

## WOMEN PREACHERS

by John M. Alber  
Women preachers! What is the world coming to these days! A few years ago, one would have never expected to see that happen, but the day has come with many women filling the pulpits



by John Alber  
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of America. Baptists have always held to the idea that women were not qualified to be a pastor and stand in the pulpit and preach God's Word, but things have changed these days and it is not uncommon to hear of a "Baptist Church" that has ordained women to the full time Gospel ministry. But what does the Bible have to say about this issue, women preachers?

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife" (1 Timothy 3:2). "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife" (Titus 1:6). The Lord willing, this Baptist preacher would like to seriously take the time and consider the Scriptural qualifications of women preachers. In as much as there seems to be such a great

## EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES

by Ron Gregory  
Charleston, W. Va.

For years, I have attempted to "explain away" the reluctance of certain individuals to accept Gospel doctrine by saying their finite minds will not allow them to comprehend infinite wisdom. While there is something to be said about the limited wisdom of man that cannot understand Godly wisdom, I fear that we are actually attempting to defend the indefensible to some extent.

Certainly, human nature causes us to be somewhat defensive of our fellow man. Since we are all born with that same sinful nature, we tend to make excuses for each other.

To the point at hand, though, let me say that I have not always comprehended nor believed in the total power and presence of Almighty God. Being a creature endowed with human

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Baptist Is Our Middle Name

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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.

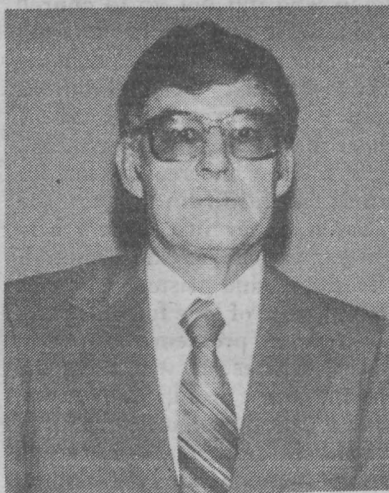
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## OUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Philippians 1:20-30. "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you



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all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF YOU IN YOUR CHURCH

I. Corinthians 12:14: "For the body is not one member, but many." I use this as a text, but you should read all of chapter thirteen to help in understanding the point I am trying to make. There will be several thoughts to this message, but the main thing I wish us to learn is that each one of us is important to our church. I want you to understand that you are very important to your church. We know from studying I Corinthians that there were serious troubles in the church. Many of those troubles came about as a result of individual members, either thinking too much of themselves, or not thinking enough of their position in God's Church. Chapter thirteen deals with Paul trying to show the importance of every member in the

church. We must mention that this is speaking of the local assembly at Corinth and not a fictional, universal, invisible



by Sam Wilson  
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body. (whatever that is)

I want you to bear in mind as you read this article, that when I use the term "Church," I am referring to a true, Sovereign Grace, Landmark, Missionary Baptist Church. If you are not a member of that kind of church, then you should join one. You cannot give God the glory He is due without being a member of this kind of church. You cannot give God the glory He is due as a member of this kind of church unless you are faithful in serving God through the church.

Let us notice in the first place; The Importance of your Church. Remember, the kind of church that I am referring to. Why are we so important? What is it that makes us different from other "so-called" churches?

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## The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

## HOW TO GO TO CHURCH II

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psa. 122:1).

This is my second sermon in this paper on this subject. It is a very important one. It is important that one does go to church, and it is important how one goes to church. I have previously pointed out that one should go to church: properly clothed; clean, not in showy or party type clothes and in modest apparel. Regularly, one should be very faithful in church attendance, being there every time the doors are open unless one has a reason that will stand up at the judgment seat of Christ. Wide awake and alert. One should get ready for church on Sunday by going to bed early Saturday night and getting a good night's sleep. One

should always be on time for the church service. One should pray during the week for the coming services and should get up early enough to have a time of prayer before going to church. As I closed the previous article, I was dealing with the matter that we should go to church gladly. Let us take up there.

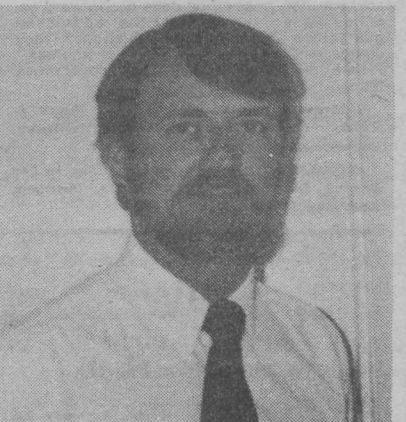
The attitude that some church members have towards going to church is a terrible sin against God. They act as if they can hardly stand to go, and are just going because they feel that they almost have to do so. One should go gladly. One should say, "Oh, praise God, it is time to go to church again. Praise God, I can hardly wait to get there. I am so happy to get to go to church. My friends, as they live, I hope you are going to church."

church? One should be glad to go to church to meet the saints of God. Your brothers and sisters in the church ought to mean much to you. You ought to be so happy to meet them at the church house and have sweet fellowship with them. They ought to mean more to you than almost anyone else. What is wrong with church members who had rather be at the lodge hall, or at the garden club, or visiting unsaved friends, or about anywhere rather than with the saints of God at church? Friend, such an attitude speaks poorly of your spiritual condition. Fellowship with God's people, especially fellow church members should be one of the chief joys of our lives. My friends, as they live, I hope you are going to church.

## GRACE

by Bob Belanger  
Genesis 6:8, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

I greatly marvel at the first things of the word of God. In Genesis we have many first so to speak, but at the onset, we notice that the first requirement this Book of books lays before us is faith, for we read, "In the beginning God." There is no explanation before us as to origin or fact of existence. It is all so matter of fact, showing that though man may doubt and question foolishly the Lord is, ever remains, and has always been. Faith is the first of all that must follow, and faith in all that is said and done in the Bible bows us to subjection in the majesty of its wondrous word of sure and holy truth. But the



Bob Belanger

matter before us is grace. Yea, that marvelous and truly amazing grace. The first mention of the word "grace" is found in our opening text, and no better place could it have been situated for first mention, than in Genesis, the book of beginnings.

The subject of grace will always remain of great import, for it has so done from eternity past to this hour. II Timothy 1:9 declares: "Who hath saved us,

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## THE CONDITION OF THE LOST

by Wayne Cox  
Memphis, Tn.

"Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying, Come rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep

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## HOW

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We should be glad to go to church to worship and praise the Lord, even to meet with the Lord in a special way. Though the Lord is always and everywhere with His children, He does meet with them in a special way in the church meeting. Oh, to worship the Lord, to bow in humble adoration before Him, this should be a chief joy of our church service. Then to praise His name, to join with our brothers and sisters in singing praise to God, this is a great part of the joy of going to church.

We should be glad to go to church to hear the Word of God. God has established His church as the institution designed to teach saved people the "all things" of God's Word. Not private Bible Study, though that is important. Not radio and TV programs, though a few of them may be beneficial. But the church of Jesus Christ, even a true Baptist church, is God's agency for the teaching of His children. And hear me now, no one who deliberately and inexcusably makes a habit of missing church will ever learn greatly in the things of the Word of God. Now the preacher, if he is somewhat what he should be, has asked God for a message. He has studied hard. He has received a message from God for you. You will not get that message that God has for you unless you go to church. One should delight to go to church to hear a message from the Word of God.

Let us remember that some cannot go to church. There are some who are sick, shut-in and unable to go to church, but God has graciously given you health and strength to do this. Then there is a multitude who do not live close enough to a church that is a true, sound church for them to attend. Oh, I know a multitude of such. They read the Bible. They read The Bap-

tist Examiner. Many of them listen to our tapes. But they do not have the wonderful privilege of attending services where they can hear the things they know are taught in the Bible. I know many of them. I weep with them. I pray for them. I write some of them. Oh, how glad they would be to have the opportunity that some of you make so little of.

Go to church anxiously. Go as if you just cannot wait, to get there. Go as if you are anxious to see what the Lord has in store for you this time. Who knows what the Lord might be pleased to do in the next service we have? Let us go with this anxious attitude.

Go to church hungry. Go to church like a hungry man goes to the table. See that hungry man. He has been working hard. He has worked up an appetite. He can hardly wait for the wife to get the food on the table. He is ready to dig in with



Joe Wilson

both hands and pour the food to his hungry body. I am not an Emily Post man on eating ethics. Maybe I should be. But let me imagine a little (I apply this to going to church, not to table manners). See that hungry man. He puts both elbows on the table, gets a big spoon (not a fork), gets a big spoon in both hands and shovels the food into his hungry body. Now, please, I am not telling you how to eat at the table, but this is the way to go to church, hungry for the blessings of God, hungry for the Word of God. Katie likes to fix a big meal. She likes for her company to really eat when they sit at her table. She will come around and ask if you want some more. If you say you do not, she will just put more on your plate anyway. She likes to see people eat. Well, the preacher is like that. He likes to see people sitting in the pew as if they are almost starving to hear the sermon. He likes to see them eating away, chewing and swallowing the precious Word of God as he preaches it to them. How it grieves the preacher for people in the audience to just nibble at the sermon, to act bored, to look at their watch, hoping the meal will soon be over so they can hurry home to a meal of TV or something else. Brothers and sisters, I have seen many people go to church to go home. The main thing on their minds from the minute they walked through the door was to hurry up, get it over with and go home. What a horrible attitude is this! Friend, go to church hungry. It takes a hungry man to enjoy a good meal. It takes a hungry person to enjoy the church service and the sermon. No matter how good a meal is, it means little to a man who is not hungry. Brother, much of your dissatisfaction with the church service and sermon is not because they are not good, it is because you are not hungry.

Join thyself to the eternal God, and thou shalt be eternal.

Go to church hungry.

Go to church because you love Jesus. Maybe you do not love the people in the church as you should. Maybe you are not overly fond of the preacher. But, my dear friend, how do you feel about Jesus? Ah, that is the question. Brother, I will be fifty-eight years old when you read this. I have been preaching over forty years. I have heard about every excuse that men make as to why they do not go to church faithfully. Some people must think I was born yesterday. I often leave off a conversation with an unfaithful church member wondering if they really think I fell for their silly excuses. Did you hear about the man who did not go to church because it was too far to walk and too close to drive. You say that is silly. Yes, about as silly as the excuse you use. I hear the excuses that men make, but I know the real reason for their unfaithfulness to the church. They just do not love Jesus Christ as they should. Brothers and sisters, a real heavy dose of love for Jesus will solve every problem we have in our churches. It will solve the attendance problem. It will solve the problem of church members getting along. It will solve the financial problems. All we need to do in our churches is to fall head over heels in love with Jesus, and all our problems will be solved. You do not go to church faithfully because you do not love Jesus as you should. I speak of those who could go. Unfaithfulness to the church and love to Jesus just do not go together.

Go to church to serve the Lord. The church is the institution set up by Jesus as the agency for doing His work in the world today. Now there is work to do besides attending church, but it is a work designed for faithful church members to do. Believers are to work for the Lord as members of, in and through, and under the authority of a true church of Jesus Christ. Hear this following statement and read it over several times. True work for the Lord begins with faithful attendance at the Lord's church. One who will not be faithful to the church is thereby disqualified to hold office or do a work in and through the church. Hear this God-given order: Salvation, Baptism and church membership, faithfulness in and to the church, service for God. We are to do all that we do to the glory of God, and remember, that God gets His proper and special glory in and through the church.

When you go to church, take some money with you and leave part of it at the church. Amen! That is the way to go to church. Don't leave your money at home when you go to church, but leave part of it at church when you go home. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings, Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open unto you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:8, 10). How much money should I leave at the church? Ten percent of all that God gives you plus an offering. If you do not do this, you are a robber, a terrible robber, a robber of God. This applies to all men of all ages. Tithing is the law of God for the unsaved and

for the saved. No individual is exempt from this law of God. You have a choice: give your tithes and offerings or be branded as a robber in the sight of God. There is no third choice.

Some people, who are covetous, and who want to rob God of His money and use it on themselves, try to say that tithing is only for the Old Testament. Jesus taught differently in Matthew 23:23, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Note the words, "and not to leave the other undone." Jesus said we ought

not leave tithing undone. Look at I Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him..." Here we see that giving is to be done regularly, systematically, and proportionally. Of course, the proportion is the tithe.

Should I go to a church and take some money out of the collection box, folk would call me a thief. The man who steals money from the offering plate or collection box is no more a thief than the man who does not put his tithe in that box. You cannot be the Christian you should be unless you tithe. Brothers and sisters, I believe that many of God's children are paying many bills they would not have to pay

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## FROM THE EDITOR

The Baptist Examiner will not change and will not be silent. Brother preachers, what you believe and preach is your business. You do not have to answer to me, Calvary Baptist Church, nor this paper for what you believe. This matter is between you, the places you preach, and the Lord. You are at liberty to change on doctrine and practice as you see fit. Understand that I speak of a liberty before men, for no man has the right before God to believe and preach anything except the Word of God. I am saying that no man and no church has the right to dictate in these matters to another church and preacher.

In pursuance and exercise of this right, many men have changed from the doctrines and practices they once held. I think of the Bible Conferences in Ashland in the 1960's, and of the many preachers who stood shoulder to shoulder at that time. Then I, sadly and with great grief, look around today and note how many of those preachers have changed on few or many things. Brother preacher, this is your business. It is the business of the church you pastor as to whether they desire to follow you in these changes or not.

What I plead for in this editorial is this: When you change, do not expect or demand that I change with you or that I keep silent about the things upon which you have changed. Let me illustrate. There is a preacher in Florida who writes many men telling them what a great friend he was to Calvary Baptist Church, John R. Gilpin, and The Baptist Examiner before I became pastor and editor. He seeks to leave the impression that I have changed things, that he is still friendly with the mentioned things, but cannot be friendly with me. The truth of the matter is that he was never all that friendly with either of the above. A second truth is that this church and this paper has never held, printed, or allowed to be preached the awful, wicked, terrible, absurd heresies that this man preaches. But he seeks to leave the impression that I have changed things with the church and paper so that he can no longer be the friend he once was. This implication is a deliberate and wicked falsehood. This man has written some terrible things about me and to me.

