee to the mountains and even beg the mountains to fall on them that they might die; but that request will be denied.

I believe the central theme of Christ's message here is to describe the horribleness of The Tribulation Period. He is teaching that it will be such a period of horror that many will leave behind all they have and flee to the mountains.

The verse in question has to do with this trip from Judea to the mountains. Common sense tells us that this trip would be far safer and faster in any season other than winter. The reference to the Sabbath had to do with the Jewish laws about traveling a limited distance on the Sabbath day. The verse has reference to the trip being easier and swifter in a season besides winter, and on a day besides the Sabbath.

The question arises, why is Jesus telling these things to the disciples, if they would be raptured beforehand and not enter into this period of time. This is no argument at all against a Pre-tribulation rapture. To say that the saved on earth at the time of The Tribulation will go through this period of time simply because Jesus mentioned it to the disciples is an absurdity. Jesus mentioned the horrors of hell to the disciples. Does that mean they are all going there? Certainly not! There are many things that Jesus taught the disciples that do not apply to them or to saved people at all. That does not mean that saved people will experience these things.

I close with a precious thought. Thank God, that when this period of terror comes, we who know God will be long gone. May God bless you all.

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Matt. 24:20 has to do with the second half of the seven year tribulation period, which is precipitated by "the abomination of desolation" (Vs. 15). This is the time "of Jacob's trouble" (Jere. 30:7). The antichrist having deceived Israel, now (midway the seven years) mockingly betrays her by declaring himself to be the God of Israel (II Thes. 2:4). Hence, Israel's suffering for the next three and one half years is unparalleled in human history (Vs. 21).

In fleeing the wrath of the antichrist, the Lord admonished

Israel to take refuge "in the mountains" (Vs. 16). This flight was to be immediate and with great haste for it would involve great hardship. Winter's weather is unsuitable for journeying. The severity or difficulties brought on by winter would impede the hurried departure from Jerusalem and Judea.

"Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day" (Vs. 20). No doubt, Jerusalem would be crowded on the Sabbath day, for many of the Jews would make the traditional pilgrimage to Jerusalem to attend the services of the Temple. Then too, the Mosaic law, which Israel as a nation will yet be clinging to, restricts Sabbath day travel to approximately a thousand and fifty yards. Dedication to the Law and its Sabbath day observance will be stronger in that day than for many centuries; for the Jews have for the first time in over two thousand years their own Temple in Jerusalem. So, it would be, some devout Jews rather than break their cherished Law concerning the Sabbath, elect to stay behind and suffer the atrociousness of the antichrist.

Winter weather would make it especially difficult for women, children, and the elderly to escape the antichrist seige of Jerusalem. It would be a show of wisdom on the part of the nation of Israel if she would have mountain retreats built and the routes leading unto them clearly marked. But alas it is so, the words of Jesus of Nazareth are unto Israel mere sounds of no significance. Israel, the desolator is coming.

JACOB

(Continued from Page 3)

the Lord my God, to do less or more." (Num. 22:18).

He was a man in the long ago who had a greater respect for the Word of God than a lot of Baptists have today. He went on to say that it didn't make any difference how much money, or how high the honors, or how great the remuneration that Balak might give him, he could not go beyond the Word of the Lord — as if to say that the Word of God was definitely final so far as his life was concerned. However, Balaam did the fatal thing. He tarried and he parleyed with temptation. He knew that God's will was for his life, but he parleyed with the temptation and he said to these servants of Balak, "Wait until tomorrow and let me pray about it tonight and see what the Lord tells me to do." The next day God gave him permission to make the journey to Balak. It wasn't God's expressed will, and it wasn't God's declared will, but it was God's permissive will, in that He allowed Balaam to have his own way for the time being.

When Balaam met Balak, it wasn't long until he learned that Balak desired of him. He said, "I want you to put a curse on these people. I am no match for

them. I can't meet them in battle. If they desire to cross my country, I cannot withstand them. The only way that I can meet them is for you to pronounce a curse upon them." Then they went up, upon a mountain, and as Balaam looked out in the distance, the Word of God tells us that he saw the utmost part of the camp, for we read:

"That thence he might see the utmost part of the people." (Num. 22:41).

The word "utmost" means a fourth part of the camp, and from where Balaam and Balak stood on the mountain top, all that they could see was one-fourth of the camp. As they stood there, Balak, on tip-toe with expectancy desiring that Balaam should pronounce a curse on these whom he thought to be his enemies — Balak stood, expecting that message of Balaam to be a blessing and a benediction in his behalf, but a malediction and a curse upon the children of Israel. As they stood there, Balaam lifted his voice and pronounced as great a blessing upon the children of Israel as would have been possible to be given. I rather imagine old Balak stood there in chagrin and consternation and said, "Wait a minute, brother. That is not the kind of preaching that I am paying you to do. Evidently you didn't see this crowd like I want you to see them. Let's get upon another mountain where you can see the entirety of this camp."

The Word of God tells us that Balak brought him to the top of Pisgah so that he might be able to look out on the whole of the camp. They built their altars and they offered their sacrifices and Balaam started again. This time, beloved, he offered a greater blessing upon the children of Israel than he had previously. Balak stopped him again in the midst of his second sermon and said, "You surely haven't seen all of this camp. Evidently you are not seeing the crowd that I want you to see."

Balak then took him to the highest mountain in the land, to the peak of Peor, and he said to Balaam, "Now, Balaam, look down in that valley. You can see the camp on all four sides. With this camp in view, put a curse upon that group of people in the valley." Balaam started in again, but God wouldn't let him pronounce a curse upon those Jews. It was one blessing right after another that fell from the lips of Balaam relative to the children of Israel encamped within the valley. Then it was that Balak became angry. The Word of God says that Balak's anger was kindled and he smote his hands together. He said, "I sent for you to curse my enemies and you have blessed them altogether. I was going to give you great honor and great wealth," and thus he angrily started to take his departure. As Balak turned to leave, Balaam said, "I have some more to say; I have another message," and he spoke the words of my text:

"I shall see him but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Jacob, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." (Num. 24:17).

I. THIS IS A FULFILLMENT OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY.

In Numbers 24:17, Balaam said, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob," and in Matthew

2:2, we find the fulfillment of it when the wise men came and said, "Where is he that is born, King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." We read further on in that chapter that they followed the star until it came to rest directly over the house where the Christ child lay. I say to you, beloved, the prophecy is given to us in Numbers 24:17 and we find the fulfillment of it in Matthew 2:2. This is another glorious, concrete example of another fulfilled Old Testament prophecy.

This leads me to bless the name of my God and it gives me courage to believe that God will fulfill every prophecy and will keep every promise that He has ever spoken. Beloved, if God saw to it that the prophecy which was uttered by Balaam in the long ago relative to the star was gloriously and completely fulfilled, God will see to it that every prophecy within this Bible is fulfilled. He will see to it that every promise in the Bible will be taken care of, and that not one of them will be broken.

Let's notice a few of those prophecies and promises, to see whether or not He honors His Word. We read:

"Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arms, and THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THEE." (Jer. 32:17).

I am persuaded to believe that the same God who saw to it that that star was hung out in the sky in honor to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, fulfilling Old Testament prophecy, that that same God will see to it that Jeremiah 32:17 will likewise be fulfilled when He said that there is "nothing too hard for God." Brother, sister, perhaps you are facing some problem today. Maybe you have some difficult task or some difficult burden that just seems more than you are able to bear. Beloved, there is nothing too hard for God. Churches face problems all the time. Individuals face problems. Sunday School teachers face lots of problems, but, beloved, remember this, there is nothing too hard for God. The God who fulfilled the prophecy concerning the star is the same God who said that there wasn't anything too hard for Him to do.

Let's read another promise: "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7).

What a promise! What a marvelous promise! The marvel of it becomes even greater when we realize that the God that fulfilled the promise concerning the star is God who said, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Let us think a minute. If you are saved, you are doubtlessly concerned about somebody who is lost, and you are interested in seeing that individual become a child of God. If you are a child of God, you know that you have somebody that you are concerned about, and it may seem like you have prayed a long time, and that you have been interested in that person's salvation a long time and haven't seen any evidence of it coming to pass. What does God say, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask

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That which man does, unaided by Divine strength, God can never own.

The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

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

Is there an "age of accountability?"

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Accountability according to Webster's unabridged is... "The state of being accountable; responsible; or liable; accountability." In my own words, responsibility for ones own actions.

The question is not clear as to who is accountable at what age, or what are they accountable for, or to whom are they accountable? Since I'm not a lawyer I won't attempt to answer the question as to civil laws, but according to God's Word.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

The word translated "man" in our text, in the original Hebrew was "adam" which refers to the human species, mankind. Mankind is accountable to God, for He created us. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

All mankind is accountable in one way or another to their Creator. Accountability means liability, which in turn brings guilt; if the law of the one to whom you are accountable is broken. Guilt brings judgment, and God's judgment is just. Judgment brings punishment. Not one violation of God's Holy ordinances shall be overlooked. (If every idle word shall be judged, what of the greater sins?) The actions, thoughts and intents of the heart of all shall be judged. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (Romans 2:12). There are no exceptions.

Through Adam all are made sinners and are accountable for that. We are sinners from the womb. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Man is born a sinner.

He does not become a sinner by practice. He sins because it is his nature to sin. A dog does not become a dog by barking. He was born a dog and barks because it is his nature. (I can bark but that does not make me a dog.) I was born a sinner, and to sin was my nature. The Bible says in Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" and again in Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death;..." This is accountability (age is not mentioned). But there are those

that will not reap the wages of sin because through Jesus Christ comes grace, and thus redemption from the penalty of sin. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (Romans 8:1). "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3) John 3:18 states... "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (Age is not mentioned).

Salvation comes through believing the Gospel. Paul said... "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). See I Corinthians 1:21 and I Peter 1:23-25. I am not limiting God by this statement. All things are possible with Him. Since He created us, nothing is too hard for Him. He can make the blind see and the deaf hear. John the Baptist leaped in his mother's womb when she greeted the mother of Jesus. See Luke 1:35-45. Since He ordained that people must hear and believe the Gospel of Christ in order to be saved, He also can provide the means whereby they shall hear. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

No matter what their age or condition, those that Christ died for and redeemed shall come to hear and believe the gospel and thereby be born again. This is the promise of God. All that are redeemed are redeemed the same way. They must be washed in the Blood of the Lamb. The only way man is not accountable at any age to God for sin is through Jesus Christ and His shed blood. Any certain age of accountability or lack of it is foreign to God's Word.

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Joseph and the mother of Jesus went to the feast of the passover every year. They would remain in Jerusalem certain days and when they had fulfilled these days they would return home. It was on one of these annual trips that they had made to Jerusalem, as was the custom of the feast, they were returning home and had gone a days journey when they discovered that Jesus was not in the company. It seems that a

twelve year-old boy should know to come along with the crowd when they set out on the return journey home. Well, whatever they might have thought, Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem. As we read in Luke 2:42, we learn that Jesus was twelve years old when the above mentioned story took place.