Now the truth is that I am preaching the same things I preached before I came here. The church called me, in part, because I am in agreement with their doctrinal position. The truth is that I am printing the same truths in The Baptist Examiner that were printed therein before I had ever heard of the paper, and certainly before I became its editor. I have not changed the doctrinal position of The Baptist Examiner.

Let me illustrate further. The Baptist Examiner and myself have always been pre-tribulationist. Many, who once held this truth, have changed. Now, I am most willing to continue friendship and fellowship with such. But am I to be forced to change my position or to keep quiet about it in order to continue that friendship? I thank God that very few post-tribs have seemed to make that demand. However, I do remember one who insisted that, if T.B.E. was going to print my Pre-trib. articles, it should print some articles by Post-tribs., defending and promoting their position. Now, I will have fellowship with these men who have thus changed, but I will not change my position, I will not print their position, I will not keep quiet about my position in order to have this fellowship.

Let me illustrate further. The Baptist Examiner and I have always held to the Sunday School and we have always held that women had the right to vote in the church. Some who once held these same things have changed on one or both of these beliefs and practices. This is between them, their church, and the Lord. I am willing to continue fellowship with these as before. However, I have had some rather severe criticism about my series on The Sunday School and my article on Women Voting. Now brethren, this is not fair. If you want to change, if you feel compelled to change, if you feel that your change is a Scriptural one, that is your concern. But you should not insist that I change with you, or if I do not change, that I keep quiet about the matter. You are not being fair to me when you seem to take this attitude. Let all of us continue to be as good friends as possible, let us have as much fellowship as we can, but let us not make unfair demands on the other in order to do this.

The Baptist Examiner and its present editor have not changed its doctrines and practices. We do not plan to change. And we do not plan to keep quiet about the things we have printed in the past just because some have changed on these things. I ask you, brethren, is not this a fair and proper position for me to take? Would it be fair to expect anything different from me in these things? Comments on this editorial will be courteously received and prayerfully pondered, and if answered at all, will be answered in love.



## HOW

(Continued from Page 2)

if they tithed. Let me give you one of the laws of Bible mathematics. Ten minus one equals more than ten. That may not be true in the arithmetic of this world, but it is true in heaven. If you will pay your tenth to God, you will have more left for yourself than if you do not tithe.

While I am at it let me state that the only place to pay your tithe is into a true Baptist church. The church is the storehouse today. You cannot tithe by giving it to some radio or television preacher. You cannot tithe by giving it to your poor parents. You cannot tithe by giving it to some charitable organization. You cannot even tithe by giving it to a Methodist, Holy-roller, or Presbyterian church. You must give it to a true Baptist church or you have not paid your tithes. When you go to church take some money with you and leave part of it there.

Go to church with determination. Be determined to do all you can to make the church service a blessing to yourself and others. Go determined to take a part in the service. Determined to pray earnestly, to sing loudly, to listen with your heart and your ears. Go determined to get every ounce of spiritual blessing that you can.

When you go to church, take someone with you. Oh, the blessing that this would be to the one taking, to the one taken, and to the whole church. Who knows what God might be pleased to do to and with and for that one that you take to church with you? Your inviting and/or taking someone to church with you might be the means of eternal blessing to that one. Take the family with you. The Father is obligated to go to church regularly and to take his whole family with him. If the father is so low down and sorry that he will not do his job, then the mother should go to church and take the children with her. If the mother is so sorry and unmotherly that she will not go to church, then the children should go on to church anyway. But the ideal is for the father to take the lead, to set the example and to take the whole family to church regularly. And let me say right here that, so long as your children live under your roof and at your expense, you should make them go to church with you regularly.

Take a neighbor to church with you. What more neighborly act could one perform than to talk to a neighbor about the Lord, and invite that neighbor to church and take that neighbor to church with them if possible?

Take anyone you can to church with you. Go out during the week and witness to the unsaved. Invite them to go to church with you. Furnish transportation for them if needed. Work hard at this. Spend some time each week at this. Oh, if our people would faithfully do this one thing, it might be the means of building up our small churches. And this is the duty, not just of the pastor, deacon, and Sunday School teacher. It is the duty of every member of the church. I have failed so much in this. May God forgive me. I am going to start doing much more work at this. Surely, the pastor should be the example and leader in this matter. I do believe that if we will faithfully and consistently work

**God makes a promise. Faith believes it. Hope anticipates it. Patience awaits it.**

at this, we will see some results in our church services. Visitors are so important to a church. They add much to the service. It is such a blessing to see them there. Let us all determine that we are going to put forth much more of an effort at this.

Going to church is an important thing. Going to church is a wonderful and blessed thing. It should be a chief joy and delight of our lives. Going to church in the right way could make it much more of a blessing than it otherwise will be. Now, we ought to go to church. It is our duty to go to church. We owe it to the Lord and to the church to be faithful in our attendance at church. But how much better it is to go to church because we want to and because we enjoy it and because we get such a blessing out of it than just to go because it is our duty to do so.

I am aware that what a person gets out of going to church will depend somewhat upon the preacher. Oh, that we preachers would realize our responsibility in this matter. Sometimes I have failed to give the people much. Sometimes I have been ashamed that the folk have come out and I have given them so little. I have sometimes been embarrassed because people had sat down at my spiritual table and I had put such a poor meal on it. Oh, may God help me to do my very best to give the people that which will make it worthwhile for them to come. May God give me the message that will be a blessing to those who are there. Yes, some of what people get out of going to church depends upon the preacher. May God help every preacher reading this to realize this and to pray and work harder in doing his part to make the church service a blessing.

But, dear friend, having said this, let me say that a good part of what you get out of going to church will depend upon the way in which you go. You sometimes go to church with such an attitude that it would be utterly impossible for any preacher to do you any good. You have a bad, ugly attitude. You don't like the preacher and you are determined that he is not going to be a blessing to you. You have your mind on a thousand other things. Your body is there but your heart is elsewhere. You just can't wait to get out of church and get back home or go somewhere else. Yes, my friend, much of what you get out of church will depend upon how you go to church. Before you complain about the singing, the attitude of the church, or the preacher and his sermon, be sure to check up on your attitude and see if that is not the real reason you did not get much out of the service.

How to go to church. 1. Properly clothed. 2. Regularly. 3. On time. 4. Get a good night's rest on Saturday and be wide awake and alert. 5. After a time of prayer for God's blessings upon the service. 6. Gladly. 7. Anxiously. 8. Hungry. 9. Because you love Jesus Christ. 10. To serve the Lord. 11. Take some money with you and leave part of it there. 12. With determination. 13. Take someone with you. I could go on and on, but these are some things about the proper way of going to church. I personally guarantee that if you will practice these things in going to church, the church service will be a blessing to you and the service will be better for all who attend and will bring more glory to God. May God bless this message to our

hearts. It is likely that obedience to these two messages on this subject would bring revival to our churches. We could at least try it and see.

## WOMEN

(Continued from Page 1)

number of women that are now entering the field of the Gospel ministry, what does the Word of God have to say about all of this? Does God call women preachers into the Gospel ministry? Now, I know of a certainty, that many are going to take great opposition to my point of view in this article, but then, that should not surprise those of us who happen to believe the Bible as God's Word, and yes, especially to those of us who take the Bible literally. You see, we are living in a day of great rebellion — and that rebellion is on every side. It is not a matter of what this preacher thinks, or what you may think. The fact of the matter is, our basic belief ought to be based upon the precious eternal Word of God: the Holy Bible. But then, few there are today who are really willing to let the Bible speak to them as to what they believe, much less practice within their churches and private homes.

In a day in which there is supposed to be a revival going on, it seems to this preacher that there are more ungodly practices going on in the name of religion. Literally, one may say, there has been some very big changes taking place within the churches these days. A new face has been put forth; but then, in reality it could be said that this is not a new change. From the time of Cain and Abel, yea, even the Tower of Babel man has had his own religion; and that religion is and has always been opposed to God's divine revelation. Man has always rebelled and will always rebel when it comes to God's Law and His perfect holy standard: the Bible. Therefore, it should not surprise us when we find that there is a rebellion among the women within our great land, yea, even more so within our churches. They would attempt to say, or at least bring across the idea that they are not rebelling, but just following the natural reactions of the day in which we are now living. Thus they would say, times have changed and we must change with our day or be left out in the cold. Oh Beloved, is not this a spirit of rebellion that must be properly dealt with within our churches, and yea, even within our Christian homes? It had better be dealt with, or we are going to be the loser! God is the one that established certain orders, yes, principles by which He expects us to live our lives by and to govern our churches.

Today, (the 80's) the world is fast moving away from the original place of the women within our churches and Christian homes. Let us be properly understood, that in the precious Living Word, the Bible, God Almighty gave to us the Biblical position of the women within the church and the home. Satan is a most subtle person, knowing just how to suggest and how to get man to respond to his evil plot and programs. Women have listened to this lie far too long. Not only women, but men as well have listened to this lie. When are we going to wake up and follow God's divine directions? Now, I do not know or

understand why our God has put such orders into existence, but I do know that when God's people refuse to obey His ever command, they are playing with fire.

Women have for years now refused to obey the orders God laid down in His Holy Word. They have become experts in every field and are now fast moving over into the Gospel ministry. They have refused to listen to the wisdom of the Word of God, rather they have turned to the advice of their "Psychiatrist" or have read after the likes of "Dear Abby" and "Ann Landers." Please, do not misunderstand what I am trying to say. There are jobs in which women can work and do a far better job than many men, but we are not talking about that. Furthermore, we are not saying that the "Psychiatrist" or even the "Dear Abby's" and "Ann Landers" do not give out some good sound information. Nevertheless, when women or men have rebelled, in their attack to find support of their evil ways, have often turned to the world for their ungodly counsel. Thus, in their total anxiety, they have the strong tendency to accept what the world says over and against the Word of God. What we need today, is a return to old time Biblical convictions! Yes, may this preacher suggest that what we need today is some Godly pastors who are willing to stand in their pulpit and thus declare the Scriptural fact: God does not nor has never called a woman into the Gospel ministry. There are some reasons for that and we will deal with that later. But for now, let it be properly noted, God's eternal precious Word is very clear on the matter of women preachers. God, in His Word tells us that He is against such an idea. The Apostle Paul had much to say about this very issue. It would seem to me, that if the women preachers would follow the advice of Paul in First Corinthians, there sermons could not ever be heard by anyone. How is that? Well, listen to what Paul wrote, "Let your women keep silence in the churches for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (I Cor. 14:34-35).

I am personally convinced, that many a good woman has been sold a bill of goods these days. They do not know their Bible and so when they run across such passages as First Corinthians they are told that the Apostle Paul did not really mean what he wrote. Many of the so-called women movements of this present Century have been inspired by the Devil. Mothers have been taken out of the homes and placed everywhere but where she ought to be these days. Thus, she has gotten a taste of life, and like Lot's wife, can not and will not let loose. You see, nowadays women want to be treated as equal with men, and the truth of the matter is, they are not. Neither physically nor emotionally are they so equipped by God to do so. I know, this is not a popular idea or thought, but when they have gotten out of their field, they will sooner or later become like the fish out of the water: floundering. Now, I am not writing this article in order to put my wife or the women in our church in their

proper place. This preacher has a Godly wife, and a Congregation that believes and practices the idea of women being quiet in the House of the Lord.

May this preacher further suggest then, that when it comes to the official position of men and women, especially within the church of God, that we consider the counsel of God's Book, the Word of God. It is not a matter of what we would like to see; nor is it a matter of what the so-called clergy thinks these days; or what the various women movements have moved toward in their meetings, but what saith the Holy Scriptures. You see, anything that is against the clear plain teaching of the Bible, is rebellion! For the most part, it should be pointed out that the so-called women's movements in today's world are headed by Godless women who could care less about what the Word of God has to say. That is most evident by their philosophy of life and the goals that they have established for their institutions.

Our problem today is that many men have refused to consider what the Holy Scriptures have to say with regard to the proper place of the women within the churches, yea, even within our Christian homes. Immediately, one figures that when an Independent Baptist preacher begins to speak on this subject that he is opposed to women altogether; but that is the farthest thing from the truth of the matter. Women have been given certain basic rights — God-given rights! Yes, and a man that really loves his wife will want to treat her right in public and in private. Shame on any man that does not so respect his lovely wife. A man ought to be taken out and horse whipped who does not love and respect his dear wife. Yes, may this preacher even suggest, that a man who puts his wife down in public or in private sessions, is not much of a man. I will go as far as to say, that such a man should not ever stand in the pulpit and preach God's wonderful Word. Now, don't misunderstand my position please, for the pastor must, yea, has to preach the Biblical position of the women; but he does not have to become obnoxious in the process of declaring the Word of God. This pastor, has heard far too many men destroy their own wife or mother in the pulpit in order to prove his point. I have made a point in my personal ministry, whether in the pulpit or talking about my dear wife, never to run her down; for therein, is in reality a bad reflection of my own self. If men would only stop and think for a brief moment before they speak, if their wife was as dumb or stupid as some have said or indicated, how much more so are they? After all, did not we men ask our wife to marry us? Of course we did! Thus, if she is as dumb or crazy as we have suggested, then, why in the world did we marry her and yes, choose her to be the mother of our children? Logic tells us that we are not so bright! God deliver us men from such actions.

Now, lest we forget the purpose of this article: women preachers. How tragic it is to find both women and their churches refusing to follow the divine pattern set forth in the Word of

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The fact that you have never experienced the love of God doesn't prove that it doesn't exist.

# The Baptist Examiner Forum I

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

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

What is "first love" in Rev. 2:4? Could it apply to Baptism?

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"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4).

This was said unto the church at Ephesus. This is the church of which Paul warned the elders to beware of false teachers that would enter in, and even from their own ranks men would arise speaking perverse things, causing divisions in the church (Acts 20:28-30). It is the church to which Paul wrote a letter reminding them of the great doctrines of grace. He then prays, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:17-19).

It seems that this church had heeded the warnings given by Paul, for it is said, "—thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev. 2:2). They also had labored patiently for the truth. We might say they were sound doctrinally, but there was one very serious thing wrong in this church. They had departed from their love for Christ.

John, in all his letters, speaks of the love which God has for His people, but he also writes that His children should love Him and each other. "We love him because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). "Beloved if God so loved us, we ought also love one another" (I John 4:11).

In (Jude 21) we are told, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life". The "love of God" here is not that love which God has for His children, for that love is an eternal, unchanging love and does not depend upon what we do or do not do. It is that love which we have for him, of which He is the object. This is what the church at Ephesus had failed to do. In their zeal for doctrines they had grown cold and indifferent to "the love of God."

I am afraid that many of our churches today are in the same state. We need to heed the warnings given to the church of Ephesus. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and

will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:5).

Seeing that this is the love referred to, there is no way it could refer to baptism.

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I do not know how baptism could even be considered in this verse. There is no way that one could consider baptism in relation to the first love.

There is only one answer as far as the first love is concerned. While there are many loves that we should have in relation to our salvation there is only one that could possibly be our "first" love. We certainly should love the Bible and there is no doubt that we should love the church or our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The first love that any saved person has is Jesus Christ. There can be no other that fits that category. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (I John 4:19). For this reason Paul said, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2).

How could anything else be considered our "first love"? He died for us. He arose victorious. He became our substitute. He gave us eternal life and hope. He entered our life and gave us peace and joy.

Yes, my friends, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer is our first love. There can be nothing else that could be the recipient of that love.

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The "first love" of Rev. 2:4 is no doubt a reference to love for God, which love should exceed all other loves by infinite measure. Christ is to have preeminence in all things (Col. 1:18), and love is the greatest of all things (I Cor. 13:13).

The charge or indictment of the church at Ephesus was not one which accused them of falling from grace, nor with denial of fundamental doctrine, neither were they guilty of leaving Scriptural morality. But the charge was a most serious one; one, which, if not corrected, would eventuate the removal of the candlestick from the Ephesian church. Their love for God was not fully extinguished, but it had fearfully diminished, and spiritual declension was the bitter fruit of this abating love. Every N.T. church should guard against spiritual apathy,

for the Lord will not long tolerate a state of lukewarmness in His churches, but will visit those who succumb to this spirit of ingratitude with judgment.

The complaint: "Thou hast left thy first love." The threatened penalty: "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick, except thou repent" (Vs. 5). The remedy: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works" (Vs. 5). The judgment of which they were warned was conditional, and came from God's unvarying love for His churches. A church may leave their first love, but God's love for His churches is perfect, and therefore everlasting and immutable.

Every new day in the life of the saint should be the day of his/her greatest love for Christ. If it is not so, then the saint should remember from whence he or she has fallen, repent of the coldness of their heart, and do their first works over.

The charge acknowledges that the Ephesian church is a candlestick holder, and therefore a bona fide church. The doctrine of the church is not the issue, so their practice of baptism is not in question, and baptism is a once for eternity experience and can never be done over.

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Revelation 2:4: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

No, I do not believe "first love" could apply to baptism. I have heard of some who believe that this phrase has reference to the combined ordinances, but I reject this idea also.

There are those who feel that this phrase has reference to their failure to witness, and that the love they had left was their love for souls. I also reject this theory. There is no evidence from the reading of the context that this was their problem. In fact, I feel most of the context would disagree with this theory.

First, let us notice in this verse, that they had left their first love and not lost it. Thank God we can never lose completely our love for Him. Thank Him even more that His love never leaves us. I feel the verse means exactly what it says. Many in the Church at Ephesus had left their first love. This means that they had allowed things of the world to detract from their love for God. When they were first saved, their love burned for Jesus. They showed this love in faithfully serving God. Though the Church there had many good things about her, the members did not love God as they should. Certainly,

this condemns us and our churches today. The greatest failure of any church is that they do not love Christ as they should. If this problem were rectified, then all other problems would take care of themselves.

The Church at Ephesus, as well as our churches today, was going backward instead of forward. Our love for God is supposed to grow and increase, not decrease. In closing, let us notice the warning given for this digression. God threatens them with the removal of their candlestick, except they repent. That threat is just as much alive today for the Lord's Churches. May God increase our love for Him. May our lives manifest the love of God. In my opinion the term "first love" means just what it says, they did not love Jesus as they once did.

## WOMEN

(Continued from Page 3)

God. It is open defiance — yea, it is rebellion against God and His Holy standard. Listen to me for a brief moment, God's eternal Word must be considered as absolute truth with regard to this matter. How can a woman stand behind the pulpit and preach God's Holy Word, and obey this command, "Let your women keep silence in the churches" (1 Cor. 14:34)? There is absolutely no way! In order to qualify for the Biblical office of a Bishop (Elder), the text we have used tells us that one must be a male. God's eternal precious Word is most unmistakable in this matter. God says, that "A bishop... must be the husband of one wife." Beloved, there is absolutely no way under the sun, that a woman could ever meet those qualifications. Let it be understood, that when a woman has married her wife, and thereby, she gives birth by that union, then this preacher will consider women preachers. So, until that can happen naturally, women are forever excluded from this office, and yes, the office of being a deacon. Forgive me, but those who would teach that this is okay, are in reality blaspheming the very Word in which they claim to be upholding. That just can not be the case!

This preacher wants to go on record as opposing the ordination of women to the Gospel ministry. Our Lord taught us that "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Now, how in the world can a church ordain a woman to the Gospel ministry if they are going to obey His every command? How can a woman who intends to obey every command of God, ask for ordination when she knows full well that - that is in direct opposition to the revealed truth of God's Holy Word: the Bible? Who, then, is really the one that is calling for the ordination of these women into the Gospel ministry? There can be only one answer to that question: the god of this wicked world system, Satan. No honest God-fearing woman or church would ever want to be in such an awkward position.

In America, we have known the freedom of religion for many years. Because of that, many various forms of religious practices have been allowed to flourish and that with the general blessings of the government. But the day is fast coming, that we who believe the Bible as God's Word may be once

again called upon and forced to go under ground. It would not surprise this pastor if in the future, in order to have tax exempt status, one may be forced to accept women preachers and a whole lot more. God help us to take a stand! I hope that never happens in our beloved land, but if it ever does, how many of our churches will give in to the pressures? You see, some have already given in and have become part of unscriptural associations, conventions and fellowships; and these so-called man made organizations are the ones which today are giving the okay to ordain women into the Gospel ministry. May we ever be found faithful to the Word of God. Unfortunately, many in the past have given in to the pressures of life. Our Lord most certainly taught that He did not know such churches or individuals who refused to obey His every command. "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). While these individuals and their churches may be showing forth their religious rights, it is very apparent that their activity is definitely demonic, and not of Almighty God. Furthermore, to the Bible believing Christian, it is very obvious that these have no love of God within their evil hearts; for if they had, they would not have gone in the opposite direction of the Word of God.

Women preachers! God deliver us from such ungodly practices. That is correct, God deliver us from the depraved evil thought of allowing such wicked practices within God's dear church. This is a most unscriptural practice. It must be preached against! God's Word is clear, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak" (1 Cor. 14:34). What is going to be the official position of the true church of our Lord Jesus Christ? Does not the church that allows such evil practices admit in their actions, that they are not a true Independent Baptist Church? Yes! And Beloved, if they are not a true Independent Baptist Church, they have no right whatsoever to call themselves the Lord's Church. May God give us Godly pastors to preach His Holy Word, and Scriptural Churches who will stand with their pastor. May God bless as you think upon these words.

## EXCUSES

(Continued from Page 1)

characteristics, my earliest religious experiences were grounded in the humanistic belief in the free will of man. Because man is inherently proud, we tend to discount the Creator's role in our lives. Most men will declare their belief that God, of a certainty, did create the heavens and earth. He will acknowledge God even created fish and animals, but he will refuse to concede that same God is in charge of the world today. To be frank, most ordinary mortals are unwilling to admit, except superficially, that God is more powerful than we are. To admit that would be to admit our own weakness, and that goes against the grain. So, many young converts feel they can "work their way through" and remain convinced they are the masters of their own fate.

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It is the little things we do in the name of Jesus that will make the big things throughout all eternity.

## The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

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

Please explain II Cor. 8:18-19. Does this mean that several churches can appoint and authorize a missionary instead of just one church?

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Personally, I do not believe that you can find a Mission Board in the Bible anywhere, not even a hint. I believe the New Testament teaches that Missionaries were sent out by local churches. In the 13th chapter of the Book of Acts we find the Church at Antioch ordaining Barnabas and Saul and sending them out to do Missionary work. In the 14th chapter of Acts we find them reporting back to the Church at Antioch. This is the way Mission work was done in the New Testament, and the way it should be done today. Now, I do believe if a Church who sends out a missionary is too small to fully support him, that they should ask sister Churches to help in the support. There are many Churches today that are too small to support a full time Missionary. Therefore, in order to do missionary work they must join in and help support a Missionary that is sent out by a sister church. I do not believe that a church should help support a missionary that would teach or preach contrary to what they believe. To answer the question, Titus was most likely working out of the church at Corinth and was sent out to collect for the poor of Judaea. No doubt the one chosen to work with him was Luke, who was well known and could have been a great help to him, or one of the other well-known members of the church at Corinth. The other churches that were helping support the Mission work at Corinth approved whomever they sent that was of their membership. This is the only way several Churches can appoint and authorize missionary work.

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I do not believe that the present day method of selecting a missionary by a mission board is the correct way to appoint or authorize a missionary. It is unscriptural for a board of men set up by some men to have the right or power to appoint or authorize a missionary to go out on the field and work under the authority of such a board. There is not a single Scripture giving such men authority to undertake to do such. For a board of men or a committee to decide who can be sent out and who can be on the payroll is unscriptural.

When a group of churches select men to form a board and give these men power to appoint and authorize men to go to the mission field, such a board does not have Scriptural authority to do such. And when a group of men who call themselves a missionary committee set salaries and decide whom to support and whom to leave off they do such without Scriptural authority.

When the powers that be solicited, combine and direct the energies of churches, they do such without Scriptural warrant. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to direct the energies of the Lord's churches.

I do not believe that the churches of the day of Paul met together in Convention or Association type meetings and decided who they would recommend to the mission field and/or decide what salary they would receive. I believe the brother mentioned in 2nd. Cor. 8:18 was authorized by the church of which he was a member, and then other churches agreed to support him in the work. He was chosen by the churches; and, choosing this brother, these churches surely supported him prayerfully and morally and in a material way. Do we not do the same thing today? The church of which the missionary is a member authorizes him and sends him out to the field the missionary feels like the Holy Spirit has led him. The missionary is under the authority of the church that sends him out. He is not under the authority of another church or other churches.

We here at Landmark Missionary Baptist Church have chosen to support Brother Fred Halliman and Brother Peter Halliman in the work in New Guinea, but they are not under our authority. They are under the authority of Calvary Baptist Church in Ashland. If this is not the Scriptural way to carry on mission work, then we need to restudy and take stock and see where we stand as to how we sovereign grace missionary Baptist churches carry on mission work.

If a man is called to some mission field, then the church of which he is a member appoints and authorizes him. Then other churches choose him as their missionary and they support him in his work. I believe this is the way the early churches carried on mission work.

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These verses do not refer to missionary work or the appointing of a missionary. They have reference to the assistance one church may extend to another church of like faith and order. The particular manner of

assistance in this case is monetary. The gifts were directed to the church at Jerusalem from the churches of Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia (Greece).

There came, shortly after Pentecost, a great famine over all the world and it greatly affected the church in Jerusalem. So great was the effect of this dearth that the disciples at Antioch determined to send them aid (Act 11:27-30). Barnabas and Saul were sent with the aid. Titus is also mentioned as helping.

The two verses, eighteen and nineteen, have reference to the many precautions that were used in the collecting and distribution of money for the church at Jerusalem. Paul gives his reasons for this caution in the remaining verses of 2 Corinthians 8:20-24: "Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ. Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf."

Our conclusion that we might draw from this example is that, when a sister church has a need and the need is made known, we have a responsibility, out of love, to aid with the abundance God has given to us.

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No these verses do not indicate that several churches can authorize a missionary, but that they had chosen a representative or representatives (as verse 23 would indicate) from their respective bodies to accompany Paul on his travels with their contributions. See verse four. Paul recognized the right of the churches to have their own representatives travel with him among the churches as he collected their gifts to the saints at Jerusalem. In I Corinthians 16:3 he said... "And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem." These "messengers of the churches" are mentioned also in Acts 20:4. We see by these verses that the Apostle Paul recognized their right of self government, because the individual churches,

not some mission board, selected their own men to represent them. Thus these Scriptures do not teach that mission boards or conventions are Scriptural, but that they are contrary to Scripture and that in New Testament times the churches voluntarily cooperated with one another as all Scriptural Baptist Churches should do today.

## EXCUSES

(Continued from Page 4)

After wandering around in the sea of freewillism, it finally occurred to me that God is either omnipotent, as the Bible teaches, or He is not. He either sees and knows all or He does not. He is either Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending (Rev. 1:8), or He is not. There is no room for compromise if one is to accept the full power of God. If my God has no ability to know everything concerning His creation, then He is not the all-powerful, all-knowing God spoken of by the prophets and apostles. If God is from everlasting to everlasting, He must surely know what His creation will amount to. He must know what will happen on every one of our threescore and ten years here on earth.

If God had not been all-knowing, one would have to believe there was no true basis for the Old Testament prophecies. When the prophets spoke of future events by divine inspiration, they must have been taking a chance whether the events would occur as written. Thankfully, God used these men to write of future events for the benefit of those around them. As it turned out, the Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled or are being fulfilled to the letter. That must mean God knew what He was talking about. Even the finite mind must see that.

How can an individual look at the prophecies concerning Christ's betrayal by Judas and fail to realize that Judas was predestined to the actions he did? If prophets could talk of him and his actions years in advance (Acts 1:16-20), what real control could Judas have had over the situation? Freewillers will admit they feel Judas was lost. They cite Biblical references to prove that — yet many of those references were written before Judas was even conceived! Was he, therefore, "predestinated to be lost"? That is a freewill term used to make men's minds turn from this precious doctrine, but I will submit that the doctrine and answer to that question are obvious, even to the finite mind.

I wonder often how a freewiller can explain the fantastic conversion of Saul; or the saving of Moses in the bullrushes. Did the "free moral agency" of Saul cause him to see the light or did God hit him over the head with the truth? Did Moses just happen to be saved, among all others, simply because "luck" allowed it? That doesn't make sense to even one of limited wisdom.

Even the Arminian will claim he is on the road to heaven. He will claim this is based on the freewill "decision" he made to "accept" the Lord. It is not, he will say, that Christ chose him but rather that he chose Christ. He will ignore all Scripture on the subject, especially Romans 8 and 9, and teach the creature is

more powerful than the Creator.