I have had people ask me, "Is the age of accountability twelve?" I suppose the reason they ask this is because Jesus was twelve years on this particular trip to Jerusalem. But there is not anything in this Scripture that teaches that the age of accountability is twelve.

Children at a very early age realize that they do wrong. A baby cries to be picked up many times, not because it is hungry; but it is its nature to make its mother think so. The baby has a sinful nature. It is born that way. It is conceived that way. Every person is a sinner by nature. That is why as soon as it is born it goes astray as we read in Ps. 58:3.

First of all we are sinners by nature, then next we are sinners by practice. The baby, the child, sins by nature. It does wrong because it is its nature to do so. As it gets older it begins to practice sin. It is then that children become accountable for that sin. When children get old enough to know what they are doing, that guilt is laid at their heart's door. Their conscience tells them of their wrong doing. This may be at an early age or may be later. One might learn of his sin at age seven or eight. It may be at age ten or twelve, depending on the teaching in the home and/or at church.

When a child or a person comes to understand that he or she does wrong and they are guilty before God, then they have reached the age of accountability. There is no set age for this. With some it is earlier than it is with others.

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Psalm 51:5 says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my Mother conceive me." Again in Psalm 58:3 says, "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." Yes there is an age of accountability. However, it not 12 years old as some would have us to believe. Some try to prove the twelve year old age of accountability from Luke 2:42-52, but this teaches nothing of the kind. The Bible sets no certain age. The Bible does teach us that there is an age of accountability, in Romans 13:11-12. Paul says, "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall

give account of himself to God."

When Adam, our Federal head, sinned and rebelled against God, he brought shame and destruction to his posterity. His sin was imputed to us who were not yet born, so that every one that is born of women is born in sin. Everyone is accountable. Some one said we are accountable from the womb to the tomb. Yes, the age of accountability is from conception to death. You might ask, do babies go to hell when they die? They have no understanding as far as the Gospel is concerned, and we say one must hear the Gospel in order to be saved. Beloved, remember the three Hebrew children who were thrown in a furnace that was heated seven times hotter than it needed to be. There was not a hair scorched nor their clothes burned. Remember Daniel was thrown into a lions den, but was not mauled or bitten, why? because God was there. He works all things after the counsel of His will. He does the impossible. He can get the gospel to babies, even to the imbeciles if He pleases. Personally, I believe all babies are saved. I do not believe that there are reprobate babies. After David committed adultery with Uriah's wife, and then had him killed; a baby was born to David and Bathsheba and died thereafter. David said in II Samuel 12:23, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." — I believe he said this by inspiration, and knew that he would see his son again. This gives me hope that babies are safe and go to Heaven when they die. If babies why not imbeciles? Surely God had a purpose for them other than just to be born without accomplishing anything. Yes, every one is accountable to God whether he be a baby or an old person. Irresistible Grace can save any one at any age. No one, whether he be one or one hundred, can be saved of his own will. I Corinthians 2:14 says, "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." You see, He can make a young person understand as easily as He can an old person. It's not in the individual, but rather the power of the Spirit. God Bless.

JACOB

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what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." It was the same God who fulfilled the promise concerning the star, that gave us this promise.

Let us look at another promise. In Revelation 17, we have a story of a harlot woman and her harlot daughters. The harlot woman is nothing more nor less than Roman Catholicism, and the harlot daughters that have come from this mother of harlots, are the Protestant churches that have come out of Rome. I make no apology when I say that the old whore and her harlot daughters that are spoken of in Revelation 17 are a definite, direct picture of Roman Catholicism and the Protestant Churches that have come out of Rome. If I had the time to give you a full exegesis of this portion of Scripture, I am sure that I could convince the worst skeptic that this is what this Scripture means.

"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (Rev. 17:16).

Beloved, this would tell us that Roman Catholicism and all the churches that came out of Rome are going to be completely destroyed. It doesn't look much like it today. It surely doesn't look much like it is ever going to be fulfilled, but listen a thousand years with the Lord is as a day, and a day is as a thousand years. What a thousand years is with us, is just a simple day with the Lord Jesus Christ. It has been only two days in the mind of God since He prophesied that the old whore and her harlot daughters were going to be destroyed. Maybe in another day, maybe in less than a day, it will come to pass. Beloved, no matter how long, it will come to pass. The same God that hung a star in the sky, is the God who said He will destroy the old whore and her harlot daughters, and He will do just that thing.

Let us notice again. In the book of Revelation, we read concerning the Devil:

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11).

This would tell us that there is a way whereby you can get victory over the Devil, and that is by the blood of the lamb. Beloved, there isn't anything said here about getting victory over him by joining the church. You can join the church and never get any victory over him. You can be baptized and you won't get any victory over the Devil. You can turn over a new leaf and you won't get any victory over the Devil. The first of the year will come and a great crowd of drunks will get sobered up and they will swear that they aren't going to drink any more this year — that they are going to walk the straight and narrow path, but they will go right on just as bad as they have been. Why? Because you do not overcome the Devil with a New Year's resolution. You can only overcome the Devil through the blood — the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The same God who said that a star shall come out of Jacob and who saw to it that it was gloriously fulfilled, said in this twelfth chapter of Revelation that the way of victory over the Devil is through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As the old song says:

"He will keep His promise to me, All the way with me He will go; He has never broken any promise spoken: He will keep His promise, I know."

II. LET'S NOTICE WHY CHRIST WAS CALLED A STAR.

In the first place, a star is a pattern of constancy. It does not change. Stars look just the same tonight as they first did when you first looked upon them. A star does not change. Everything else changes. Kings change; nations change; forms of government change; modes of transportation change; methods of warfare change; styles change; our health changes; our houses change; our homes change; everything about us changes, but, beloved, the stars remain the same.

On that night long ago, when in Genesis 14, Abraham walked

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beneath that Syrian sky and looked up therein, God spoke to him and said, "Abraham, count the stars." He said, "Lord, it is impossible." God said, "So shall thy seed be." Listen, beloved, every little star in the sky whispered to Abraham, "Have faith in God." The stars that looked down on Abraham that night, years ago, are the same stars that look down on you and me tonight. They haven't changed one particle. They are a pattern of constancy.

No wonder Balaam referred to the Lord Jesus Christ under the figure of a star. Beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't change. He remains the same.

"Jesus Christ, the SAME yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, EVEN FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING, thou art God" (Psa. 90:1, 2).

"For I am the Lord, I CHANGE NOT: therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6).

Beloved, as the stars are a pattern of constancy and change not, but remain the same, so Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and through all the days to come He shall remain the same.

Another reason why the Lord Jesus Christ was referred to under the figure of a star is that a star shines on all alike. God doesn't let the stars shine just on one place and cause them to refrain from shining on another. Some people are rich and some are poor, but the poor man can enjoy the starlight just as does the rich man.

Some folk like music, and while everything with them is music, to others it is just a big noise. Some folk are very prosaic, while others are poetic. Some folk are cultured while others are boorish. Some are black and some are white. Some are learned and some are ignorant and illiterate. Beloved, it makes no difference what the conditions may be, the stars shine on all alike.

Beloved, Jesus Christ shines on all men alike. Thank God, He didn't come just to save one class. If He had, the most of us would never have been saved. Thank God, He didn't come to save the rich. If He had, I would never have been saved. Thank God, beloved, He came to save all alike, and when He left this world, He said:

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to EVERY CREATURE" (Mark 16:15).

Over in the Calvary Baptist Church in Washington several years ago, at the close of the services one day, three individuals walked down to the front of that church, indicating their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Saviour and their desire to place their membership in that church on the grounds of baptism. The first was Honorable Charles Evans Hughes of the Supreme Court. Side by side with him was a widow woman, and on the other side of him was a poor Chinese washer-man living there within the city. When the pastor walked down to shake hands with these three and to

present them to the congregation, he called attention to the apparent differences in their lives, and he said, "At the Cross of Christ the ground is perfectly level." I tell you, beloved, the stars shine on all alike.

Jesus is also referred to under the figure of a star because a star is the fountain of influence. Maybe you won't agree with me on that. Maybe you do not believe that the stars and the moon exert an influence. Beloved, I am old-fashioned enough in my theology that when I set out plants, and plant beans and potatoes, I consult the moon before I do it. I believe that the stars exert a tremendous influence. Listen:

"Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for SIGNS, and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Gen. 1:14).

Not only do stars exert an influence over crops, tides, and the seasons, but the Bible tells us that the stars exert an influence over your life and mine.

"Canst thou bind the SWEET INFLUENCES of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" (Job 38:31).

If you will study this closely, you will find that it is speaking about the Pleiades and the Orion — the stars, and Job thus speaks of their influences. I do not know that I could give you an interpretation of that text, but I just accept it on its face value — literally, that the stars are the fountain of influence.

Beloved, then I turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and I proudly say that the Son of God came for that purpose, to be a fountain of influence. Oh, the influence of the Son of God upon the life of a sinner! When the Son of God shines upon one that is dead in sin, that individual begins to live. No man has ever yet been made alive until Jesus Christ has shined upon him. No man has ever been made alive until the influence of Jesus Christ has been felt in his life.

Oh, the influence of the Son of God when He shines upon some burdened Christian. That Christian faces a new life, with a smile upon his face and a smile within his heart.

Oh, the influence of Jesus when He shines upon some backslidden saint. That backslider mends his ways. As the stars exert their influence upon us, so the Son of God influences us. The more Jesus Christ becomes real to you, the more influence the Son of God has in your life.

Jesus was referred to as a star too, because a star is a source of guidance. You have read of the Polar Star. Before the days of radar the Polar Star was the means of navigation. All ships were navigated by setting their sails with the Polar Star. Beloved, I say that as a star is a source of guidance, so the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest source of guidance that you and I could ever have.

I used to go fox hunting in the years gone by. Maybe you won't think so much of me when I tell you that, but, beloved, I used to love to hear the hounds bark. And frankly, the more I see of human beings in this twentieth century, the better I like dogs. I can remember many and many a time of going fox hunting at night that when I got out of my car and started into the woods, that I have looked up and got my bearings — got my location and marked it by a star that is in the sky. It didn't make any difference where I went into the hills, nor how far I went into

the woods, nor how many swamps I waded, I could find my way back to that car because I marked it by a star. Beloved, a star is a source of guidance.

I say to you, beloved, if you want guidance in this world in which we live, look to the Lord Jesus Christ as a source of guidance. He guides every man who is searching. He will lead you to liberty. You can look in vain for peace elsewhere, but you can look to the Lord Jesus Christ and He will guide you.

Jesus is likewise referred to under the figure of a star because a star is an object of wonder. Do you remember that little couplet that you learned years ago when you were a child —

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder where you are."