The freewiller will picture the pitiful Christ, left only to pleading with lost souls to "commit" to Him. They raise their voices to the tones of "Who at My Door is Standing?" (Sometimes, I do wonder who it is that is standing at their doors) and go on to explain that some lost friends have been "Almost Persuaded" to "accept" the Lord. Such silliness, in light of either limited or unlimited wisdom.

The freewiller is certain, based on his "decision," that he is headed for heaven. He is equally sure that his lost friend, who never becomes completely persuaded, is headed for a devil's hell. But how can he think this? If God is not all-powerful, all-knowing and all-seeing, how can a freewiller accept the prophecies of Revelation? How can they be sure, if there is no predestination, that there will really be a great battle at the end of time and that God will prevail over the devil? They seem to simply accept John's word that Christ will gather the saved together with Him in glory, while the lost will be banished to torment in hell. How do they know man's freewill and the devil's "free moral agency" will allow John to be right? There is a definite conflict in their logic.

The whole basis of a freewiller's belief is in jeopardy because of his refusal to admit to God's foreknowledge. Friend, either God foreknows or He does not. He cannot be the all-powerful, omniscient God referred to in the Scripture and have trouble knowing what will happen tomorrow. Likewise, one must twist the finite mind to believe God knows what will happen at the end of time yet does not know the events of the next minute.

Man can apply the methods of his finite wisdom and arrive at the inconsistencies of freewillism. He cannot on one hand accept the basic Bible truth that it is foreordained that good eventually will triumph over evil if he does not accept foreknowledge. If God truly created the earth and the inhabitants thereof to do as they please, how can He know how everything will end? Does one buy a murder mystery, open the first page and then turn to the last? Even to the finite mind that makes no sense. And how can we accept some freewillers who say, "Oh, yes, there is predestination"? If that is true, then God has some power and some presence but certainly not all.

Freewillers would have us believe they logically feel God created the heavens and the earth, placed creatures here to do as they please, yet knows in the end He will btlle the devil and defeat him. How can He know that if He knows nearly nothing in between? How can the Arminian be confident the devil will not win the battle? Or that there will even be a battle? What if enough men, using their freewill, join with the devil to defeat God? That is silly and we should dismiss the whole freewill argument for just what it is: the work of the devil.

The excuse we've always made for freewillers simply does not hold water. No human logic makes these men miss God's essential truth of predestination

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## EXCUSES

(Continued from Page 5)

and election. No, God has explained His actions, even in their cases. ("...and whom he will he hardeneth." Romans 9:18). These individuals are blinded and poisoned to the precious truth of predestination and election. It is not for me to know why they remain so blinded or how long the condition will exist. But God knows. And I doubt that any of us are serving Him well when we attempt to explain the freewill's blindness by saying it is simple human logic at work. Even that somewhat denies the power of God.

## PERSONAL

(Continued from Page 1)

believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."

Apostle Paul was very conscientious about his testimony, about his manner of life, what he believed and what he stood for. In Timothy, Paul writing to the young minister there in the City of Ephesus, was telling him he knew what he believed and what he preached, and from a youth he had known these things. We are concerned about our testimony for the cause of Christ. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God. Our testimony is always in fault and the world sits back and looks at it. But Paul is telling the believers here, there was a way designed before me. God has a way, He has a design upon our life. For every born again believer, God has a design upon. We are to dedicate our life, and we are to crucify the flesh daily. We can never have victory over the old flesh, this old Adamic nature that we have. Notice, how Paul begins his personal testimony "According to my earnest expectation." Earnest is used as a down payment or the faithfulness of God's promise that God has set a bounty upon the promise that He has made. God is showing His faithfulness. "To my earnest expectation" means effective circumstances; it means an uplifted head and an outstretched neck. Do you remember when Peter and John ran to the sepulchre when Mary and some of the women came back and told about Jesus not being there. John outran Peter, and he stopped to look in the sepulchre. He didn't take the word of anyone. He had an earnest desire to know for sure. In Luke 21:28, where Jesus was dealing with Israel, he said, "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your head; for your redemption draweth nigh." We are to have a concern about our personal testimony and a concern about what God's design is in our life, as much as we have the expectation and the glorious hope of the coming of Jesus Christ. It is not enough to just be happy or just be satisfied because we are saved. We need to search the scriptures; we need to give ourselves fully to the Word of God and find out what God has in store for our lives.

Once I was talking to a man about the treasures laid up in heaven. He said, "What are the

treasures?" We have to find them first. You have to find the treasures before you can lay them up. Where do we find them? We dig them out of the Word of God, the precious jewels of the Word of God. God told Abraham He was his shield and exceeding great reward in Genesis 15. In Matthew, God said when you are persecuted and reviled for my names sake, great is your reward in heaven. God is your reward; special privileges that God is going to bestow upon you, the talent that He gives you. Talent means ability, and we are supposed to improve upon these talents that God gives us and be faithful in them. We need to lay up these crowns, we need to lay up these rewards.

We are not going to know what God has in store for us unless we study God's Word. In I Corinthians 2, it says that eyes have not seen and ears have not heard and it hasn't entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for them. We have to dig it out. God is not going to show it to you if you are lazy. You have to be a conscientious Christian. Paul says, "to my earnest expectation and my hope." He said my personal testimony will be just like the seal of me looking for the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

If you want to have some special privileges, Brother, earn them and work for them. Did Jesus not give some of the disciples special privileges? Peter, John and James, didn't they go with Him when He raised the daughter of Jarius. Were they not with Him on the Mt. of Transfiguration? Were they not with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane when He revealed His human passion and suffering?

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope that in nothing shall I be ashamed, but that with all boldness as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." The object of expectancy, until the fullness is realized, is that Christ might be fully magnified in your body. Instead of being ashamed or put to shame, Christ might be seen in your life in His loveliness. Whether we are going to live, or whether we are going to die, Christ should be seen in our lives. The pillow of consolation is Christ. "To me living and dying in Christ is gain whether by life or by death." What Paul is saying is that it doesn't make any difference if we live or if we die, but that our life is for Christ. As Paul said in Philippians 3:7, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

The desire and heart beat of every born again believer ought to be know more about Christ. There was a design in Paul's life and it was constantly before him. It's before every believer. Of course, the world can't say this. But a born again believer can, because of Christ in his life, that hope of glory.

In verse 21 of our text, Paul says, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Notice how he said "for to me." Personally, to Paul, this is how we should feel about it. Paul

said as long as he lives, it will be Christ, and when he dies, it will be gain. There will be nothing here on this earth that he desires. How many Christians today are so deeply rooted in the things of the world that they are bound with them? Sins are so easily bese before us to keep us off balance. You can't do anything when you are off balance, you are helpless. That is what Satan wants us to do. We are to be steadfast and be ready. We should know that when we die, we will go home to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. We should go for the treasures that we lay up. We should go for the rewards which He promised us.

Now in verse 22: "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not." If this is my portion Paul says, to continue to live is the fruit of my labor, then this is worth my while. If this design upon my life is what God wants me to do, that I may tarry, that I may stay here for the fruit, then I don't have any option to choose. Why? Because it is the design of God and a way set before us that we do not have any control over.

Verse 23: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Paul is saying, on the one side, I have a burning desire, a hunger to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better.

Verse 24: "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Paul is saying that it was more needful for you that he stay awhile. This is the design God has for me and a way set before me to abide in the flesh for it is more needful for you that I suffer in this old flesh and in this body. It is more needful for you that I still preach and lift up the cross to the saints of God. Needful for the saints of God, not more needful for Paul. He didn't say it was more needful for him, but needful for you that he tarry awhile, that he preach awhile, that he tell about the sovereign grace of God. Now, this is Paul's testimony, that he shall abide and continue with you all for your joy and faith. That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. Paul said, "I have this confidence. To have died to express the state of affairs, to express my desire, my love to depart and go to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. To continue to live in this body of flesh is the fruits of my labor. That whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs that you stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together in the faith of the gospel. Be fixed in the faith." To stand fast means to be unmoved in the spirit of the Lord with one mind. Strive means to work. Some say you must strive to enter into the straight gate, the narrow road. Jesus told us that we are to strive together. There is nothing about your adversaries that should terrify you or scare you. Which is to them an evident token of perdition but to you of salvation. Have your surety and confidence of salvation in God. You also have the evident token of perdition. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but to also suffer for His sake. May God bless you all.

## GRACE

(Continued from Page 1)

and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world (ages) began"; and as the child of God is ushered into the presence of the King Eternal, it will be only then that he will begin to fully understand the depth of Sovereign Grace.

How grievously pitiful are our times when we observe the understanding the "modern day Christians" concerning grace. The present day god of Arminianism or Freewillism always seems to be at the bargaining table waiting for some poor soul to make his acceptance speech as this soul has made the decision not to reject the pleading god. In whose hands does grace lay? Is it not in the hand of power to show favor, or in the hand of the powerless. To the elect the scriptures declare: "Let us therefore come boldly (in confidence and assurance) unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." The saved are beckoned to the throne of grace, but the emphasis we seek to stress here is that we are coming before a throne where grace doth reign with all authority power and dignity.

What is grace? Some have simply defined the word as meaning favor or mercy, but to anyone who would but take the time to read of the subject, it would be found to be much more than just favor or mercy, for grace truly is "unmerited favor." Observe, if you will, the information relayed to us in Genesis chapters five thru nine, and see if you can believe that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" because he still had a spark of good, and that he was the only one of his day who decided for God. Such belief and doctrine is truly not born of God, but of men who yet believe they "shall be as gods." In Genesis 6:5 we are told: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The Lord God then further declared in verse seven: "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth," and again in verse eleven, "the earth also was corrupt... filled with violence... it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted his way." We must take note that such terms as "man, every imagination, man whom I have created, the earth, all flesh," is all inclusive. The Lord had declared that there were none good, righteous, and none that would seek Him for "all flesh had corrupted his way." Surely Noah was here appointed among the all, etc. How is it then that in and among all the certain doom and wrath; among all the sin and corruption, we come to such a light, a verse of joy and comfort?

How is it that we should read, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord"? What, had the Lord made a mistake in relating of these things to Moses? Did the Lord forget to mention the goodness of Noah? Did the Lord forget to tell us that when Noah heard the news he gave his desperately wicked heart to God? How is it that Noah found grace? There can be but one explanation beloved, and though not seeking to

pervert or do an injustice to verse eight, we can surely say that this verse is telling us that the Lord looked down among the race of mankind and elected that Noah and his family should be the recipients of His unmerited favor. The Lord declared in similar manner unto Moses, "I.. will be gracious, to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" (Ex. 33:19). Again in Romans 11:5-6, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." Suffice to say that grace then is according to the Sovereign will and work of the Lord. In the presence of Him all glorying of self, and honor to the doctrines of men shall and will forever cease. Grace, or truly unmerited favor, which results in the salvation of souls must always and always will proceed from God according to His will, pleasure and design. Psalm 84:11 proclaims, "The Lord will give grace."

Continuing again through the book of Genesis in chapter nineteen we come upon another scene of impending doom wherein like manner Lot was elected to be a recipient of unmerited favor. Alas, Lot, like so many of us today, beholding the plain, campaigning round it, and moving into the world to linger as certain doom lies all about. Yet even in the failing child of God, and thanks be to God, grace will abound. Grace will overcome. It is grace that "laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters" (Gen. 19:16) and cries, "escape for thy life; look not behind thee" (Gen. 19:17). It is the hand of Grace which reaches into the filth of Sodom (the world) and delivers for "by grace are ye saved." Of what have we, the undeserving, to boast? Lot declared, "Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy..." (Gen. 19:19). How can grace be otherwise than all of the Lord? Why should it be otherwise? Truly by grace His mercy is magnified and He is glorified! He is praised when those, the recipients of His grace understand a Sovereign Grace; a favor unmerited. Yea, beloved, let us continue on then and see still further what glorious things are written in the Word concerning grace.

To be a recipient of grace declares much to us; and many things we so often give little meditation to. Grace does not merely define unmerited favor or vice versa, nor does it merely declare the sovereignty of God, but it describes to us some of the attributes of God; i.e. His great love wherewith He hath loved us, His mercy upon the condemned and undeserving, yea and much more than these; but grace portrays a personal relationship with the Lord; a caring knowledge that God has for His own. The Lord declared to Moses, "For thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name" (Ex. 33:17). Since the God of Arminianism is dependent upon the decisions of men, he therefore remains an uncertain god. That is, a god that does not know for sure if he will be accepted or rejected, nor

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To look around is to be distressed. To look within is to be depressed. To look to Christ is to be blessed.

## STUDIES IN EZEKIEL

Willard Willis, Monroe, Ohio

"The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying" (Ezek 25:1).

There may be those who would say, "I wish the Word of the Lord would come unto me and advise me regarding God's will for me." May all who may have such thoughts, know that God's Word has come to us. It is here today in what we know as the Bible. God, in days of old, spoke through Ezekiel and others. he, according to the following passages, speaks to us today by way of His Son.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:1-3).

"Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them; And say unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord God; thus saith the Lord God. Because thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity; Behold, therefore I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee; they shall eat thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk. And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couching place for flocks: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. For thus saith the Lord God; because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel; Behold, therefore I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord" (Ezek 25:2-7).

This chapter, through chapter thirty-two, relates to the inspired prophecies which Ezekiel made against Israel's neighbors who delighted in the destruction of God's temple and sanctuary. The fall of Jerusalem, as far as Israel's neighbors were concerned, was a three ring circus.

There is a dynamic message for us in the above. Let us enlarge upon this message by reading 1 Peter 4:17-18:

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

You may remember from Ezekiel 21:20 that Rabbah and Jerusalem were the two choices for invasion which were set

before Nebuchadnezzar. Rabbah (present day Ammon) was the capital of the Ammonites and Jerusalem the capital of Israel.

Let us, however, before pro-



Willard Willis

ceeding, refresh our memories regarding the origin of the amonites. Their origin is recorded in the following passages:

"And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said to the younger, Behold I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also, and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him, and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day" (Gen. 19:33-38).

The Ammonites, according to the above, were descendents of Lot and Lot was a nephew of Abraham. Abraham, of course, was the father of the Jewish race. The Ammonites, therefore, in a sense of speaking, were relatives of the Jews. Ezekiel's prophecy, then, now turns from the Jews to their relatives.

The Ammonites were on God's list because they said "aha" when His sanctuary was profaned and because they clapped their hands and stamped their feet and shook their heads in derision when Jerusalem fell.

We are to see then that the sin of the Ammonites was that they rejoiced over the fall of the temple and the Jewish race.

God's rule then and now is that we are not to rejoice because of the downfall of our enemy. God reserves all rights regarding any private vengeance which is to be taken against any. This rule is laid out before us in the following passages:

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good"

(Rom. 12:18-21).

Let us be cautious regarding any private revenge (court action if necessary, is satisfactory) we may seek to take against our enemies, lest God deal with us with a heavy hand. We, in other words, when taking private revenge, may do more damage to ourselves than to our enemies.

The sentence God placed upon the Ammonites was that "Rabbah", their capital, was to become a "stable for camels."

I read in the Baptist Examiner under the date of July 24, 1954, of a man who went to Rabbah so as to determine if God really did turn the town into a stable for camels. The man's reply was that there was not a single inhabitant left in the city. He said the city still stands, but that it stands in ruins. He reported that many of the great buildings are still there, but that they are used as stables for camels. He proceeded to report that the smell of dead camels and the dung of camels was everywhere. He even reported of seeing the carcass of a camel floating on the water. He reported further that one could not sleep at night because of the neighing of the mares, the bleating of the sheep and goats and the barking of the dogs.

God said further regarding the Ammonites that he would cause them to "perish out of the countries" (Ezek. 25:7). Here, again, our God kept His word. The Ammonite nation, in fact, is non existent today. You will not find them on any world map.

"Thus said the Lord God; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen; Therefore, behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-Meon, and Kiriathaim, Unto the man of the east with the Ammonites, and will give them in possession, that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations. And I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 25:8-11).

God's charge against the Moabites related to that which they had said, that is, "the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen." The Moabites, by this statement, declared that the house of Judah was not among God's chosen people. This was not only a challenge to the Jews, but it was also a challenge to God in that they questioned God's Word. God, in fact, on numerous occasions, has stated that the Jews are His chosen people. It is therefore a great sin to say that the Jews are not God's chosen people. Note God's Word on the matter as stated in the following passages:

"And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemest to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God" (11

Sam. 7:23, 24).

Note also the following passages:

"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord;... If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord" (Jer. 31:35-37).

It is very obvious from the above passages that the Moabites were in gross error when they said, "Judah is like unto all the heathen."

It is also true that our Lord's churches are not like all others who call themselves churches. They shall perish, but the gates of hell will never prevail against our Lord's church. It is as stated in the following passage:

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

God's sentence regarding the Ammonites was that "the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations." The Moabites, because they said, in essence, that the Jewish day was finished, were finished themselves. Let us therefore be careful as to how we treat God's Word.

"Thus saith the Lord God; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them; Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 25:12-14).

The Edomites had their beginning with Esau-Esau being the twin brother of Jacob. We can see then that the Edomites were closely related to the Jews.

The sin of the Edomites was that they had "dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance." Obadiah, in chapter one and verses thirteen through fourteen, informs us of the manner in which the Edomites took vengeance.

"Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress."

We have a further reference to the sin of the Edomites in the

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Sovereign Grace Baptist  
Mission,  
P.O. Box 36, Tari,  
via Mendi,  
Papua, New Guinea.

following passage:

"Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Psa. 137:7).

God, by way of the Chaldean army, was the one who was whipping Israel. Why, then, was it wrong for the Edomites to join in with God in His chastisement upon Israel? It was wrong in the same sense that it would be wrong for a neighbor to help a father whip his son. The same principle carries over to this day regarding God and His chastisement of His children. We must never join in and help God chastise His children. We are to pray for the sick and the afflicted and never act against them or wish calamity upon them. It is as stated in the following passages:

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:17-21).

The text before us states that Israel would be God's means in bringing desolation upon the Edomites "from Teman, and they of Dedan." Matthew Henry informs us that Teman lay in the south part of the Edomites and Dedan lay in the north part of the country. A

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## EZEKIEL

(Continued from Page 7)

later invasion, then, by Israel was to sweep through the entire country. It is not known for certain what war these passages allude to. We, however, do know that the Edomites, Ammonites and the Moabites are what we know today as the Arabs.

"Thus saith the Lord God; Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy it for the old hatred; Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast. And I will execute great vengeance upon them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them" (Ezek. 25:15-17).

The Bible refers to the Philistines as being enemies of Israel more than it does any other nation.

The historical records in the world are strewn with the wreckage of nation upon nation. Every nation, in fact, which has persecuted Israel has brought God's heavy hand upon themselves. It was most certainly true of the Philistines and numerous others. The reason for the downfall of these many nations is given in the following passages:

"Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

It is said that some people live to eat; that is, their lives are centered around eating. The lives of many others are centered around this or that pleasure. The Philistines lived for the destruction of Israel. God, however, saw to it that they reaped that which they had sown.

The destruction of the Philistines was so great that God gave them a nickname. The nickname being "the Cherethim" which literally means, "cut off" or "destroyed."

The actual destruction of the Philistines is recorded in Jeremiah 47:1-7.

Ezekiel, chapter twenty five, was recorded in BC 590 while Jeremiah forty seven (above) was recorded in BC 600, or ten years later. It was at this time that the Chaldean army wasted the Philistines.

## BOOK REVIEW

We have a book for sale through our book store. It is Study of the Holy Spirit by William Edward Biederwolf. Frankly, I do not know a satisfactory book on the subject of the Holy Spirit. This certain-

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ly is not one. This is a small paperback book of 125 pages. However, for its size, it does contain much material on the subject. It is about as thorough as a book of its size could be on this subject. I do wish that some sound Baptist would write a thorough book on this important subject. With some reservations, I recommend this book. It sells for \$4.95. Order from our bookstore and remember that the profit goes into the ministry.

We have a book available through our bookstore. It is 101 More Hymn Stories by Kenneth W. Osbeck. I think that it is always interesting to know the story behind the writing of a hymn. It often adds to the interest in singing the song. The story is often a means of emphasizing the spiritual truth of the song and making it more effective. This book has these stories concerning many of the hymns we frequently sing. The book is a paper back and sells for \$8.95. Order from our book store and remember that the profit goes into the ministry.

We have a commentary on Acts available through our book store. It is Acts of the Apostles by Thomas Walker, it is in the Kregel Expository Commentary Series which speaks well for it. The author was a missionary. He was a careful student of the Greek and the book manifests able scholarship. This is a word-by-word commentary on Acts. How often have we been disappointed in commentaries that are thought-by thought, or other than on each word. There are very able, informative, and suggestive outlines at the close of each chapter. The book is hard back and contains over 600 pages. It sells for \$16.95. Order from our book store and remember that the profit goes into the ministry.

## GRACE

(Continued from Page 6)

which individual will do such until it is done; then this freewill god will write your name in the book of life once he has learned it. Not so with the God of the Bible. Not so, for He knows the end from the beginning, knows His own, and knew them from the foundation of the world. Consider that it is not He that needs to know us, but we who need to know Him! Oftentimes during a day many people will cross our path and remain unnamed to us. It is familiarity with others that help us to learn their names; names which are often forgotten shortly after the first introduction. Observe then, how it is a Christlike deed to show favor to an unknown and never receive an introduction, yet the Lord declares to us a very personal, loving, omniscient concern in showing and giving grace to those He knows personally by name. It astounds me to know such a personal God that will call me by name at first call, not in the fact of His omniscience, but in the fact of the smallest details concerning His children to let us know of His great concern. "And I know thee by name" reflects back to grace and He is again magnified. Yet which is more blessed to know; that He knows us by name, or that He ever watches those who have found grace in His sight?

Sovereign Grace demonstrates the great need of

man. The implication is that grace is of grave necessity. That without grace there can be no acquittal from peril and doom. There is the great sin question which must be settled. How can I pay for all the disobedience, the wrong, the evil, the sin? The answer is you nor I, can pay or right the wrong of sin, for the will of man can but soothe the conscience while it ravages the soul. We have not the curse of ourselves. To see grace displayed to us and upon us we must first see ourselves.

We must see ourselves as God sees us. We must understand that purity cannot abide the impure. A thrice Holy God cannot abide sin for such is contrary to Him in all and every way. Such things as these must be realized, as I believe was realized by Noah, Lot, and every child of God that has ever been and will be. There was no way out; condemnation was proclaimed by the Word of God, therefore destruction must follow; and in such case is man with God to this very hour. Proverbs 3:34 tells us "He giveth grace unto the lowly" or the afflicted, Whichever word may be used in interpreting the Hebrew, here, i.e., "lowly" or "afflicted", the sense remains the same, for each describe the condition of man in his position of sin before God. Afflicted by sin, torn by sin, and its results upon all mankind. But praise be unto God, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 5:20). Grace, grace, doth my Father have! Exceeding abundant grace to fill the thirsty soul; to quench the hungering soul; to rest the weary that travel in search for true peace and rest. Yea, grace points the way and says, "He giveth," yea, He giveth to His own.

A form of grace works continually and daily throughout the earth, that is, mercy is displayed in all creation and given to all the sons of men who willingly and greedily receive it yet remaining unthankful and unholy. This speaks of course of temporal and transitory blessings for just and unjust alike; but grace came in its richest and fullest form among men and was despised and rejected of man. John 1:14, 16, 17 (portions thereof) tells us of grace personified: "and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth... And of his fullness have all received, and grace for grace... grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Here beloved, is where and only where grace has origin; by Jesus Christ, through the will of the Father and comfort of the Spirit. Wouldst thou desire the favor of God upon your sin sick self? The word declares, "He giveth" for He is "full of grace" and "we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved" (Acts 15:11). There is no question left unanswered to the troubled soul for the grace of God is sufficient to provide and meet every need to those who would but believe and obey for Acts 18:27 declares that we believe through grace. Yea, belief of the glad tidings, the gospel of salvation is to believe in the glorious news of the grace of God. Not to believe the gospel is not to believe in the grace of God. It is to reject all that He declares. It is to reject the cure for all ones spiritual ills. Yet He abideth faithful and declares "the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance

among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24). "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2)... "For if though the offence of one (Adam) many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." (Rom. 5:15). "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our lord." (Romans 5:21). The connection is more than obvious; Grace is authored by, provided by, and is only by the Lord Jesus Christ. Truly Christ is the only answer!

Then beloved, for the child of God comes another message to the elect concerning grace. There is an exhortation written in II Corinthians 8:7 which reads, "see that ye abound in this grace also." I have learned through much self-inflicted hardship that faith indeed "cometh by hearing" but lacked in the doing. The child of God, sad to say, is more often read than the Word of God. The same grace that cometh by Jesus Christ could not have come without display; always observed to the maximum, even Golgotha's hill. Here did grace richly and fully abound, and Christ as the Master asks no more of His own than He had done Himself. How can mere man portray the meaning of such grace as this? Yet Christ as man declared it, for grace can only be declared in the doing. "Minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6). Abound in grace, minister grace, speak with grace, for in so doing beloved, we do show forth the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives.

Let us conclude beloved of God with a final note that reminds us of the fact of Sovereign Grace. In Exodus 33:19 the Lord makes us to know His vast superiority over man in that all things are His to do with as He wills. "I... will be gracious to whom I will be gracious," is His proclamation. Only those who have not seen the fact of the sovereignty of God will seek to speak against this fact of God and the Word of God. Does not such a statement humble us to thanksgiving? To those who truly have the mind of Christ will such a saying cause rejoicing? Can He not do what He will with that which is His, or is it "hard for thee to kick against the pricks?" How glad will the day be when all the saints are gathered over yonder and each will gaze in wonder and admiration, proclaiming, "Sovereign Grace."

## LOST

(Continued from Page 1)

which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. (Luke 15:1-7).

I am going to speak to you on "The Condition of the Lost," and the awfulness of being lost. Reading the passage just

quoted, we should notice two things in particular that stand out. I don't mean to imply there are not many things clearly taught in these verses, but there are two things that stand out predominately, and they are the words "lost" and "sheep."

I do not know the haunts and habits of sheep, not ever having been a shepherd, but I have been told by those familiar with their habits that there is nothing so lost as a sheep when it strays away. Thus, of all the animals in the world, Christ couldn't have used a more apt figure to represent the utter helplessness of lost mankind, nor could He have more accurately described the lost sinner, than He does in using the illustration of lost sheep; for there is nothing so lost as a sheep when it becomes lost.

Then the other thing in this passage which we notice particularly is, of course, the sheep itself. I am not going to speak this evening on the sheep, but I mentioned it only to point out the subject itself, and that is the actuality and the reality of being lost.

I. The Cause Of Being Lost.

Here is something that is undeniably a fact which cannot be shrugged off and dismissed from one's mind, and that is the fact of being lost if one is without Christ. I might just add this: in spite of what you may have entertained in your hearts, or what you have been told in times past, people without Christ are lost, not simply "going to be lost after awhile," but they are lost now in the eventful present.

The saddest thing in the world is to be lost, without God, without life, without hope and without Christ. That is the most pathetic, most horrible thing that one can think about. You can talk about the Atomic bomb with all its devastation and all the destruction that might come as a result of its being dropped, but it comes nowhere near the awful fact that all around us there are those who are without Christ — lost.

I recognize there are those who don't like to think about this particular issue. Parents don't like to think of their children as being lost, and sometimes children don't like to face the fact that their parents are lost. We are prone to think in terms of the other fellow's children perhaps being lost, but not our own. But may I say, with all the fervor and strength of my heart and soul, that he or she who is without Christ is lost, lost much worse than a sheep when it becomes lost.

Beloved, this fact of being lost is something that we cannot escape. In spite of the fact that many, no doubt, would like to dismiss it from their minds and never again think of being lost. I tell you, beloved, every moment that we live we are faced with the undeniable fact that we rub elbows every day with men, women, boys and girls who are actually lost. But how many Christians care enough to try to win them to a saving knowledge of Christ? Very few, I fear. May I shame you who are Christians into being submissive to the will of God?

If one child, in leaving the church auditorium some evening, should get lost on the way home — that is, lost from the presence of its parents — the police force, friends and the whole community would be called out to search and search until the lost child had been found. The parents would be wailing and lamenting, tasting their own

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## LOST

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hot, salty, briny tears because their child was lost. Yet there is a child, perhaps, in your own home who is lost, lost to God, lost to Christ, lost to life and lost to the new birth; but you lie down at night and sleep soundly without a thought of the doomed, helpless, lost condition of that lost child. How can you rest? How can you be so unconcerned? Every day of your life you see the other man's children who are lost, without God and without hope in the world, yet not one tear of sympathy is shed in their behalf.