Beloved, look up at them tonight and wonder about them. Why, astronomers know so little about the stars. They are still wondering about them. Years ago, the scientists said that they could count as many as 6,000 stars. Then when Galileo came with his telescope, they said that they could count up to 60,000. Then when the high-powered telescopes were invented, they found that they could count as high as 360,000,000. Now they tell us that the stars cannot be counted, that they are infinite in number. Jeremiah told us in the long ago that they are numberless. Beloved, the astronomers know so little about the stars, and the results of their observation is only astonishment instead of intelligence.

The same is true concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. The more you wonder about Him, the more you become amazed with wonder. Beloved, there is mighty little that you can know about Jesus. You can know Him as your Saviour. You can know Him as your Lord. You can know what He means to you. Oh, the vastness and the bigness of the Son of God! What He is and what He may mean to us someday only causes us to wonder. You look up in the skies and that star that you see only appears to be a little hole in the sky, or maybe it looks like a little gold dust that has been sprinkled here and there, but when you get a telescope and look through it, the star looks a lot larger than just a little dust that has been sprinkled in the heavens. If you could take an airplane and journey toward it, the closer you got, the larger that star would appear to you. If you could get right next to it, you would find in each one of those stars a world so big that you could not compute its size.

Now, beloved, that is what Jesus Christ is to us. The most I knew about Him on the day that He became my Saviour and my Lord was that He had saved me. He has come to mean more and more and more to me every day as I go down life's pathway, but every time that I read my Bible, my Jesus becomes more and more and more an object of wonder. Everyday I get a little closer to Him, and He is just like those stars — if you were near them, you couldn't even compute their size, so great would they be, Jesus is just the same to me.

Brother, sister, listen to me, it is no wonder that God caused Balaam to say, "There shall come a star out of Jacob." Surely Jesus is that star. He is an object of wonder to every one of us.

III. HOW DO YOU RECEIVE HIM?

Mt. 2:16 tells us that Herod had all the babies in Bethlehem

killed. Luke 2:7 tells how that they received Him in Bethlehem — there was not even a place for Him to stay when He was born — there was no comfortable room for Him in the Inn, but rather He was born in a stable, and cradled in a manger. That was the world's reception for the Son when the Lord Jesus was born. I wonder, beloved, how it is today. I wonder if the world has any more love for Jesus. I wonder if the world's reception would be one bit different today. Let's consider it carefully.

We have recently passed through that pagan season of Christmas — pagan because that is where it comes from — and how has Jesus been treated? We say that it is His birthday, but how many of you in this congregation gave a birthday gift to the Lord Jesus Christ? In contrast, how many of you gave gifts to one another? I think that if it were my birthday I would feel very much slighted if you gave gifts to everybody else but me. Surely all these signs of worldliness show us that the reception the Lord Jesus Christ receives today is no different from the night so long ago when He was born in Bethlehem.

Beloved, I go back to that day and stand on that high mount with Balaam and Balak and I hear Balaam say, "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob." I come down to the day that He was born and I see Him in the manger. I see His star in the sky. I turn to the close of Revelation and I hear Him say, "... I am the bright and morning star..." Beloved, has the Son of God — God's Star — come into your heart? Has the Star of Bethlehem become the Polar Star of your life? May it please Jesus for you to see Him as the Star of your life this very hour.

May God bless you!

SAVED

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separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-39). However, let me hasten to say that it is possible to be deceived by Satan, even in salvation, even if it is based upon sound truth. It is possible for a person to be deceived into thinking he, or she is saved, and have that false salvation based on Bible truth.

I. SOUND DOCTRINE ALONE CAN NOT SAVE: There are many people deceived into thinking that they are saved because they believe all the doctrines of salvation. They believe in Christ's deity; they believe that He was manifest in the flesh, and born of a virgin; they believe that He lived a perfect life, and died a vicarious death; they believe that He rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and now sits on the right hand of the Father's throne.

But my friend, just believing these things without a penitent heart is not salvation. I am talking about a heart that remains in repentance day by day. Notice the book of James 2:18-22. Salvation comes to the believer when the soul is given up to Christ. Your confession must include His Lordship. Lip service is as a bucket sitting on a shelf which has a hole. There is no way of telling for sure whether it is good, or bad. It may testify by its appearance that it is a good bucket, but the fact that it will not hold water tells you that it is

no good. "And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house and it fell; and the great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:26-27).

II. THE ABSENCES OF DOUBT COULD BE A TRICK OF THE DEVIL: You may say, "Once upon a time I was saved, because I believed the gospel, and was baptized." But since that time your life has been far away from God. You have not had any inclination to follow Christ, or to serve Him, or surrender to Him as your personal Lord. My friend, Satan just may be tricking you with false confidence. Let's look at John 4:14... "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Please hear me, I am not talking about what other people can see. Your heart can easily be covered up. I am talking about what you yourself know. I do not attempt to judge anyone. If a person says that he is saved, and he has the right theology behind it, I must take his word for it. A city on a hill can not be hid; you do not hide a candle under a bushel. I am simply saying that if your salvation is not based on a well of water springing up within your soul continually, then you might do well to examine your heart before God Almighty. Illustration: Will a poor man who has been left an inheritance rest assured of his windfall and continue to allow his family to do without the necessities of life? Shall not this grace that has come to him be acknowledged by his good use of it? Be sure that you have clear evidence of your salvation. "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10).

III. JUST BECAUSE YOU FEAR GOD'S WRATH DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU HATE SIN: No one who is sane in his mind would want to go to hell. I doubt there is anyone who sets out in life to do everything he can to assure that he will go to hell when he dies. Any person in his right mind, who is convinced of the reality of hell and the judgment of sin, will no doubt become fearful in his heart. I was uneasy for several years before I was saved, because I feared the possibility of punishment from God when I died; but it was not until I came to Christ in repentance that my love for sin turned to love for Christ, and my fear of God's wrath was replaced by a hatred for the old man and the old life of sin. It was not until I came to Christ by His sovereign grace that I began to hunger, and thirst after His righteousness, and my hunger was quenched by His righteousness. And now, praise God, my soul is continually fed through an appetite for things of God. Paul said in Romans 6:1, 2 "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?"

IV. EMOTIONALISM IS NOT ALWAYS PROOF OF SALVATION: Many people get caught up in emotionalism. Many preachers are able to preach in such a

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STUDIES IN EZEKIEL

Willard Willis, Monroe, Ohio

Missionary To
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"Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day" (Ezek. 24:1, 2).

The prophecy we have studied from chapters twenty through twenty three was given in the "seventh year" of king Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezek. 20:1). It is stated in verse one of the chapter before us that this prophecy was given in the "ninth year", or two years later. It is believed by interpreters that the prophecy before us was given in January, 588 B.C. The very first two verses of the chapter before us impress us relative to the accuracy of the time of the year, month and even the day. We, however, are made to wonder as to why the need of such minute accuracy. Ezekiel is even commanded to write the name of the day. The name of the day was to be written because it was to be remembered by Israel as a fast day. It was a day to be set aside for fasting because it was the day in which Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem.

Ezekiel was a captive three hundred miles from home when the invasion finally arrived. He, however, was fully aware that the invasion was taking place. One can find this same record in II Kings 25:1, Jeremiah 39:1 and 52:4. The purpose then for the writing of the day was so that it could be remembered by a fast and so all would know that God had kept His word. You and I, to this day, must confess that what God had promised, He was able to perform and did perform. We must confess that none was able to stay His hand. We have "Red letter days" on our calendars too. The day we are now considering was most certainly a "Red letter day" in the history of Israel.

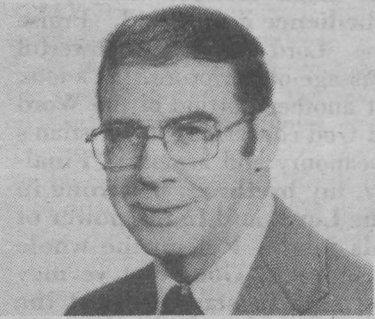
Ezekiel, no doubt, informed the other captives in Babylon that the invasion of their homeland was in process. They, of course, when they had received a confirmation of his report, would be convinced of the accuracy of all his prophecy.

"And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it" (Ezek. 24:3). Ezekiel was to utter a parable unto the rebellious house. The word "rebellious" is the sum total of all that which we have been reading regarding Israel. Were we to add up all the precious chapters in a column and draw a line under them, the sum total would be "rebellious". It is for this reason that the troops of Nebuchadnezzar were now pounding on the door of the rebellious house.

Ezekiel, in his parable, was to liken Jerusalem to a seething pot. The following passages from Jeremiah 1:13 and 15 present the same parable: "And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north...For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdom of the north, saith the Lord; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne

at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah."

We are to see, then, that the seething pot is Jerusalem. This fact is confirmed further by Ezekiel 11:3 which reads:



Willard Willis

"Which say, It is not near; let us build houses: the city is the caldron, and we be the flesh." The Jews, by the above statement, were saying that they were safe, since the walls of Jerusalem performed the same function as the walls of a large caldron. God confirmed that Jerusalem was a caldron (pot). He, however, caused it to be a caldron in which they were boiled (slaughtered).

"Gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, fill it with the choice bones. Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein" (Ezek. 24:4, 5). The fire which burned under the pot and caused the water to boil, represented the wrath of God. The wrath of God, in fact, according to Deut. 4:25, is a consuming fire. The pieces which were placed in the pot represented the best which Israel had. No one, in fact, was exempt because of his or her title or position. Naked each of them had come into the world and now naked must they go before God's bar of wrath. The judgment which was to be vented upon them was to be complete. They, according to Ezekiel 23:34, were to drink the entire cup. The pot was to "boil well" so that God's judgment would be final. Nebuchadnezzar's invading forces, of course, were to put the fire under the boiling pot.

Wherefore thus saith the Lord God; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it" (Ezek. 24:6). This passage is designed as a comment upon the previous passages in this chapter. The meaning when analyzed, means, "woe to the bloody city." It means woe to the "pot" (Jerusalem) "whose scum is therein". The word "scum" carries with it the same meaning as the word rust-rust which is the result of corrosion and corruption. That which is not used will rust. A stagnant body of water will eventually be covered with scum. Israel was all of these things and more. May we, in our own lives, not give place to rust and scum. The pieces, which represent the inhabitants of Jerusalem, were to be brought out "piece by piece" with no "lot" falling upon any particular piece. The meaning is that all were to suffer alike. There was to be no "lot" or vote

as to who was to be brought out first. No lines were to be drawn between this one and that one, or between these and those.

The following passage presents us with an example of that which was not to be done in Jerusalem: "And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts" (II Sam. 8:2). All were to suffer the effects of God's wrath. Some were to go into captivity and be scattered among the nations while others were to die, but all were to be punished severely under the forces of Nebuchadnezzar.

"For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust" (Ezek. 24:7). Israel had set her blood upon the "top of a rock", that is, her sins were open and uncovered. It is as stated in the following passage: "The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sins as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves" (Isa. 3:9). The blood which Israel had set upon the top of a rock, cried unto God even as Abel's blood cried unto God from the ground. The blood was in plain view and not covered with dust as was required by the law of Moses (Lev. 17:13). Their sins, in other words, were not covered or forgiven so that judgment was now pounding on their door. "That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered" (Ezek. 24:8). God set Israel's blood upon a rock and then took vengeance upon her; setting an example for all of the earth to remember. God, in so doing, said to one and all, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

Let all know that all the sins of the world, aside from the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, are set upon a rock where the God of wrath observes them. On the other hand, those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, have their sins covered with His precious blood. Their sins have been cast behind God's back where they will never be remembered again. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great. Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned" (Ezek. 24:9, 10). The "pile for the fire great...heap on wood, kindle the fire", all mean the same as that of drinking all the cup and "boil it well." Their sins had been great, therefore their judgment was to be great too. They were to be whipped with many stripes because their sins were many. The flesh was to be "spiced well"; that is, the invasion forces were to fall upon Jerusalem even as a hungry man sits down to a meal that is well spiced. The Chaldean forces, in other words, were to relish their slaughtering of the Jews.

Setting the pot "empty upon the coals" speaks to us of the

destruction of the city itself after the people had been judged. The scum or the impurities in the ladle of the steel are poured from the ladle and taken to the slag dump. The scum, however, in the pot before us, the scum that is left after the pot is emptied, was to be completely consumed. Thus all their sins and the evidences of them were to relish their slaughtering of the Jews.

"She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire. In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. I the Lord have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 24:1-14). A steel producer, when making a ladle of steel, makes every effort to purge out all of those impurities that will lessen the quality of the finished product. The scum, for example, must not become a part of the finished product. Israel, on the other hand, had her scum, yea, her lewdness in her finished product. She when presented to God was not of prime quality, but rejects which were fit for nothing more than scrap. God the Spirit is working in the Lord's churches today so that they, when presented to the Lord Jesus, will be chaste, yea, chaste virgins. This fact, among other things, means that the filthiness of false doctrines will have been purged out. The church will be presented as prime quality rather than secondary or even rejects.

"Also the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn or weep, neither shall thy tears run down" (Ezek. 24:15, 16). Ezekiel's wife, the "desire of his eyes", was to die "with a stroke"; that is, sudden death was to befall her and her death was to be of the Lord's doing. Sudden death, of course, is much worse than slow death as far as the loved ones are concerned. Ezekiel, however, was not to be overcome by the death of his wife. He was not to mourn, weep or allow tears to run down his face. The reason for the death of Ezekiel's wife and his reaction to the same, was because his wife's death was a symbol of the death of the house of Israel-God's wife. Ezekiel's wife, of course, lived with him down in the land of Babylon. The destruction of Jerusalem, then, sent shock waves three hundred miles away in the land of Babylon. We may say, from the example of Ezekiel, that we can never forecast what our duty in the army of the Lord will cost us or our loved ones. It cost John the Baptist and the apostle Paul their heads. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews enumerates many sufferings which our forefathers were called upon to endure. Our Lord, himself, laid down His own life.

"Forebear to cry, make no



FRED T. HALLIMAN

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Papua, New Guinea.

mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men" (Ezek. 24:17). God, in this passage, forbids Ezekiel to use the customary formalities of mourners. The forbidden customs, as far as Ezekiel was concerned, were the covered head (II Sam 15:30), the bare feet (Isa. 20:2), and the covered lips (Lev. 13:45; Micah 3:7). The action taken by Ezekiel was completely contrary to his own will. He, in order to conform to God's will, went about his work as if his wife had never died. This is one of the greatest examples of obedience that we will ever read or hear about. "So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded. And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so?" (Ezek. 24:18-19).

The people who were in the captivity with Ezekiel were very concerned because of the strange action he had taken. They were aware that there was a message in his action for them. They, after all, had friends and relatives back in Jerusalem and were very concerned relative to their well being. The people therefore said to Ezekiel, "Wilt thou tell us what these things are to us," that is, how do they effect us? "Then I answered them, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom

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EZEKIEL

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ye have left shall fall by the sword. And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men. And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: yet shall not mourn or weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another" (Ezek 24:20-23). Ezekiel informs the people that his wife, the desire of his eyes, was taken so as to convey to them that which was also dear to them was also to be taken away. That which was being removed was the Lord's sanctuary, the excellency of their strength. Their sons and daughters were also being taken away. The temple, in their public pride, was to be plundered and burned and the sanctuary was to be profaned.

We are to consider God's sanctuary among men to be the desire of our eyes, yea, even more so than any of our creature comforts. This fact means that the Lord's church should hold first place in our thoughts and in our actions. It should be held up above other things in our prayers. It should take precedence over all other activities. This is because the Lord's church is God's sanctuary among us today. God's sanctuary, in the passages before us, is termed "excellency of their strength". The Lord's church is also the "excellency" of our strength, since it is through His church that we are empowered and taught by God the Spirit. "Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord God. Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters, That he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears? In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb; and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 24:24-27). The day spoken of in verse twenty-five was the day when the temple was destroyed. It was the day when God took from them "their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes and that whereupon they set their minds".

Ezekiel, according to verse twenty-seven, was not to prophesy any more regarding all that had taken place. The news arrived, according to Ezekiel 33:21, in the twelfth year of the captivity. It was at this time that Ezekiel was "no more dumb" (33:22) regarding his prophecies relative to Jerusalem. We will find in several of the chapters which follow the chapter before us, that Ezekiel's prophecy deals with other nations rather than Israel.

It is interesting to observe that the siege of Jerusalem lasted for about two years before the city fell. Note with me the following passages: "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month in the tenth day of the

month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all of his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it, and built forts against it round about. So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And in the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden; (now the Chaldeans were by the city round about;) and they went by the way of the plain. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgments upon him. And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also the princes of Judah in Riblah. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon found him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death. Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzzer-adan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, and burned the house of the Lord and the king's house, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire: and all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about" (Jer. 52:4-14).

SAVED

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way as to stir the emotions of people in order to get them to make some kind of visible response to the message. There are other preachers who show sincere emotion in the preaching. I do not criticize those who are sincere. Nevertheless, the thing that I want you to see is that many things can contribute to an emotional reaction. Many people never outwardly show their deepest feelings. Others become emotional at the very least things. I experienced outward emotion when I was saved in 1968, but I must not base the assurance of my souls salvation on emotion alone. Our text says, "not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

V. IS YOUR PEACE TRUE OR FALSE? The Bible says in Romans 5:1, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The preaching of an "easy believism" doctrine is just another device of the devil to give the world a false peace. A preacher may preach hell fire and brimstone, and cause great fear to come over your heart, and then tell you that all you have to do is believe John 3:16, or Acts 16:31, and everything will come out all right. A person may give mental assent to these truths without a change of heart. This can only lead to a false temporary peace which is based on the energy of the flesh,

and eventually the heart will betray you. Jesus said, "O generation of vipers, how can ye being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." (Matthew 12:34). Take note these were professed believers in the true and living God. Religious people who did every thing mechanically right, but their heart was far from being right.

CONCLUSION: People, are you saved? I urge you to ask yourself this most important question. Remember, Satan is a deceiver, and a counterfeit, that will do anything he can to cloud the real issue, and sooth your fleshly conscience, and tranquilize your mind, and blind your eyes to true salvation. Salvation is too vital an issue to simply be satisfied with a "hope-so". It must be based upon a "know so". May God give you grace to truly come to Christ with soul and mind. Amen.

FIGHT

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"Whereunto thou art called". To lay hold and hold forth eternal life one must be called unto eternal life. So, saith the Scriptures, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:30-31). What boldness should be wrought in our souls as we meditate upon this Scripture! Dearly beloved, we have the Almighty God. Who can stand against the might and power of the Lord God? Feed upon this wholesome verse of Scripture, "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35). What a privilege to be called to serve such a loving and powerful Lord.

Brothers and sisters in the faith, we must fight the good fight of faith. This brings us to a most important point as to every born again believer. "And hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." One of the most difficult battles for the saints today is telling others about the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Professing a good profession is telling of the amazing grace of God. This is necessary in order to fight the good fight of faith. You are not a Missionary Baptist because you say you are! You are a Missionary Baptist if you are telling others about the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, beloved we know that there are many battles for us in this life. Satan and his army of demons may disillusion us to thinking we are losing this good fight of faith. We may fall a few times, or many times. Nevertheless, Christ has already won the victory for His elect people. So, beloved, may we not be discouraged by the deceptions of the devil, but rather be steadfast in our persistence and consistency to fight the good fight of faith. How thankful we should be that the Captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ, is leading us to victory.

Before we go any further in this message, let us fully understand that this good fight of faith is a spiritual fight. Thus, a spiritual battle must be fought with spiritual weaponry. The

Holy Scriptures reveal this truth to us in II Corinthians 10:3-6, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." Praise the Lord for this powerful passage of Scripture. Let's look at another portion of the Word of God concerning a Christian's weaponry and armour: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:10-18). Such solemn Scripture for the saints. Some may say, "Oh, I already know that passage of Scripture!" Do you really? We all fail to know this portion of the Word well enough to practice it to its fulness. Therefore we must be put in remembrance of these things. Yes, spiritual armour for spiritual enemies.

Now that we see the type of fight we must fight I am forced to ask some serious questions concerning our subject. Are we fighting the good fight of faith? Notice I replaced the word "you" with the word "we". For I, as well as others, am not, beyond disobeying the command to fight the good fight of faith.

First, let us consider who is fighting the good fight of faith? They are those who are fighters busily, energetically, and vigorously, standing up, defending, and fighting for the faith. I speak spiritually, of course. There is no time to let your guard down. There is no rest after round one, nor round two, unless the Lord takes us home. To the fighters of the faith; the Lord is their rest, comfort, joy, peace, and strength. Here are some marks of a faithful fighter of the faith. A fighting saint must of course be saved from his sins by the Almighty grace of God. Next, one must be baptized into and be a member of a true Sovereign Grace Landmark Missionary Baptist Church. Oh, I count it a privilege to suffer for Christ's sake in being a member of one of His true churches enduring and fighting against the persecutions of false churches

and false brethren.

Another characteristic of a fighter for the faith is that he is grounded in the truth. One must be a great prayer, must love to tell others about Jesus, must have great love, must faithfully attend the house of God, and to sum it up someone who is fighting the good fight of faith obeys the orders of the Captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now if we hold true to these characteristics we do well.

We are reminded by the Scripture, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Timothy 3:12). How true this is! But, beloved this is a blessing. What?! A blessing? How can this be? Well, the Word of Almighty God explains it better than anyone. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12).

Yes, the blessing of being a faithful fighter for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Now, from time to time we may backslide or lose rank in the Lord's army. If you are losing your footing and you are not standing upon the Rock or Foundation, take heed to this. It is very discouraging for the fighter, in the heat of battle, to see sluggards doing little or nothing to help in the struggle! The fighters may wonder if the sluggards know the golden rule, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matthew 7:12).