We are living in an age of indifference and unconcern. I don't believe that in all my twenty years of ministry I have ever seen the lack of concern as in the last few years — that is, unconcern and indifference over the lost. Of you who profess to be the children of God, I venture to say, not ninety-nine percent of you have spoken, given or offered one word of Scriptural advice in the past twelve months to a lost man; and yet you get up and sing: "Oh, how I love Jesus." Then you wonder why the lost look at us with a sneer; you wonder why they look at us with skepticism. Perhaps they reason in their hearts: "If you believe what you say you believe, that 'men outside of Jesus are actually lost,' then why have you not done something about me? Why haven't you witnessed to me of the saving grace of Christ? Now why?"

You know how I feel about segregation and integration, don't you? I say this in order that none of you will go away and say, "Brother Cox has turned over and taken the other side." I haven't! Brother Cox will die as he is tonight. But I say this in order to point this out: in my community there lived a Negro — only one — who had a little girl about two years old. This little girl got lost and the weather was very cold; the ground was frozen. Every white man in that community went out, and they searched all night for this lost child. Next morning about daylight they found her in a deep rut in a country road. She was hunched down, frozen stiff. They picked her up, took her home, revived her and she lived. One little Negro girl alarmed and struck a note of sympathy in that whole community. Yet men are lost in sin all around you and not one word do you speak to them about Christ. How can they believe that we are Christians? How can they believe that we are missionary-minded?

"But," you say, "Brother Cox, this church sends and spends more money for missionaries than any other church its size."

Granted; but it's so much easier to send money to foreign missionaries than to be a missionary at home. That's a good alibi we have, to escape from our own responsibilities. Let us face facts as they present themselves. We are indifferent and unconcerned; we care nothing for the lost. Let us just care; you are not concerned; you just don't care. Let's just face it. Someone will say, "You shouldn't say that." But I am saying it because you just don't care, that's all. Man does that which he is concerned about. The man, therefore, who is not concerned for the lost will not do anything for the lost because he

is unconcerned. He doesn't care if they are lost; he doesn't care if every lost man dies and goes to a devil's hell — you deny that.

I say this because we are living in an age in which folk, Baptist folk, are unconcerned. (Incidentally, I believe I know as much about Baptists as anyone else in the world. I know Baptist people up one side and down the other. I understand Baptist folk: I'm a Baptist.) But Baptist people have gotten to the place where they hesitate about becoming concerned and thoroughly aroused to the point of tears over the lost that they have all but dried up spiritually.

Three times in the New Testament we see Jesus weeping; twice we see Him weeping over the lost.

You might say, "I don't believe that." It doesn't matter whether or not you believe it — it's still true. In John 11:35 we see Jesus weeping at the grave of a friend; in Hebrews 5:7 is testimony as to His weeping over a world that had rejected and rebelled against Him; and in Luke 19:41, He wept over the city in which He was soon to die. Don't tell me the Lord didn't show and express His feelings over the lost: He did.

You might say, "Then, it is a fact that men are lost — why?" Listen to this: you don't have to do anything to become a sinner; you don't have to do one thing; merely be born into the world and you are a sinner. That's all there is to it, just be born.

Now I am not preaching on total depravity, but let me say this: the most obnoxious doctrine in the world to many folk is the doctrine of total and inherent depravity.

Men don't like to believe there is sin in everyone that is born into the world. Men don't like to believe that. It makes no difference whether you believe it or not, it is true; it is a Biblical and experiential fact. Romans 3:23: "...All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Men are born and condemned as such (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12)... "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (Rom. 3:9). Sin, or depravity, is the cause of being lost-sin.

### II. The Effect of Being Lost.

Then if sin is the cause of being lost, what is the effect of being lost? For every cause there must be an effect; I believe in cause and effect. So then, what is the effect of being lost? This: men are spiritually dead and cut off from God; completely alienated from God, enemies of God. Romans 8:7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Paul said, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye are without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:11, 12).

He was talking to the Ephesians, although they were saved at the time he wrote the Epistle to them, and he is telling them their condition as Gentiles prior to their conversion. He said they were aliens and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

"But," you might say, "it isn't so awful being lost." Well, let us see: the Word of God says that it is. God, talking about the wicked, the lost, said in Jeremiah 23:12, "Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the Lord."

It is an awful thing being lost. Can you feature being lost in the darkness, with snow on the ground and it frozen; you try to stand up, and one foot goes one way and the other foot goes the other way. Then suppose you are on the brink of a precipice; the ground is frozen, you are in the darkness and you can't stand up; you are slipping closer and closer to the edge of this precipice, and any moment you may go over the edge.

You say, "Why, that is an awful thought!" Well, that is the condition of the lost: "Their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein." I tell you, beloved, this idea of being lost is a fact, and the awfulness of it cannot be denied.

### III. The Terrible Awakening to Being Lost.

You have heard me tell about the aged man who heard me preach on Hell; it was during one of the greatest meetings it was ever my privilege to be in; a meeting in which aged men tottering on their staffs were saved. One night this old man, tottering on his staff, came down the aisle, led by his wife.

I was preaching on Hell, and suddenly he had come face to face with the knowledge that he was lost (before, he didn't think he was). As he came toward me, holding up one hand toward Heaven, saying, "Brother Cox, I'm lost: I need Christ," he wasn't far from the kingdom right then.

After he had said this to me, I told him, "There isn't but one thing that will keep you out of Hell and that is Christ." He wasn't far from the kingdom right then: for when he became conscious, realizing his need of Christ, he was immediately saved.

In a few years I held his funeral, and I told the people this man's experience: how this aged man who suddenly realized his spiritual condition said, "I'm lost, and I need to be saved. I don't want to go to Hell."

Just like the old prodigal son in Luke 15:17, he faced the fact that he was lost. When this prodigal son was faced with the fact of his condition, he was there feeding the swine, the most degrading thing that he could engage in. He was so hungry that he would have gladly eaten the husk (not the kernels, but the husk) that fell from the swine's mouths — the husk and not the corn — and no man gave him one thing to eat. He was helpless. No man fed him; no one was there to bless him, to comfort him; no one to lead him, and suddenly he came face to face with his lost condition and said, as he reasoned, "The servants in my father's house are fed, while here am I starving to death. While I am perishing, in my father's house there is bread to spare." He awoke to the knowledge that he was lost and far away from his father's house. What did he do? "I will arise and go to my father's house — I will arise."

I tell you, the father's love was reaching out, touching and

fingering his heart, breaking up the fallow ground thereof. Like a beam of light, it came across the miles; the distance was bridged and spanned with the father's love as it revealed to him his need. He faced the fact that his need could only be met back at the father's house, and he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (Luke 15:18-19).

He faced the fact that he was lost — terrible awakening. Here was a man that had everything, and found himself at last in the hog pen. Let me tell you, beloved, every lost person in the world is in the hog pen, ready for the slaughter; he is ready to be taken from the swine's pen to the slaughter-house to be slain under the inexorable justice of God, who will not spare. It is a terrible thing to be lost!

When the Philippian jailer, in Acts 16:30, came to the terrible knowledge he was lost, brother, he came face to face with his need; he saw himself as he was, a helpless creature in the sight of God, destitute of life, destitute of God, of Christ and of the Spirit of God, helpless, without hope in the world as he cried out to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, What must I do to be saved?"

Here was a direct admission that he was lost: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? I am lost; I am lost; I'm lost." I tell you, beloved, this idea of being lost is a fact.

When I was a lost boy many years ago, I could hardly sleep at night as I was made to see I was lost; I was afraid to lie down and go to sleep for fear I would wake up in Hell — lost. But there came a time when the Shepherd found the sheep; and He brought it home and I came rejoicing. Not only did I rejoice, others rejoiced with me.

### IV. Jesus Seeks Out the Lost.

Notice in the parable before us: "Who of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing." V. 4, 5.

Watch it now: He goes after it, looking, searching until He finds it. There is no giving up; He searches until He finds it. The Lord identified Himself over and over as the Shepherd. He is the one being used in the illustration before us. He is the one who seeks relentlessly on and on, seeking after the lost until they are found.

I used to read that over and over. I don't know how many times I have read that, and almost every time I read it I get a new thought or idea. Just recently as I was reading this I thought about the shepherd who suddenly looked around and a sheep was gone, and he started searching for the little lost sheep. And there was the poor little lost sheep wandering over the hills and valleys; its feet were bleeding and everywhere it looked, nothing but stark terror and it was frightened almost to death. But here is the shepherd, searching relentlessly, searching, looking for the lost sheep. I could almost picture the shepherd as he finally looked down into the valley and there was that poor, lost, straying sheep. Before it was certain death; but the shepherd, hurrying as fast as he could, runs

and picks up that one little scrawny sheep, with its wool all twisted, dirty, matted, and part of it gone; but the shepherd picks it up, hugs it to his bosom, and hurrying home, calls his friends, saying, "...rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was lost."

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

Ezekiel 34:11, 12, 16, "For thus saith the Lord God; Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day... I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick..."

Lord, what will you do? "I will search out my sheep." What will you do when you find them? "I will bind that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick."

You know, the Lord is a relentless searcher. If He hadn't been He would not have found me, and He wouldn't have found a lot of you, either. But He said, "I search for my sheep and seek them out." He seeks on and on until He finds them, and when the sheep has been found there is always rejoicing.

Then I want you to notice the last thing: He will search for how long? Until He finds it. Then what is the result when He finds it? "Rejoicing." When the shepherd brought the little sheep home there was rejoicing. The Lord says, as He draws a vivid picture of what takes place in Heaven when a soul is saved, "...Likewise, I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repenteth (V. 10) ...more than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance." (V. 7).

Rejoicing in Heaven itself; in the City of God there is rejoicing by the angels themselves when a sinner is saved. Why shouldn't there be rejoicing on earth? And if the parable holds true — and it does — there was rejoicing when the shepherd brought the sheep home and invited his friends to come: "...Rejoice with me: I have found my sheep which was lost." (V. 6).

May the Relentless Searcher search you out and bring the wandering ones home is my prayer. Amen.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Sovereign Grace Bible Conference, beginning August 6th through August 8th, 1985 at Victory Baptist Church, 9601 Blue Ridge, Kansas City, Missouri 64134. Pastor, Harold Leasure, (Phone) 816-765-0191.



# CHURCH

(Continued from Page 1)

What is it that makes us so important to the communities we serve? What is it that makes this kind of church so important to the members thereof?

First; we are important because very often we are the only true churches in a fair sized area. We need to think about this. We need to realize the responsibility that goes along with this thought. I know of no other church for many miles that I could recommend or recognize in the Gladwin area.

Though the community here does not recognize it, we, as a true church of Jesus Christ, are different and very important. I do not say these things to brag on the individual members of The Grace Baptist Church here in Gladwin. We are here because God in His sovereign grace placed us here and taught us some truth. I write this not just that others may know the importance of a true church in the area, but that those who are members might recognize this fact. Though true churches may be small in number and not thought much of in the community, it is important for people to know we believe we are THE place for serving God properly. May God cause us to see the awesome responsibility behind being a true church in a large area. Being a true church in an area where there are no other true churches will make you an only church. Being an only church will help us to understand why true churches are so important.

First, we are the "only" church with authority from God to do His work. There are other "societies" who claim this authority, but they are usurpers. Your true church is important because she has the authority to carry out the commission left her by Christ. Secondly, true churches are the "only" ones with a right to administer the ordinances. Many in so-called churches go through the motions of baptism and the Lord's Supper, but it is only the motion. They have no authority to baptize or to set the Lord's table. If the ordinances are important, then your true church is important.

Thirdly, a true church is the only place to pay tithes and offerings unto God. Others can give all the money they wish, but you can only tithe to a true church. Fourthly, you are a member of a church that teaches the truth. Doctrinal truth is not considered very important in most "societies." It is important to God and to His true churches. If you are a member of a church that preaches and stands for something, then you should thank God. We offer the truth, that makes us very important. Lastly, a true church is the "only" place God receives the glory He is due. I am not saying He does not receive glory anywhere else; but the glory He receives through His church is special and not equaled by the efforts of those outside a true church.

I do not say these things to boast on the members of true churches, but rather to boast about the institution Christ started. It is not my intention to make anyone angry or insult your "church," but rather to present the truth of God's Word. If you become insulted

or angry at that which is written, then search the Scriptures and prove me wrong.

I write this also to encourage members of small, true, sound churches to take heart. Do not be discouraged. Pay no attention to those who laugh and make fun of you. We will have the last laugh. Realize that you are a very important part of your community. Many will stand in judgment and suffer loss of reward for their neglect or ill treatment of you. Realize that regardless of what they think, your church is very important. You may not be able (and shouldn't anyway) to offer a lot of the things bigger churches offer, but if you have the truth, then you have the upper hand. It is not our business to offer education, ball teams, bingo and such activities to the world. Our job is to preach to them the gospel and the truths of God's Word. The important church is the one that offers the most truth.

The second point I wish to make is that the church is important to God. Read Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 5:23-27. It is an amazing thought, that we are as loved by God as was the Church at Jerusalem. How this should cause us to live up to the work God has given us to do in and through His Church! To realize that Jesus walks in our midst! This is a privilege that false churches do not have. Very often you will be the only church in a larger area in which Jesus dwells. Though we may be very small in the eyes of the world, we are very large and important to Jesus. The church is so important to Christ that He did not leave the starting of it up to man, but rather came to earth and started it Himself. The Church Jesus started was a Baptist Church. That is the church that is important to Him. Not the "societies" which are started by men.

What a privilege to be a member of a church that Jesus started, loves, and promised to perpetuate! How it ought to stir our hearts that as a Body of Christ we are very important to God. We are the institution He chose to leave here to do His work. May God impress this thought on our hearts. Though we may not seem important to the world, we are important to God.

Now, we come to the main theme of this article; "The importance of YOU in your Church. Far too often we are too concerned with the importance of other members and not as concerned with ourselves as we should be.