This brings us to the question, who is fighting very little for the faith? The answer is the sluggards of the faith; who are lazy, slothful, and idle soldiers for the Lord. What a shame and reproach they are to Christianity! Oh, my dear brothers and sisters let us examine ourselves, for we must give an answer to our Captain who knows all. Christ our Captain is not some earthly captain who doesn't see what is done behind his back. Our Captain is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent!

Beware my brethren! We are all in danger of Satan catching us with our armour off or our shield down or the sword of the Spirit at the side! At that instant we can expect the devil's fiery dart of indolence burning up the unattended part or parts of our spiritual life which have been neglected. With our wound we retreat and backslide and lose rank from slugger to sluggard! You must be on guard, this could happen to you! This could happen to you.

The marks of a sluggard are almost always the opposite from the marks of a slugger. There are some exceptions such as both may be saved. May we strive to fight the good fight of faith with all our might! Let's consider the following passages in reference to this. "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." (Proverbs 10:5). "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." (Proverbs 18:9) Love not sleep, lest thou

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FIGHT

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come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread." (Proverbs 20:13). Such great spiritual applications here! May we put them in remembrance so we may not sin in this respect. I'm afraid most of us fall into the sluggard category! We don't see many fighters for the faith like Paul and Peter! Oh, how I long that we be on fire for our Lord who has done so much for us!

Now we are brought to those who fight not for the faith of our forefathers. Those who fight solely for the devil and his impish army. Those of you who are enlisted in the army of Satan I speak to you all. You will be cast into the lake of fire if you do not surrender to the Captain of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, I pray the Spirit of Almighty God would show you that you are a sinner in need of a Saviour! Oh, won't you wave the white flag lest ye die in your sins, lying in torments, defeated in the flames of hell forever!

In parting I would like for us to take notice of Proverbs 6:9, *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?* First of all may the elect be saved so they can fight the good fight. Then, may the saints be sluggards and not sluggards! Are you fighting the good fight of faith? Are you really?

A REVIEW OF CURTIS HUTSON

I am writing a series of articles reviewing "Why I Disagree With All Five Points Of Calvinism": a booklet by Curtis Hutson, the editor of *The Sword of the Lord*. I am not using the term "Calvinism", but am referring to the same five doctrines as the Doctrines of Grace. I do not give John Calvin credit for the origin of these five glorious, Biblical doctrines. True Baptist churches were preaching these truths long ere John Calvin saw the light of day. True Baptist churches still teach these glorious truths. There are many things that John Calvin taught that I do not believe. Frankly, I urge all those who believe these truths to cease calling them "Calvinism." Why should we give John Calvin a credit he does not deserve.

Curtis Hutson is the hand-picked successor of John R. Rice. He is a good man for that job, as he is in very close harmony with the doctrinal position of John Rice. However, it does seem to me that he goes beyond Rice in his attack on the Doctrines of Grace. Mr. Hutson's booklet is a very inadequate and feeble attempt. He fails miserably in adequately presenting our position, his position, and his efforts to disprove our doctrines. One would think that a reading of this booklet by the friends of Mr. Hutson's position would cause them to reconsider and even to turn to our position.

We deal now with the doctrine of The Perseverance of the Saints. I am somewhat surprised at Mr. Hutson's saying that he disagrees with this one of the five doctrines of grace. In fact I was surprised at the words "All Five Points" in his booklet. Most Arminians pretend to believe points one and five of these doctrines: that is, Total Depravity and Perseverance. If I did not miss it in my much reading of John R. Rice, he

would have professed to believe these two doctrines. We have seen that Mr. Hutson does profess to believe in Total Depravity but vehemently denies Total Inability which is an essential ingredient in the over-all doctrine of Depravity. Mr. Hutson is the first of his brand of Arminians that has written against the fifth point: Perseverance. That is, he is the first so far as I know. Therefore, I was quite surprised at his including this doctrine in his booklet as to his disagreeing therewith.

As I read his booklet, I came to understand his thinking on this subject. He does believe in the Eternal Security of the saved, but adamantly denies the doctrine of Perseverance. Let me take some time here to deal with this matter. Let me say that I do very strongly believe in Eternal Security and in Perseverance. I do believe that many who believe the Doctrines of Grace have erred greatly in over-emphasizing the Eternal Security of the Saints while saying very little about Perseverance. I think that we have opened the door to the criticisms of our doctrines by the Arminians in doing this. The old writers made much more of the doctrine of The Perseverance of the Saints, than they did of Eternal Security. But most of our men today have reversed this to the extent that one rarely hears a sermon on Perseverance. In fact, I have on several occasions noticed that when men have been assigned the subject of Perseverance, they have almost totally ignored the doctrine of Perseverance and preached altogether on Eternal Security. Frankly, I consider one of the "imbalances" of sovereign grace preachers of today to be their frequent, strong preaching on Eternal Security coupled with their almost total failure to preach on Perseverance. I feel that this imbalance has contributed greatly to the lack of a diligent concern about holy living on the part of many of our people. I feel that one of our greatest needs today is a return to a strong preaching on Perseverance. Brethren — my kind of brethren — let me appeal to you on this point. Let me urge you to preach that Perseverance is an essential part of the doctrine of Eternal Security. Let me urge you to preach that the person who does not persevere in repentance, faith, and holiness is not eternally secure and will never reach heaven. Our over-emphasis on Eternal Security, coupled with our almost total neglect of Perseverance, has led to men having a carnal assurance that they are "once saved, always saved" when the fact of their lack of perseverance proves that they have never been saved at all. This has also contributed greatly to the very low standard of holy living among our people.

I urge my brethren to study again the preaching of our forefathers and see how they preached this doctrine. In our opposition to the heresy that a saved person can lose his salvation, we have gone to the other extreme of preaching an Eternal Security that does not include Perseverance. Once more, dear brethren, I urge upon you that one of the greatest needs of our kind of churches today is a return to more preaching on Perseverance.

Again, I am somewhat shocked that Mr. Hutson attacks the doctrine of Perseverance. I feel that he is doing the same thing here that many of our own

brethren are doing. He is separating Eternal Security and Perseverance. Brethren, God has married the doctrine of God's Preservation of His people and the doctrine of the Perseverance of His people. Let us beware lest we put asunder what God has eternally joined together.

It is almost impossible to believe that Mr. Hutson would make the following statement. I am sure that Mr. Hutson is a learned man, and that he knows a good bit about what the Bible does say. I am sure of this even though he does not understand some of it. Having this confidence in his knowledge of what the Bible does say, I was even more shocked that he made this statement. He says, "I do not know a single Bible verse that says anything about the saints' persevering." There it is. Would you believe it? Surely, Mr. Hutson has just gone overboard in his efforts to destroy the doctrines of grace. How much of the Bible need one quote to him to show that the Bible teaches the necessity of the saints persevering and the fact that they will persevere? Let me quote a few verses which teach what Mr. Hutson says he does not know of being taught in a single Bible verse.

"The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger" (Job 17:9). Mr. Hutson, if this verse does not teach the Perseverance of the Saints, pray tell us what it does teach! The verse plainly teaches that the man who has been justified by faith in Jesus Christ will persevere. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Pro. 4:18). Surely, this verse teaches perseverance. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). This verse teaches that persevering unto the end of one's life is essential to final salvation. It cannot be properly explained in any other way. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). How could Perseverance be taught any more plainly than this? The verse does not say that one can be saved and then lost. It does say that perseverance is proof of reality. If one does not persevere, it gives proof that such was never truly saved. "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (I Cor. 15:2). One who can forget the gospel, turn away from it and go on as if there were no gospel will not be finally saved no matter what profession he has made. "...to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel..." (Col. 1:22-23). Mr. Hutson, if this Scripture does not teach the necessity of the perseverance of the saints, please tell us what it does teach. "...whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6). Now let the man who wrote that he did not know a single Bible verse that taught the Perseverance of the Saints hear this verse, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14). How can a

man know that this verse is in the Bible and then write publicly that he does not know of a single verse that teaches Perseverance? It is beyond me. One more verse that teaches what Mr. Hutson says that he does not know of a single verse that so teaches. "...for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us..." (I Jhn. 2:19).

I have given a few of the many verses which teach the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints: the doctrine of which Mr. Hutson says he does not know a single verse that so teaches. Please note that some of these verses teach the necessity of Perseverance, while others teach the fact thereof. The saints must persevere or they will never reach heaven. True saints will persevere. These are the two parts of the Bible doctrine of Perseverance. There is no such thing in all the Bible as the Eternal Security of a person who make a profession and then does not persevere in repentance, faith, and holiness. Search and see. To teach such a doctrine is an exceedingly dangerous thing. Such a doctrine will lead many to sleep in the lap of carnal security and false assurance until rudely awakened in hell. To teach such a doctrine will encourage the practice of sin. The Bible teaches the Eternal Security of all the truly saved, yes it does. And it also teaches the doctrine that all the truly saved will persevere through life. And it is an exceedingly hurtful and God-dishonoring thing to divorce these two Bible doctrines. Mr. Hutson has so divorced these doctrines: affirming that the Bible teaches Eternal Security while stating that he does not know a single verse that teaches the Perseverance of the Saints.

Mr. Hutson says, "The saints do not persevere: they are preserved." He is in total error here. The saints are preserved. And because they are preserved, they do persevere. The professed saint who does not persevere is not preserved. It is as simple as that.

Mr. Hutson quotes John 10:27-29, Let me here quote John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish..." Mr. Hutson comments, "Now that doesn't sound like the perseverance of the sheep." Well, Mr. Hutson, can't you read? Are you totally blinded by your prejudice against this doctrine? Read it again Mr. Hutson. Notice these words therein, "they follow me". Mr. Hutson, I don't know where you went to school and learned to read, but those words sound to me exactly like "Perseverance." Those who do not hear His voice and follow Him will certainly perish. Mr. Hutson, I call on you to explain those words "they follow me" in the light of your denial of Perseverance.

Mr. Hutson says, "Charles Spurgeon once said, 'I do not believe in the perseverance of the saints. I believe in the perseverance of the Saviour'." Well, I have not read all of Spurgeon. I cannot say for certain that he never made this statement. I can say that, if he did make it, it was one of those times that all public speakers have when one says what he does not mean to say. No man can read far in Spurgeon without knowing that he did adamantly believe and strongly

preach the Perseverance of the Saints I will be happy to furnish Mr. Hutson with a multitude of quotes from Spurgeon teaching this doctrine.

Mr. Hutson says, "I am neither Arminian nor Calvinist." Well, his saying this does not make it so. When one holds to a doctrinal system that has long worn a certain identifying tag, his denying that tag does not change the facts. Mr. Hutson is an Arminian. He holds avidly to the major doctrines of the system of theology known as Arminianism. He does not agree with that system on the fifth point of the possibility of a saved person losing salvation. However, Mr. Hutson does adamantly hold and fervently preach the other four points of the Arminian system. He preaches the central doctrine of Arminianism which is that a man's salvation, in the final decisive factor depends upon the decision of man. Any man who so holds is an Arminian no matter how loudly he denies being such. John Rice was an Arminian. Curtis Hutson is an Arminian. The Sword of the Lord is perhaps the leading advocate of Arminianism in the world today. At least it is one of the major publications advocating Arminian heresy available today.

Well, we are almost done with Mr. Hutson's booklet. Let us sum up somewhat. Mr. Hutson has convinced me that he does truly disagree with all five of the Doctrines of Grace. He has not convinced me that these doctrines are not true. The weakness of his presentation has confirmed me even more strongly in my adamant conviction that these doctrines are the truths of God's Word. Mr. Hutson's booklet will convince no man who will honestly face the Scriptures on these doctrines. Mr. Hutson's booklet may satisfy the demands and desires of his blind followers. But the only way any man can believe the teachings of Mr. Hutson's booklet is for that man to already be so blinded by preconceived prejudice so as to be unable and unwilling to really study the Bible on these doctrines.

Mr. Hutson has not honestly, properly, nor adequately presented these doctrines which he has attacked. No Arminian ever has done this and it is likely that none ever will. Mr. Hutson's presentation of these doctrines has been the invention of his own mind and not the true picture of the things we believe. He has repeatedly stated things that no man believes, called those things "Calvinism" and proceeded to destroy them. But he has destroyed the inventions and misrepresentations of his own mind, and has not touched the precious truths that we hold dear. However many of his blinded followers will believe that he has actually destroyed these doctrines.

I call on Mr. Hutson to admit the falsehoods, misrepresentations and errors in his booklet. Mr. Hutson, let us believe as we see fit. Let us stand honestly for what we do believe. Let us fight with all our might against what we consider to be heresy. But, please, Mr. Hutson, let us be honest in this battle. You either do know, or you could and should know that you have repeatedly misrepresented the

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Though some of the damned have been for four thousand years sweltering in the flame, they are no nearer a discharge than when they began.

CURTIS

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doctrines we believe and teach. Mr. Hutson, it is beneath a man of your stature and ability to engage in controversy in the dishonest way in which you have written this booklet. Mr. Hutson has repeatedly stated that we believe things which we do not believe. Let any man honestly state our doctrines. Then let him do all he can against them if he so desires. But let not men deliberately or ignorantly misrepresent our doctrines and destroy his misrepresentations; thus leading his followers to believe that he has destroyed our doctrines.

Again I call on Mr. Hutson to admit publicly that the overwhelming majority of Baptists from the days of Jesus Christ until recent years have believed the doctrines which he has written against. Let him admit that he is non-Baptistic in his doctrines. The doctrines which Mr. Hutson has attacked are the doctrines of the historical faith of Baptist people. For my part, I will not recognize as "Baptist" that preacher or that church which is Arminian in its doctrines. I believe that the Doctrines of Grace are the doctrines of true Baptist Churches. I believe that those men and churches who wear the name "Baptist" have stolen a name to which they have no real right. They are wearing a name that they do not deserve. True Baptist people are Sovereign Grace believers. Praise the Lord! I call on Mr. Hutson to admit this, which is not just my belief, but is an easily proven historical fact. A man has the right — so far as men are concerned — not before God — to believe as he sees fit. He has the right to defend and to declare what he believes. But no man has the right to wear a name that has historically stood for certain doctrines, and then to seek to destroy those doctrines. I was an ordained Holiness preacher. God taught me Baptist truth. I did not continue to wear the name of a Holiness preacher and preach Baptist truth. I turned in my ordination papers and left that denomination. I was honest in so doing. Had I tried to hold onto those papers and to continue as a holiness preacher, while preaching Baptist doctrine, I would have been dishonest. Surely everyone will agree with me on this. Well, what about men who call themselves Baptist preachers and pastor so-called Baptist churches while they tear down what Baptist people have historically believed and preached? I call on people who "wear the name" to "play the game". Be Baptist or drop the name. May God use this series of articles to promote the glorious truths of the sovereign and saving grace of our God.

BLESSED EXPERIENCE IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA

by Joe Wilson

It was my wonderful privilege to preach at different places in the state of Georgia. I always find it a great privilege and a high honor to be invited to

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preach by one of the Lord's true churches. I feel that the Church is doing me a favor in this matter, and not that I am doing them a favor.

I left home at 5 A.M. on April the fifteenth and drove to Ellaville, Georgia. The trip took me nearly twelve hours. I did learn that, though Georgians may talk slow, they do drive fast. I set my cruise control and drove through Kentucky and Tennessee, leading the pack most of the way. When I left Chattanooga and crossed into Georgia, with my cruise set the same, I was constantly passed by other cars. God gave me a safe and trouble free trip for which I thanked Him.

I arrived about supper time at the home of John Pruitt who is the able pastor of the Grace Baptist Church at Ellaville. I had met Brother Pruitt some several months earlier. We have been having fellowship via the mail for some time. I preached his father's funeral. I had him preach for me one Sunday. I have been impressed by Brother Pruitt's soundness and dedication to the work of the Lord. I was happy to run an announcement in The Baptist Examiner as to his availability for service whenever the Lord might open the doors. I was happy to think that I had, in this way, had a small part in his going to Ellaville to pastor the church there.

Brother Pruitt has a fine family. His wife is a dedicated Christian and seems willing to sacrifice that her husband might be a pastor. They have two lovely young daughters. I greatly enjoyed my stay in their home and was treated royally while there. Brother Pruitt has to work at a secular job, so I had much time to study and write during the day. Oh, how I do wish that all our pastors could be full time in the Lord's work. I would urge every church to make it one of the first aims of their church to get their pastor on a full-time salary so that he can do the work that needs to be done in pastoring a church. This is one of the great needs of our kind of churches.

I had not heard of the Grace Baptist Church of Ellaville until a few short months before this meeting. However, upon being there, I learned that many of our brethren have preached at this church. This is a fine church with a great potential for doing a good work for the Lord. I met some very fine Christians during this week of special meetings. I was greatly blessed by fellowship with these fine people.

This church is a sound church. They believe the truths that are taught in The Baptist Examiner. I could preach these things with much liberty. The sermons I preached were well received. We had very good attendance at these services. It was my privilege to meet a Brother James Hamric during these services. He had pastored the church for several years. He is now a member of the Memorial Heights Baptist Church in Perry, Georgia, but lives in the Ellaville area. He attended the service every night except when his church was having services. I do not know if he is desirous of pastoring again or not, but I do recommend him as a sound and able preacher.

We had a fellowship on Saturday which was a blessing. The following men preached besides myself. Sammy West from Griffin, Gordon Buchanan from Perry, James Hamric, and John

Pruitt. The ladies prepared a fine meal for the noon hour. I felt that this fellowship added much to my week with this church.

I shall long remember my visit to this church. I urge our readers to pray for this fine church and its able pastor. If you are ever in their area, they will appreciate your visiting them, and they will be a blessing to you. I would recommend this church to any of our readers in the area. I do not know of another church in this area that really stands strongly for the truths we believe. May God richly bless this fine church and greatly use the ministry of John Pruitt.

I left Ellaville about 9 A.M. on April 22nd, and traveled to Pembroke, Georgia to the home of a long time friend, Elder Aaron West. I arrived there just in time for lunch. I was privileged to preach for the Grace Baptist Mission from then through April 27th. This mission is located at Blichton, Georgia and is near Savannah. The mission was organized into a church on Saturday of that week.

Brother Aaron West is a member of the West gang of sound Baptist preachers. His father is David West, one of the very finest of preachers around today. His brother Sammy West, is pastor in Griffin, Georgia. These three men are sound and able preachers of the precious truths of the Word of God.

The Grace Baptist Mission was sponsored and authorized into a church by the Landmark Baptist Church of Charleston, S.C. where David West is pastor. The story of the coming together of these people and the events that led to their becoming a church is a marvelous story of the workings of the providence of the sovereign God of the Bible.

Our readers might remember my telling of an experience I had in November of 1983 in Springville, Alabama. That was the time I got into a hornet's nest of "Sovereign Grace and Nothing Else" preachers. I was led of the Lord to preach on The Bride of Christ, and nine of these preachers and their folk walked out before I could hardly get started. It was one of the hardest times of preaching I had ever experienced. There were two things that could have happened that would have kept me from going there, but they did not happen. My time there was a miserable and unhappy time. However, riding back to Tullahoma, Tenn. with my good friend, Harry Danner, we discussed that God had some reason for my being there and going through that painful experience.

As a result of that experience I met brother Reggie Moore. I explained to him that the Springville church was not a true church, having not been properly authorized. Brother Moore sought and obtained Scriptural Baptism and ordination and the church was properly organized. Through this experience I learned of some folk needing help in or near Savannah, Georgia. I told them of brother Aaron West, and from that, things developed to the organization of the church there. Praise God for His wonderful works among the children of men.

Oh, how much I enjoyed the blessings of preaching for these folks this week. It has been a long, long time since I have been in as good services as we had during that week. The very first

service on Monday night was a great blessing. I felt the power of the Lord present in the service as I rarely do — oh, that I might see more of this! The members of the mission were exceedingly faithful in attendance during the week. Those of you who know the West boys will know that this work is a very sound work. I do not know how a work could be ahead of this one in being true to the Word of God.

We had very good services every night. Brother David West and his fine wife came over from Charleston on Thursday and stayed with us through the rest of the week. I consider David as one of my closest friends and we had some great fellowship during these days. David and his wife are a blessing to just be around. They have a spiritual influence about them that is always a special blessing to me. I feel that I am always blessed to just be in their presence.

Another of the West boys, James, was present at nearly all the services. I had some wonderful fellowship with him at his home, at the services, and at his place of business. Two of the West girls were in all the services and one was in two services. The West family is a blessing to all who know them.

Brother Reggie Moore and his fine wife are in the mission — now a church — there. They have been a great blessing to me since I met them in the Springville incident. Brother Moore is a very sound and able preacher and is a great help to Brother Aaron West in the work there. He also led the singing and did a fine job of that. I have learned to really love Brother Moore in the short while I have known him. I recommend him to the churches as a sound preacher. He is available for work wherever the Lord might lead. Some of Brother Moore's children help to make up the fine congregation of this church. In fact, they were the ones who were looking for a preacher to help them get a sound work started in the area and formed the first nucleus of this church.

A fellowship on Saturday and the organizing of this mission into a church was the climax of the week. Oh, it was a great day! It was the greatest day of God's blessing that I have seen in a long, long time. I laughed, I wept, I prayed, I praised. My soul was blessed beyond words on this glad day. Besides myself, the following men preached. Reggie Moore, Aaron West, John Pruitt, David West, Brother Noe from Birmingham, Ala. This was my first time to meet him and it was a blessing to me, and Tom Sollosi. Each man seemed especially blessed of God in preaching His precious Word. I do not know when — or if — I have been in a better fellowship.