First, I wish to state most emphatically, that there are no unimportant, or less important members in the Lord's Churches. That is nothing more than an excuse used to explain one's poor actions towards the church. Attendance would be a good example of this. You may argue about this, but you would be wrong; your being at church is just as important as the Pastor being there. We will deal more with this later on. Don't use that "I'm not important" excuse. Stop feeling sorry for yourself and do your part. Read I Corinthians Chapter 12. If you can read that chapter and minimize your importance, then you need a new heart to help you understand God's Word. No member has the right to increase or decrease his own, or any one's importance to the church. Pastors get so tired of the same old excuses all the time. People need to start realizing their im-

portance to the church and fulfilling their responsibility or at least come up with some fresh excuses for the Pastor's amusement.

Let me now give some reasons for your importance. First, the church can not function properly without you there. To have your name on the church roll is not enough. Notice the illustration in chapter 12 to the body. None would deny that the function of the human body is hampered by a missing member thereof. The same is true about the church. We can function. We can manage and get by; but we cannot function as a body of Christ should without every member present and doing his part.

I like to refer to non-attenders and non-tithers as welfare Christians. They claim they love and want a true church, but they want it at the expense of others. I urge you to realize that you are just as important in being at church when the doors are open as any other member. If someone does not show up, then you do not need a pastor. Those who are unfaithful would be the first to complain if no one showed up at a service. They would think it a terrible thing if the church cut out some services. Yet they are the very ones that seldom show up for that service. They are welfare church members. They are the first to condemn others for being slothful in human business, yet they make a mockery of the Lord's business. Thank God, He has blessed us with good attendance at Grace Baptist Church. We do have room for improvement. Until you have perfect attendance, there is room for improvement. We have just a few members who need to learn that we meet three times a week. We meet twice on Sunday and on Wednesday night. I tell my members and I am now telling all who read this, that from a Biblical standpoint, I am no more obligated to be at church than are the members. This is from God's point of view. Now argue that if you can. I may have an obligation to the church, because they pay my salary, but my obligation to God is no greater than any other member of the church. Which is most important, our obligation to our jobs or our obligations to God? I do not understand how some church members can defend their not being faithful to the church. I have had some admit they were wrong but then go right ahead with their deliberate rebellion. Beloved, you will not find one excuse given that will clear you from this obligation. If you are not going to be a worker in the church then why join? Your work does not clear you. Show me scripture for such clearance. Quit your job and find one that allows time for God. That is what the disciples did. I have men that drive forty miles to work everyday and yet members that miss because they might have to drive that distance twice on Sunday. Tell that to God.

You people who think your Pastor is hard and expects too much, just wait until you tell your flimsy little excuses to God! If it were not so pathetic, I'm sure heaven would snicker at the excuses members give for poor attendance. I urge you to realize that you are important to your church. If you are not there you are creating a hardship on the rest of the body. If a person loses a leg, the other leg must

then support all the weight of the body. If you are not at church then you put an extra burden on the other members. Read chapter 12 and then try to deny this. It is an insult to your Pastor not to be at church. It is an insult to every member present, because by your actions you are saying they need church and you don't. The pastor and every other member needs three services a week, but not you. Get your priorities straight and realize your attendance to church is important. I had no intention of spending this much time on this one point. This is a pet peeve of mine and I believe a pet peeve of God's. If this aspect of one realizing his importance to the church will improve then much else will take care of itself. Your attendance is important to your church. (BE THERE).

In the second place YOU are important at your church that there be no schisms. Don't be the cause of trouble in God's Church. Not being faithful is an evidence of disagreement, either in practice or in principle. You are important to try and keep unity in the church. You may be called on to be a peacemaker in the church. There may be a vote come up that you miss that would later create a division. You need to be there to make sure your Pastor and any other teacher teaches the truth. It has been my experience that most schisms in churches come from those who are not faithful and do not realize their importance to the church.

In the third place you are important to your church because God set you there. We all need to ask ourselves the question, Why am I a member of this church? Is it because of circumstances, convenience, relatives or is it by conviction? If it is not by conviction, go elsewhere.

Is there a greater act of God's grace, other than salvation; than to make you a member of the Church Jesus started? If you were not important to this important institution, then God would not have set you in your church. Pause and think; I was set here by God, I must be important to this church.

In the fourth place you are important that we might as a church, rejoice and mourn together. (Again, keep referring to chapter 12). Suppose on Sunday night, there is a person saved and you are not there; how can we rejoice together over this? There are many other examples that could be used for rejoicing or mourning. The Bible teaches that this is to be a function of the whole body. It is important that you be there to help on these occasions. You are important that you might show proper care and concern for the other members of the body.

In the fifth place you are important for the financial support of the church. Again, I refer to non-tithers as welfare Christians. They want a building, furnished and heated. They want pianos, pews and books to sing from. They want a Pastor even if they are not going to be there to hear him as often as they should. They also want the rest of the body to pay for it. Your money is important to God's Church. May God cause you to realize that it is a rare and great privilege to be able to pay tithes to God. There are members of false churches who are willing and zealous to give their money to God's work, yet their zeal is not according to knowledge. God has blessed you

with this opportunity. Take advantage of it. There is no greater place for investment than the Lord's Church. You are important to the church for your financial support.

I must hurry along now. I have received some criticism (Ed. Note: from the editor) for the length of my articles so I will try to cut them down. I will just mention a couple of things more for your thought.

In the sixth place you are important to the church for the keeping of sanctity in the church. You are important for your own sanctity and that of the church. Don't talk to me about being sanctified if you are not faithful to the church. You are a discredit to the church if not faithful. Rather than contributing to the sanctity thereof you are a part of the lack of it.

In the seventh place, you are important to the church to help in the protecting of the truth. Someone must keep the Pastor in line, why not you? We must as a body be in agreement as to the truths taught. There are a lot of preachers who preach according to those present. Be there to keep him teaching the truth and only the truth. Truth is a very important element in the church's existence. You are important to make sure truth is taught.

In the eighth place, you are important so that we might sing, pray, and worship together in God's house. Though you create a hardship on the church by not realizing the importance of you in your church; the greater damage is to yourself. You are not just hurting the Lord's Church but you are hurting yourself and your family. Church worship is important. You are a part of a church that makes your participation important.

In the last place, you are important to the church for your own sake. Do you not realize that you are a member of a true church espoused to Christ? Do you not realize that by not being the member you should be you are being unfaithful to the espousement? What a privilege! What a responsibility! What joy this thought should bring to our soul! How this should make us realize that I am important to my church. My future depends on my actions relative to the church.

My last thought is this. Is your church important to you? Do you love the Church? Then realize your importance to it and live up to it. Do you love Jesus? Then treat His church like you should. May God impress on our hearts the importance of ourselves in the functioning of His Church. May He enable us to act accordingly. May God bless you all.

## A REVIEW OF CURTIS HUTSON'S

I am writing a series of articles reviewing a booklet by Curtis Hutson, editor of The Sword of the Lord. This booklet is an attempt, a very weak one, to destroy the Doctrines of Grace which means much to our souls. The booklet is far too small to even begin to deal adequately with this subject. I would suggest that Mr. Hutson shows his disdain for and hatred of this doctrine by even imagining that he can dispose of such in so few words. I would think

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The engine may be built in a day, but it takes years to perfect the engineer.

## REVIEW

(Continued from Page 10)

that, to any Spirit - taught and thoughtful reader, his booklet would become a defense of our doctrines rather than a destruction thereof. We are now dealing with the doctrine of Irresistible Grace.

Mr. Hutson says, "John Calvin meant that God simply forces people to be saved. God elected some to be saved, and He let Jesus Christ die for that elect group. And now by irresistible grace, He forces those He elected, and those Jesus Christ died for to be saved." Now this is a very inadequate and misleading definition of this doctrine. I would think that Mr. Hutson knows this. I know that he should know better or keep his mouth shut on the subject. The word "force" leaves an impression that is not involved in a true exposition of the doctrine of Irresistible Grace.

We who believe this doctrine do not teach that God forces a man to be saved against his will. We teach that God gives a man the willingness to be saved. We teach that, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power..." (Psa. 110:3). Why is it that men who oppose our doctrines either cannot or, more likely, will not present them as we believe them? Mr. Hutson knows that we do not believe or teach what he is implying in his booklet. We believe that the blessed Holy Spirit works in the elected and redeemed one at the appointed time and makes that one desirous of and willing to be saved. He does not "force" them to be saved. He just makes them willing to be saved.

Mr. Hutson has ignored the Biblical fact that man, of himself, is not willing to be saved. Ignoring this Bible doctrine, Mr. Hutson feels that man can and must come to Christ of himself. We who believe the truth teaches that man by nature cannot and will not come to Christ. We teach that man's coming to Christ is repentance and faith is a work of the Holy Spirit and not something that man can do of himself.

Mr. Hutson makes much of this statement, "Nowhere in the Bible does the word 'irresistible' appear before the word 'grace'." Well, what does that prove? The word "Trinity" does not occur in the Bible, but Mr. Hutson surely believes this doctrine. The word "Christian" does not appear in the Bible before the word "baptism," but Mr. Hutson believes in Christian baptism. The word "rapture" does not appear in the Bible, but Mr. Hutson does verily believe in the rapture of the saints. Come on, Mr. Hutson do not use arguments that you would not accept when used against doctrines you do believe. The question is not, Does this term occur in the Bible? The question is, Does the Bible teach this doctrine? The answer is that it surely does.

Mr. Hutson says that, "The word 'irresistible' does not even sound right in front of the word 'grace'." Well now, this is an enlightening statement. Except who is to judge if it sounds right or not? The fact is that it sounds pretty good. When we believe what the Bible teaches about the total depravity of man, believe that man does not desire to be saved, believe that the carnal mind is enmity against the law of God, is not subject to the law of God, neither can be. When we believe that that which is

born of flesh is flesh, is nothing but flesh, and will never be anything else. When we believe that man does, and always will resist any effort made towards his salvation unless that effort be effectual and irresistible — When we consider and believe the Biblical teaching on these matters, the word "irresistible" sounds pretty good. Praise God for the grace that will do for us what we cannot and will not do for ourselves! Really, I think that "irresistible" sounds pretty good in front of "grace", and I think that "irresistible" grace is the only kind that will prove effectual and saving.

Mr. Hutson says, "he represents grace as the irresistible act of God compelling a man to be saved who does not want to be saved." Now, this is absolutely not true. No man has ever been saved, no man will ever be saved who does not want to be saved. God will not save a man who does not want to be saved. Again we see that the root of Mr. Hutson's opposition to the Doctrines of Grace is his failure to believe the Biblical teaching of Total Depravity. Totally depraved man does not want to be saved. The question is not, Can any man be saved who wants to be saved? Of course he can. The question is, Where does the "want to" come from? The question is, How can a man who does not want to be saved be caused to want to be saved? The answer is, the Irresistible Grace of God. If Mr. Hutson - if all Arminians - would accept the Biblical teaching of Total Depravity, he would have no trouble with the remaining doctrines of the saving grace of our sovereign God.

Mr. Hutson says, "The Scriptures show that men do resist and reject God." Of course they teach this. Whoever denied it? This is the root of the problem. This is why grace must be irresistible if men are to be saved. All men, by nature, do and always will, resist and reject God. How can such men be saved? By Irresistible Grace, and by such alone. Maybe Mr. Hutson can tell us how a man who resists and rejects God can be changed so that he does this no longer, but rather gladly receives Him as Lord and Saviour? I can tell you how. It is by irresistible grace. But since Mr. Hutson does not believe in irresistible grace, I do not know how he proposes to get a resisting and rejecting sinner saved. Brother, the fact that men do resist and reject God is the reason that, if anyone is to be saved, he must be saved by irresistible grace. If it is resistible, men will resist it. I know I was saved by irresistible grace because I resisted as long as I could, and I would have still resisted had not God worked in me with irresistible grace.

Mr. Hutson says, "The Bible teaches that a man can be reprovved over and over again, and that he can harden his neck against God, and as a result will be destroyed without remedy."

Of course the Bible teaches this. Whoever said it didn't? But what has this to do with Mr. Hutson's denial of irresistible Grace? The truth is that this just shows us the necessity that grace be irresistible if men are to be saved. If men harden their necks against the reproof of God — and they certainly do — then it will take Irresistible Grace to save such men.

Mr. Hutson says, "God calls and men refuse... God stretches out His hand and no man

regards it... The Bible makes it plain that some men do reject Christ, that they refuse His call... That verse plainly teaches that men can and do resist God and refuse to come to Him." Again, whoever denied that these things are true? We who believe in the Doctrines of Grace certainly do believe that men refuse to come to God. Either ignorantly or deliberately, Mr. Hutson refuses to face up to what we teach. We believe in the general call of the gospel. We believe that God calls every man who hears the gospel to repent of sin and believe that gospel and thereby be saved. We believe that God is sincere in this call and that any man who will repent and believe the gospel will be saved. We preach this again and again and again. Moreover, we also believe that men do resist this call and refuse to come to God. Thus far we are in perfect agreement with Mr. Hutson.

The difference between us is that Mr. Hutson's doctrine has no way to get these men saved. Mr. Hutson's doctrine cannot save a man who is unwilling to be saved, who resists and rejects the gospel. Mr. Hutson's doctrine only goes so far as to offer salvation to men. Understand that our doctrine also offers salvation to all men who hear the gospel. Mr. Hutson's doctrine can offer salvation to a man, but can do nothing more. Our doctrines offer salvation to a man — that man rejects the offer — our doctrine can go further. Our doctrine — and it is the Bible doctrine — of Irresistible Grace can cause that man to stop resisting, to stop rejecting, and to gladly come to Jesus Christ in saving faith. Oh, the superiority of our doctrines to those of Mr. Hutson! Please tell us, Mr. Hutson, how are you going to deal with this problem? You say that God offers to save man. We agree. You say that man rejects that offer. We agree. Now what are you going to do? You say that this offer is as far as God can and will go. Tell us how these resisting, rejecting ones are going to be saved? You see, Mr. Hutson, we preach all that you do on this matter. We preach as wide and free a gospel offer as you do. But we go further than you do, and we preach that God works by Irresistible Grace in the elect and they are saved thereby. Your doctrines have no way of getting resisting, rejecting sinners saved — ours does. Brethren, I tell you that, if Mr. Hutson's doctrines be true, there is no possible way that any sinner will be saved. Mr. Hutson's doctrines close the door of hope so far as any man ever being saved. Mr. Hutson's doctrines can save willing sinners — but sinners are unwilling. His doctrines can save living sinners who are able to come to Christ — but sinners are dead and are unable and unwilling to come. Oh, it is the glory of the Biblical doctrine of sovereign and saving grace that God's Irresistible Grace causes the elect to respond to the gospel invitation in repentance and faith. Mr. Hutson's doctrines stop short of getting the job done, but our doctrines — which are those of the Bible — gets a multitude that no man can number saved and in everlasting glory, praise the Lord!