Then to witness the birth of a true Baptist Church — what a great blessing this always is! We all rejoiced with great joy as brother David West pronounced, on the authority of the Landmark Baptist Church of Charleston, S.C., that this mission was now a church. The folk who had worked hard in bringing this about and who were to constitute this new church were so greatly blessed, and those of us who looked on rejoiced with them in their great joy. I do not know of a greater experience in the Lord's work than that of witnessing and participating in the birth of a true church.

Then, at the close, one of the West son-in-laws, for whom

much prayer had long been made, came forward professing Christ as Lord and Saviour and asking for membership in the new church. Even now as I write I almost weep again for joy. I had known this dear one for many years and had prayed for him and witnessed the West's concern for him. I do not know that there was a dry eye in the house as folk shook hands, hugged one another, and rejoiced at this time.

I shall long remember this week in Blichton, Georgia. Pray much for this new church and for Aaron West, her pastor. I recommend this church to any of our readers in the area. Here is a very strong and very sound church, a church that I shall long be proud of having a part in her beginning. I look forward to fellowship with these fine folk in the days and years ahead.

I greatly enjoyed my stay with Aaron West and his fine wife, Vanessa, and their daughter, Hannah. They treated me so well. Here is a fine Christian family. Vanessa will stand beside her preacher husband and be a help meet to him in the work of the Lord. Please pray much for this new church and her able pastor. Pray also for Reggie Moore that God will use him there, and then lead him in his service for the Lord as the Lord sees fit.

Following this wonderful day of fellowship, about 4 P.M. I left and drove to Perry, Georgia to be with a dear and long time friend, Elder Gordon Buchanan for four days of special services. I arrived in Perry about 7 P.M. and Gordon came to meet me and lead me to his home. I have known and loved and appreciated this dear brother for a long time. We met in the early sixties at one of the Ashland conferences. We have preached revivals and at conferences for one another. I can only hope that our fellowship has meant a part as much to him as it has to me. We write often. We tell our problems and needs to one another. We pray much for one another. I do very highly value the friendship of this dear brother. He has stood by me and been a friend and a greater encouragement than he can know in some of the dark days of my life. Praise God for a friend like this man of God — a friend that stands by and sticks.

I preached four times on Sunday and then on Monday through Wednesday for this fine church. Brother Gordon has one of the larger of our kind of churches. He has done and is doing a fine job as pastor of this church. I was not used to preaching to as many people as I did at this time, but I praise the Lord for this opportunity.

Do not imagine that brother Gordon is a compriser because of the size of his church. He stands strongly for the doctrines taught in The Baptist Examiner. The church was large when Brother Buchanan went there. They have lost many members since he became pastor. I was able and free to preach strong doctrine there as I could anywhere else. The messages were well received.

Some folk from Ellaville visited two nights during this meeting, and some from Griffin, Georgia, where Sammy West is the fine pastor, visited one night. I did thank God for this.

One experience of this week which I shall long remember was having supper in a Mennonite restaurant one night. The food

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EXPERIENCE

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was delicious, and I greatly enjoyed the experience.

I must say that I was greatly blessed by my visit in this church. The people reacted so warmly and enthusiastically to my preaching. We had great fellowship during these short days.

I left Perry about 3 A.M. on May 2nd. I arrived home about twelve hours later after a hard and wet trip. It surely was good to get home, to see Katie, and to get back to my work in Ashland. I shall long remember those precious days in Georgia and the many wonderful saints of God I met for the first time as well as those I renewed fellowship with during this time. I recommend these three churches to any who live in their areas, or to any who pass through their areas at time for church services. I urge our readers to pray for these churches and for their fine and able pastors.

Elder Reggie Moore is assisting Aaron West at Blythe, Georgia; and James Hamric is helping Gordon Buchanan at Perry. Pray for these two preachers that God will use them where they now are and will open doors of ministry to them as He sees fit. They are sound and able preachers of God's Word.

LESSONS FROM ACTS PRISONERS OR FREE?

by Willard Pyle

As Paul traveled to Rome he was a prisoner and yet he was freed, for God had saved him. Those who had made him a prisoner were outwardly free and yet in reality were prisoners, for they were in bondage to sin. This is true of Peter and those who put him in prison, for Peter even though in chains and behind locked doors was free as a child of God, while Herod and his soldiers were really the prisoners.

In this message we want to set forth the condition and the position of the lost and the saved and see that there is a great gulf between them. This is something very few have any concept about. The natural man or the unsaved man is in bondage to sin but he is so lost he thinks he is all right. He knows nothing of the separation that sin has wrought nor of the ruination it has brought. When the prodigal son left home, he thought he had obtained his freedom. But this freedom resulted in great loss and misery, for it took him to the hog pen. His temporary gain and fame was short lived. How many times down through the years has this scene been repeated as we by our fallen nature are all prodigal sons and have followed the same course of sin, (Eph. 2:2,3). "All we like sheep have gone astray" (Isa. 53:6). We went astray from the womb speaking lies (Psa. 58:3). We truly were out of the way and were living like a rich farmer who the Lord said was a fool, (Lk. 12:16-21). The prisoner of sin enjoys the pleasures of sin for a season but then reaps the wages of sin forever, (Rom. 6:23). As he pitches his tent towards Sodom and looks on the fields that are well watered he doesn't know it is under a curse of sin and shall

soon have God's judgment poured out upon it. The prisoners of sin in traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho are blinded by the bright lights and the allurements of the world and don't see the thieves who lie in wait to strip them of their possessions and to leave them half dead. They have no idea that the joy ride will come to a sudden stop and the results will be disastrous.

The prisoners of sin are enchanted by the music of the piper of the Devil, and follow him over the cliff of destruction thinking it leads to bliss. They run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward and perish in the gain saying of Core while all the time talking of freedom. In reality they are in the kingdom of darkness and subjects of the worst taskmaster one could have. They not only live in sin but have great joy in getting others to do so. How awful to be under sin and its consequences for unless God in mercy intervenes they shall cry out in hell, "I am tormented in these flames". May the saints remember, "such were some of you", for by nature we were all the children of wrath. Apart from salvation there is no hope. Therefore we are extremely thankful that in and through the grace of God. He chose to save a people for His Name's sake. This is the next point in this message.

As we begin this thought, we are constantly reminded by means of radio, TV, and books of all kinds that mankind is seeking to be free. However, there is much confusion both as to what real freedom is and in how to obtain it. When most people talk of freedom they have in mind every man doing that which is right in his own eyes, which is lawlessness and throwing off all restraints. They want to do their thing, but the sad part of this is that doing their thing usually entails more bondage. So in seeking to be free they are enclosed in the chains of sin more firmly.

May I say as loudly as I can that the only people who are really free are those who have been set free in salvation. When Peter was delivered from prison and had time to consider what had happened he said, "Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from the expectation of the people of the Jews (Acts 12:11). Beloved, every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can say the same thing spiritually, for God sent Him to save His people from their sins, (Matt. 1:21). "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4,5). Paul says in Colossians 1:13, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son": and Peter says the same thing in I Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

This is set forth in the story of the wild man of the Gadarenes found in Mark 5. Before Jesus came this man was living in the tombs, "and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones." But, praise God when Jesus came he was set free from his bondage and we see him clothed and in his right mind at the feet of Jesus. This is what happens spiritually when God saves a sinner. Notice a similar case in the story of the woman bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself (Lk. 13:11). Again, when Jesus came and called her unto Him she was made free from this bondage of the Devil (vs. 12, 13). The glory of salvation and the awfulness of being a sinner is clearly seen. How wonderful when God brings us out of death into life, out of darkness into light, and out of misery into fullness of joy.

When the Queen of Sheba saw the meat of Solomon's table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendants of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers she was so impressed she exclaimed, "the half has not been told". How much more should the saints of God be impressed with the so great salvation we have in Jesus!

To know of the "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places" should make us praise God from whom all blessings flow!

In closing may we again look at Paul the prisoner of man and yet the free man of the Lord, who willingly became the bond-servant of the Lord; while at the same time those he was a prisoner of were the slaves of the Devil. How is it with you? Have you experienced the joy of real freedom in Christ? May we beseech you to flee from the wrath to come by entering the Ark of safety and discover that in Jesus all is well.

A VERY, VERY SAD LETTER

Dear Brother in Christ, I have read your article as to, should a divorced man be allowed to preach or be a missionary?... I am a retired Baptist preacher, retired because of the poor health of my wife and myself.

I was saved in January of 1951... II Corinthians 5:17 was real in my life. I had, and still have, such a hunger for the Word. I memorized thousands of Scriptures, held street meetings, jail services, and really witnessed for the Lord on the job and everywhere.

I went to the mission field. They gave me the hardest field because of my past life, thinking that because of this, I could help the people. The Lord really blessed. Souls were saved and the church grew.

Then, at the annual Missionary Convention, the director of the mission felt that I was God sent, and took me under his care, because we had so little support. I was his "Timothy." He insisted that I be ordained. He went to the States to do deputation work — Then it happened!

My wife found out that they didn't believe that one who was divorced should preach or be a missionary. Of course, we had to tell them that I was divorced. Being in the States, he wrote

back that we must leave the field immediately. He had no Board meeting. He didn't even ask if we had money to go home — just go!

He wanted to know, "Why didn't you tell us?" Brother, I didn't know anything about such a church rule. We rejoiced in our salvation, the cleansing and forgiveness of sin. We thought that the past was forgiven and forgotten by God. We found out that with churches, the boards, etc. (and with many churches and preachers, Ed.) it was not so. This is hell.

I can't teach. I have had classes taken away from me. I can't do anything. Oh, yes, I can give my money and do visitation work which nobody else will do. It has been a hell these past 30 years. I have pastored several churches.

Since my retirement, we go to a Baptist Church. I have opportunities to preach, and I love it, but they don't know about my divorce. They are like all the others — one can't teach or preach if divorced. I would be glad just to be a member, but being a retired preacher, they thank the Lord for sending me there, until, until...? They asked me to be a deacon, but I refused, knowing their stand on the divorce issue.

Brother Wilson, I live in fear of when they do find out. I just can't go to church if they take that stand. I just can't. I don't want to drift from church to church. I feel that I should be a member of a church and be used of the Lord in that church — But?

I believe in the Doctrines of Grace and teach them. In fact, before my retirement, I wanted the church to continue to have a man that believed in these doctrines.

I had your son, Joe, come, but they wanted a young man they could teach. They got a young man from Bob Jones University. They said Joe was too loud for them. Many of those who believed in the Doctrines of Grace have left. They are scattered sheep, going to churches that do not believe Bible Doctrine. Playing church.

Brother Wilson, forgive me. When this subject comes up, I get all upset. Sometimes I feel like writing a book on the hell I've been through... I have heard so many times in the past, "Sure, you have your opinions and you think you are Biblical because you are the guilty party." some have even said that I do so much witnessing and visiting because of a guilty conscience over my divorce. But God knows my heart. He has given me this gift. They do not want to even discuss my divorce. They do not want to hear the details of who the guilty party is.

My divorce happened 10 years before my conversion. I went back to my ex-wife to try and get back together even though she was pregnant with another man's child. Not once has any preacher asked about these details. Just go home, give up the class and refuse any offices. Forgive me, brother.

Editor's Note: I withhold the name of this brother at my option. I do not desire to get him into trouble with the church of which he is now a member. I have advised him to leave this church where he is a "second-class member" and find a church that will use him properly and treat him properly. He, at present, does not see fit to do this. I wish that all the churches and preachers who believe that a divorced and remarried man

cannot preach would read this letter. I wish it would lead such to re-study their false and unscriptural position and come to the Bible truth on this subject. Preachers who lead churches to take this sort of action — and the churches who follow such leading — will answer to God for the great hurt they are doing to God's work and to some of God's called preachers. These men thinking they are right will not excuse them when they face the Lord and give account for the hurt they have done and are doing. For my part, I praise God that He has given me a good ministry in spite of those who say I do not have the right to preach. But I do grieve greatly for men, such as the writer of this letter, who have been so opposed and so hurt by the unscriptural and Pharisaical attitude of some preachers and churches. I hope that this letter will lead some to restudy their position, realize the great hurt they are doing, and come to the Biblical truth on this subject. Such men could do a great service for God by coming out publicly and admitting their error and seeking to make amends for the hurt they have done. Please read this very sad letter again.

WHY I LIKE THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

by John Alber Kountze, Tx.

Beloved, may I take the time and introduce unto you the best assistant any true Bible believing pastor would ever want — The Baptist Examiner. Here is a paper that has been around for over 50 years, and it is still publishing the same truth that it did in the early thirties. A paper that has not changed its position over the years on the vital doctrines that count. Yes, here is a paper that is committed to "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). A paper that, from the very beginning, was a Baptist paper and not ashamed to publish the convictions that our Lord Jesus Christ was the Founder and first Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jerusalem.

Over the 20 years that I have been preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, one, and only one, paper has stood out as the defender of the faith. That is not to say that other religious papers have not and do not now stand for the truth of God's Holy Word. But beloved, The Baptist Examiner has been in the front lines of the battle for over 50 years and it is still going stronger than ever. For many of our pastors, The Baptist Examiner has been their teacher, guide, counselor, and college instructor. For our people it has been a sounding board and means whereby our churches could be known throughout this great land of ours. Furthermore, it has been a way in which many a pastor has been able to ground his flock in addition to what he preaches and teaches in the pulpit.

Our churches may be small in number, but they make up for it in willingness to get the truth of God's Word out in the world in which they live. On that one ac-

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TUNE IN TO THE CALL TO CALVARY

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

WHY

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count, The Baptist Examiner has been a way in which the local church could be heard and seen throughout the globe. My own ministry has been enhanced and better known because of the policy of this great paper and its sponsoring church, The Calvary Baptist Church of Ashland, Kentucky. We who are known as Missionary Landmark Baptist preachers and hold to the doctrines of Sovereign Grace should use this great paper to get the truth out and to establish our own congregations.

There is hardly a week that goes by that this preacher does not push The Baptist Examiner and the work of Elder Fred T. Halliman and his son, Peter Halliman. Why? For the most obvious reason, they stand where this preacher stands. When someone asks me, where do you stand and with whom? I am bold to answer and say without being ashamed — T.B.E. and those who hold to the truth that the paper prints. It has taken a few years before I could ever make such a statement; but once it was done, my heart was relieved. In light of the teachings of the Bible and The Baptist Examiner many new things have been revealed to this preacher. One of my highlights each year is this: the annual May Bible Conference in Ashland, Kentucky. Why? So many reasons could be given, but two stand out at this point: (1). Christian fellowship that is centered around the person of our Lord Jesus Christ; and (2). the great preaching that exalts the Lord of Glory and His Church.

The Baptist Examiner is a leading voice in a world that is sick with sin. It stands without compromise against sin and worldliness. It points men and women to Calvary. It reminds the Christian that the Lord of Glory is coming back for His own, and that before the Tribulation begins. It supports world wide missions through the Local Church and keeps us up to date as to what is happening on the mission field. It furthermore, supports and attempts to help other churches get a job done for the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because this great paper is interested in truth and the Lord's True Churches, it has become over the years the best assistant any pastor would ever want. The preacher does not have to worry about someone trying to undermine him, or teach some other doctrine that is contrary to the Bible. Brother Wilson has tried to use men who are in agreement with the teachings of the paper and stands where he stands. He is not perfect, but then, no human is! It has not been an easy job to get men to write for the paper, so he must use what is made available. Brethren, I urge you to use this great tool that is made available to all who are Baptist and hold to the doctrine of Sovereign Grace.

APPRECIATED LETTERS

Dear Brother Wilson, Recently, I attended and preached at a Sovereign Grace Bible Conference in another part of our state. There I met a Richard Stevens... He introduced me to your paper by giving me many of his old back issues. My soul has been nearly raptured as I have been reading them around 4-5 a.m... I did not know that there was a paper that held to the Doctrines of Grace so keenly. I drank up your paper like a dying man on a desert drinks his last drop. Praise God! They are such a blessing... Enclosed, please find my check for a subscription. I can't afford it, but after reading some of your papers, I can't afford not to... Sincerely yours, because of His grace.

Pastor Alfred Smith
Dakota City, Iowa

Dear Brother Wilson, I want half of this check to go for The Baptist Examiner and half for New Guinea Missions. I have been reading T.B.E. since the early forties when my late husband had a friend who sent in a subscription for him... God bless you in your work for Him. In Christ,

Inis Ingle
Jonesville, Va.

Dear Editor, This seems so small an offering for all the good I have received from The Baptist Examiner these thirty some odd years. Someone... in Dearborn, Michigan sent my name in for a life-time subscription... I thank you for this paper and the truths for which it stands. Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Arnitta Ferguson
Lakeland, Fla.

Dear Brother Joe,

Please be kind enough to print this in the Baptist Examiner. On May 18th we had our first services in our new church building. We at the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church would like to take the time to say thanks to all who made this fellowship possible. We are living in a time when true brotherly love has almost vanished. We at the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church at Fall Run, Ireland, W. Va. would like for the world to know that there are a few churches and a few people in the world that still know the true meaning of Christian love.

Two of these churches are the Indore Baptist Church, pastor: Elder Ray Brown; and the Kings Addition Baptist church, pastor: Elder James Hobbs. Individuals are brother and sister Charles and Maggie Williston.

The Indore Baptist Church furnished most of the money and some of the labor, to help us build our new church building. They also gave us almost \$8,000 for the Lords work here. That is a whole lot of true Christian love. The Kings Addition Baptist church also sent us a check. This check was a special check, in that it was given at a time when they were thinking of expanding their own church, and

were considering borrowing for their own personal need, yet they reached down deep in their pockets (so to speak) and did help their brothers and sisters here in Ireland, W. Va. That is a whole lot of true Christian love. Love is putting others before yourself.

Charles and Maggie Williston, (sister Maggie now home with the Lord) gave us the land to build on. Charles is also my father-in-law and one of the greatest individuals I know, and we love him very much.

A special thanks goes out to God The Father, God the Son, and God The Holy Spirit. These three have enabled this work to continue against impossible conditions, mainly poverty, and even some Baptist brothers and sisters.

The services went very well, true christian love was shown from everyone and God received the glory. Brother Ray Brown preached on that man called Jesus. Brother James Hobbs preached on the Love of God. Brother Joe Wilson preached on the wrath of God, and Brother Don Penington preached on the Church. God also blessed us with the presence of brothers Fred and Peter Halliman. Both brothers gave a wonderful devotional.

All of the speakers had their sermons well prepared, and their delivery was excellent. God continued to bless throughout the day. While brother Don was preaching, a precious sister and member of our church, who had moved to Mississippi 15 months ago, returned home for good. I

left the services to get a drink of water, and while looking out my kitchen window I saw one of Satan's workers coming in the drive way. Having prayed much that God would save this person, I met him in the driveway, gave him a warm welcome, and asked him to come to the services. God did not permit him to enter the church.

God did give the one he was looking for the knowledge, courage, and strength to do his will. Only a few knew of his presence. He soon left and our services went un-disturbed. Nothing, and I do mean nothing, can stop God's will from being completed. To God be the glory. Sister Mae Riley came forward the Sunday before, acknowledged Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour, and asked to be Baptized into the church.

We topped off the services by baptizing sister Mae Riley into the church. Precious brothers and sisters, just as God has furnished His own sacrifice, He has also supplied Himself a building and a flock herein this part of the seeming wilderness world. God has enabled us to do a work here in W. Va. but the work has just begun. Life here is tough, and at the same time it is wonderful. We at the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church would like to double and triple our efforts. This will take knowledge, courage, strength, and money. I am asking all who read this to remember this church and its pastor in your prayers.

Yours in Christ,
Elder Carl Barnette

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder James Hamric has resigned the church in Florida which he last pastored. He is available for preaching wherever the Lord might lead. Brother Hamric is a sound and able preacher of God's Word. It was my joy to meet him and hear him preach during my recent preaching in Georgia. I recommend him to our readers. He can be reached at Rt. 2, Box 140, Ellaville, Ga. 31806. You can call him at 912-937-5744.

TEN MINUS ONE

Ten minus one equals more than ten
When the tenth is given to Him
Ten minus one equals more than ten
To withhold it is a sin

Ten minus one equals more than ten
Do you give it every week?
Ten minus one equals more than ten
Tithe if God's blessing you seek

Ten minus one equals more than ten
Into the storehouse it all should go
Ten minus one equals more than ten
Give it and watch it grow

Ten minus one equals more than ten
Would a man rob God of His due?
Ten minus one equals more than ten
The tithe applies to you

Medford Caudill

ABUNDANT LIVING

An abundant life
Has joy within,
From God's guiding hand
To prevent us from sin.

Abundant living
Is peace, joy, and health,
If you have these three
You've found much wealth.

Abundant living
Is medicine to the soul,
The yoke is lightened
As you accomplish your role.

Abundant living
Is wished for by many,
And can be obtained
From His riches of plenty.

Jean C. Dye

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MOTHERS, LIKE THE FLOWERS BLOOM

The sweetest flower, to me, on earth,
Bloomed brighter than all others.
Her loving smile for all to see,
This flower was my Mother.

God gave her a special touch,
To shine above world's gloom.
And all who knew her, loved her much,
Through all the years she bloomed.

She talked of Jesus through the hours,
On a cross was crucified.
And smiled tender as a flower,
The bowed her head and cried.

God gave her to me a little while,
To light this world of gloom.
And now the angels watch her smile,
My sweetest flower to bloom.

And now I pray to God each night,
As tears fall on the floor.
To share with Mother, in glory bright,
Where flowers bloom forever more.

by Ervin Perdue