Mr. Hutson says, "They were stubborn and rebellious against God. The Bible plainly says, 'They resisted the Holy Ghost.' Of course they were stubborn

and rebellious. Of course they resisted the Holy Ghost. But what they resisted was the Holy Ghost speaking through the prophets and preachers. Men always do this. But no man can resist that internal and designedly efficacious work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the elected individual. Mr. Hutson, when you tell us that there is a work of the Holy Spirit that men do resist, you do not disprove our doctrine. We also believe that there is such a work — a work that men always do and always will resist. But this does not touch on our doctrine that there is also an irresistible work of the Holy Spirit. We believe what you believe on this — and we believe more. And the more that we believe is that which actually does save men. Mr. Hutson, you have no way of getting these men saved. They resist all that God can or will do for them according to your doctrine. Please, Mr. Hutson, please look at what you are saying, and please tell us how, according to your doctrine, men can be saved.

Mr. Hutson says, "God offers salvation to all men." Well, this is true — we teach this, but what does it prove in this controversy? To offer salvation does not save. When Mr. Hutson proves that God offers salvation to all men, he has not disproved our doctrine of Irresistible Grace. He has not even touched on the subject. Why does he keep making these statements that do not deal with the subject he is trying to disprove? We believe that God offers salvation to all men. We believe that men do resist God and reject this offer. We further believe that God's irresistible grace enables and causes some men to respond to this call and to savingly trust in Jesus Christ. Once more I will say that our doctrine has a way of getting resisting, rejecting, unwilling sinners saved whereas Mr. Hutson's does not.

Mr. Hutson says, "So people do resist the Holy Ghost. They do refuse to come to Christ. They do harden their necks. They do refuse when God calls." Yes, Mr. Hutson, all these things are true. We believe each one of them. We also believe that there is the Irresistible Grace of God whereby some such sinners are "made willing in the day of his power." What do you believe about how such sinners are saved?

Mr. Hutson says, "That means that those who are not saved could have been saved. Those who rejected Christ could have accepted Him." Please, Mr. Hutson, tell us how the fact that men do resist the Holy Ghost and do refuse when God calls — how does this prove that they could have done differently and been saved? Your saying it does not make it so. You have said that they refuse and reject and resist. We have agreed. You now say that the fact that they do this proves that they could have done differently. Now, this is absurd. How can what men do prove that they could have done differently? Mr. Hutson, your reasoning on this matter is absurd. Suppose I say that dogs walk on the ground and that this proves that they could fly. You would laugh at the absurdity of my reasoning. But you say that men do resist God and this proves they could have done differently. How utterly foolish!

Mr. Hutson says that, "God offers salvation to those who will have it." Well, of course He

does. We believe this, and we also believe that He gives His elect the "will" to have this salvation. Mr. Hutson then says, "But He does not force it upon anyone who doesn't want it." Well, of course God does not force a man to be saved who does not want to be saved. No man has ever been saved who did not want to be saved. But here is the problem: no man wants to be saved. How can God save a man who does not want to be saved? The glorious answer of God's sovereign and saving grace is that God gives His elect the "want to." He makes them willing. He makes them hungry and thirsty for this salvation. I was a sixteen year old boy. I did not want to be saved. I laughed at salvation. I resisted every effort men made to get me saved. Then one night I was saved. Now when I was saved, I tell you that I wanted salvation more than I wanted anything in the world. Why was this. Why did a boy who did not want anything to do with salvation suddenly want to be saved more than anything else. Well, Mr. Hutson's doctrine provides no answer to this question, but our doctrine: the Bible doctrine of Irresistible Grace does answer this question. The God who elected and redeemed me caused me to want to be saved.

Please note that our doctrine gives God the glory for our wanting to be saved, whereas Mr. Hutson's doctrine leaves this vital, essential link altogether up to man and thus leaves man room in which to glory. This leaving of room for man to glory is the major attraction of Arminianism. The fact that the Doctrines of Grace give all the glory to God — none of it, not even the "want to" to man — this is the reason that men hate these doctrines. But when our hearts are taught the truth by the Holy Spirit of God, and we see that salvation is altogether by the grace of God, and we see that we are so depraved that had God left any of it up to us we would have never been saved — when we see these things, we delight in those truths which give all the glory to our God. Yes, God offers salvation to all men who hear the gospel. Yes, men do reject this offer. But, praise God for Irresistible Grace which causes some to desire this salvation and to come to Jesus Christ in saving faith.

## WEST TELLS OF CHURCH REORGANIZATION

by Elder David West

On April 26, 1985, I had the privilege of taking part in the organizational meeting of the Grace Baptist Church near Ellabelle, Georgia. The Landmark Missionary Baptist Church of Charleston, S.C., the church which I pastor, authorized this mission work near a small rural south Georgia town just west of Savannah. To initiate this work, my son, Aaron, the missionary pastor, did not out on an itinerary for a year's duration, explaining to sister churches that he was called by the Lord to start a new work in south Georgia. The Lord began to bless his efforts as he rolled

(Continued on Page 12 Column 1)



Talking with people will oft leave you troubled and upset, but talking with Jesus always brings you comfort and peace.

## TUNE IN TO THE CALL TO CALVARY

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

## WEST

(Continued from Page 11)

up his sleeves, stepped out by faith, moved to the area and began to have regularly scheduled services. Aaron does not think it is beneath his calling to work a job as he pastors. So many of us out of necessity, have done the very same thing.

To be sure, the day of the church organization was an intensely blessed and emotional experience. Several of our church families have recently moved from Charleston to south Georgia. They were included as charter members of the Grace Baptist Church. We were deeply saddened by this personal loss. Howbeit we did rejoice that a new church was being established.

Seven preachers brought messages during the course of the day. Pastor John Pruitt, Pastor Reggie Moore, Pastor Aaron West, Brother Wayne Noe, Pastor Tom Sollosi, Pastor Joe Wilson and myself sought to honor the Lord Jesus and edify His people during these services.

During the actual organization of Grace Baptist Church, I read a letter which had been sent to us by Ella Grove Baptist Church authorizing their pastor, Tom Sollosi, to help during the church organization. Several years ago, the Ella Grove Church authorized the mission work in Charleston which is today the Landmark Missionary Baptist Church. It is the contingency of our kind of Baptists to stress that we believe the authority for doing the Lord's work belongs solely to the church and not to a man or group of men acting independently without New Testament church authorization. I asked Bro. Sollosi to read the Baptist Church Covenant to the members constituting the new church. Those saints who were being organized into the new church agreed to the covenant by signing their names beneath that document. This was a most solemn event as each person publicly before God, angels and the attending saints avowed their agreement to enter into a covenant relationship with one another in Christ. I delivered the organizational message before this duly constituted assembly. On behalf of my son, Aaron, we invite those living within driving distance of Ellabelle, Georgia, and who are interested in worshipping and serving the Lord in a true Baptist Church to contact Elder Aaron West, Pembroke, Georgia, for information regarding the schedule and place of services.

May the reader kindly bear with me for just a moment more. The Apostles died out almost 2000 years ago. There are no apostles today as the issue pertains to the office of apostleship; but there is a segment of work in which the apostles were actively engaged and that work was

church planting. That work is still as valid today as it ever was. We should pray that our Lord would be pleased to establish more lampstands in these last days. I can testify that God blesses churches who are interested in church planting. It is our prayer that our gracious and merciful Saviour will raise up more people and pastors to preach and believe the whole counsel of God. God bless you all.

## LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Once upon a time there lived a little girl called Red Riding Hood. One day her mother asked her to take a basket of fruit to her grandmother who had been ill and who lived alone in a cottage in a forest. It happened that day that a wolf was lurking in nearby bushes and overheard the conversation. He decided to take a shortcut to Grandma's house and intercept the basket of goodies for himself.

The wolf arrived first and made advances to Grandma, which she resisted. He then killed Grandma and ate her. Then he dressed himself in grandmother's nightgown and jumped into bed to await the arrival of Red Riding Hood.

When she arrived, the wolf made overtures to the girl and tried to grab her. The terrified child ran screaming from the cottage. A woodcutter working nearby heard the cries, rushed to the rescue and killed the wolf with his axe. Red Riding Hood was saved.

The townspeople, when they learned of the rescue, converged on the scene and proclaimed the woodcutter a hero.

However, at the inquest certain facts emerged.

1. The wolf, prior to his execution, had not been advised of his rights.

2. The woodcutter had made no warning swings before striking the fatal blow and had used unreasonable force.

3. Representatives of the American Civil Liberties Union stressed the fact that although the killing and eating of Grandma may have been in bad taste, it is the nature of wolves to do so and because he was merely "doing his thing," he did not deserve the death penalty. It was also determined that he was of a sub-species which was endangered. Further, the ACLU lawyers contended that killing Grandma could be construed as self-defense, inasmuch as the wolf's intent was to "make love, not war," and it can be reasonably assumed that Grandma resisted... resisted and might, given the opportunity, have killed him. Also, an elderly neighbor testified that Grandma had occasional male visitors and may have behaved in a seductive manner.

Based on these considerations it was concluded that the woodcutter was guilty of unaggravated assault with a deadly weapon and was so indicted, arrested, arraigned, convicted, and sentenced to twenty years without possibility of parole.

The night following the sentencing, the woodcutter's cottage was burned to the ground and one year from the date of the "incident at Grandma's" her cottage was dedicated as a shrine for the wolf who had bled and died there.

At the dedication of the shrine, Red Riding Hood gave a touching tribute. She explained that while she was grateful for the woodcutter's intervention, in retrospect she realized that he had over-reacted; the wolf, after all, had only wanted to share her wealth, which of course, was his right and privilege. As she knelt and placed a wreath in the memory of the wolf, there was not a dry eye in the forest.

## GEORGE MUELLER'S

(How to know the will of God is the question most frequently asked among Christians of all ages. The following is George Mueller's secret. These are very reliable steps to follow.)

1. I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter.

Ninth-tenths of the trouble with people is just here. Ninth-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

2. Having done this, I do not leave the results to feeling of simple impression. If I do so, I make myself liable to great decisions.

3. I seek the will of the Spirit of God, through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.

4. Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

5. I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright.

6. Thus, through prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflections, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly.

In trivial matters, and in transactions involving most important issues, I have found this method always effective.

—Selected

## THE MEANEST MOTHER

### IN THE WORLD

EDITOR'S NOTE: Orien Fifer of Phoenix, Arizona, was the author of this reprint here that recalls the years when she was growing up. It has become something of a classic and has been repeated in many newspapers across the nation.

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My mother insisted upon knowing where we kids were at all times. You'd think we were on a chain-gang. She had to

know who our friends were and what we were doing. She insisted if we said we'd be gone an hour, that we be gone not one hour and one minute.

I am ashamed to admit it, but she actually struck us; not once, but each time we did as we pleased. Can you imagine someone actually hitting a child just because he disobeyed? Now you can begin to see how mean she really was.

The worst is yet to come! We had to be in bed by nine each night, and up early the next morning. We couldn't sleep till noon like our friends. So, while they slept, my mother actually had the nerve to break the child-labor law. She made us work. We had to wash dishes, make beds, learn to cook, and do all sorts of cruel things.

I believe she laid awake at night thinking up mean things to do to us. She always insisted upon our telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, even if it killed us — and it nearly did.

By the time we were teenagers, she was much wiser; and our lives became even more unbearable. None of this tooting the horn of a car in front of the house for us to come running. She embarrassed us to no end by

making our dates and friends come to the door to get us.

I forgot to mention: while our friends were dating at the "mature" age of 12 and 13, my old-fashioned mother refused to let us date until the age of 15 and 18. Fifteen, that is, if you dated only to go to school functions, and that was twice a year.

My mother was a complete failure as a mother! None of us has ever been arrested or beaten his mate! Each of my brothers served his time in the service of his country.

And whom do you think we have to blame for the terrible way we turned out? You are right — our mean mother!

Look at all the things we missed — we never go to march in a protest parade nor take part in a riot; burn draft cards or a million things that our friends did. She forced us to grow into God-fearing, educated, honest adults.

Using this as a background. I am trying to raise my three children. I stand a little taller and I am filled with pride when my children call me "mean." Because you see, I thank God. He gave me the "meanest mother in the whole world!"

—The Capital Voice

## FOR IT SEEMS GOOD IN YOUR SIGHT

I love You, my God, for whom You are,  
I love You because You first loved me;  
And for Your works, both near and far,  
I praise You, my God, blest Trinity.

For you made the earth and all things therein,  
Good were the works of Thine almighty hand;  
But then Satan came and introduced sin,  
Causing the curse and the fall of man.

As the river flows down to the ocean,  
Downward, to hell, flows the stream of mankind;  
Satan tempts them and sets them in motion,  
To follow him, heedlessly and blind.

For fallen men are at enmity  
With you, my God, so holy and good;  
Dead in trespasses and iniquity,  
They will not come to You, even if they could.

But all things work according to Your will,  
Nothing happens that You do not decree;  
And so Your plan is being fulfilled —  
Your plan for now and eternity.

You allowed man's fall that You might bestow  
The exceeding riches of Your grace,  
Upon those You loved and did foreknow,  
And chose from among Adam's fallen race.

Within themselves they have no merit,  
That You should embrace them to Your breast,  
For Adam's sin they did inherit  
And are just as sinful as the rest.

Lord, many of mankind You do redeem,  
Through the precious blood of Your Son on the cross;  
So grateful am I that You intervened,  
Else all of mankind would surely be lost.

You have said who-so-ever-will may come,  
But those who come are Your elect,  
To whom You give the power to come;  
All others, Your Holy Word reject.

Oh, I wish all men would know the new birth,  
But I will not question Your all-wise design,  
For as the heavens are higher than earth,  
So are your ways higher than mine.

You have reasons known only to Your mind,  
Which You have not chosen to reveal,  
Why You do not save all of mankind;  
To Your sovereignty I must humbly yield.

And so I leave it all in Your hand,  
My God of wisdom, love and light;  
Tis best that all things work as You planned,  
For so it seems good in Your sight.

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