

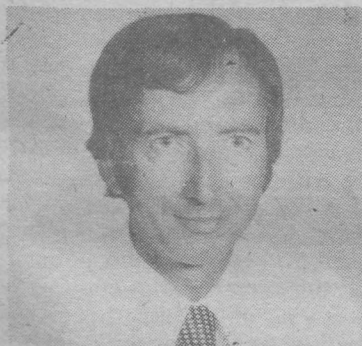
DESTROYING YOURSELF

by Ron Boswell
7 W. Franklin St.
Hagerstown, Md. 21740

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help" (Hosea 13:9).

I want to talk to you about destroying yourself. Our text speaks of the destruction of a nation. If you will look closer, you will see that the nation was made up of individuals.

The absolute sovereignty of God never lessens human responsibility. I have heard some say that they just did not get up in time to make the church services, therefore, God must have had some other pur-



Ron Boswell

pose for them. One man said that God had predestinated his failure to tithe so that he could meet a financial need that arose later in the week. Many have excused their unfaithfulness to the Word of God in the same manner. Some have excused their sinful life style in the same manner. I want you to realize, in the

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JUSTIFYING ONE'S SELF OR JUSTIFYING GOD?

by Chuck Sandelin
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Samuels, Idaho 83864

"And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John" (Luke 7:29).

Justification means that you



Chuck Sandelin

have appeased or satisfied the demands of something. When one cries out, "I'm justified," it indicates that there is therefore now no condemnation. When justified, the legal demand has been met; and you are free from obligation.

Justification is possibly one of the most prominent doctrines that run through the Bible, from the fall of man to the white

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Park Ridge Baptist Church of Gotha, Florida will have a Missions Conference February 3rd-5th. The church is located at 3629 Crystal St. The pastor is Doug King. For further information you may write Doug King at P.O. Box 12, Gotha, Fla. 32734, or call him at (305) 295-6296.

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

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THE TRUTH ABOUT ROCK AND COUNTRY MUSIC, PART III

by Sam Wilson

The next type of music we want to look at is Country. How many of you parents have had your children throw country music in your face when you rebuked them for listening to Rock? You got just what you deserved. One way we train our children is by example. Should we expect our children to give up their vices if we will not give up ours? The devil is very wise. He knows that our likes and dislikes change. He knows that as we grow older, we don't like the beat and noise of rock music. He will simply change the beat and keep the words. He will modify the words a little so as to appeal to the older people. If you forbid your children rock music and then listen to country music, you are a hypocrite. You have absolutely no defense for country music. You can try and defend it, but you are fighting a losing battle. Country music has no spiritual benefit whatsoever

to it. I hear you thinking. You say that there are other things we do that do not have spiritual benefit to them. We are not dealing with other things right now, we are dealing with country music. Though many of the other things may not have a



Sam Wilson

spiritual benefit, neither are they a spiritual detriment. I am going to say something now that will probably make some of you angry. (You probably said amen when I was talking about rock).

You can not be as good a Christian as you should and listen to country music. I will not apologize for that remark. I will challenge you to prove me wrong. I did not say you could not be a good Christian. I said you cannot be as good a Christian as if you were to give it up. Before you get too angry, I urge you to read the rest of this article. You should never criticize rock music lovers if you are a country music lover. You, as a Christian, have no business supporting country music. You have no business buying their records. You have no business listening to them on the radio. You have no business going to their concerts. They will detract from you spiritually. Please don't argue with me concerning the origin of country music. Don't tell me how good it was in the beginning. There may have been some good ones, but there was also the rotten

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THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND RELATED EVENTS PART IV

Part 4 - The Man of Sin
by T.P. Simmons

We have already touched somewhat upon the Man of Sin in previous articles, but now we come to study him more closely. The reader will get more out of the article if, before proceeding further, he will turn and read the following Scriptures: II Thessalonians 2:3-10; Revelation 11:1-7; 13; 16:13-16; 17; 19:17-20; Daniel 7:8-27; 8:8-25. These last two Scripture passages have reference to An-

tiocles Epiphanes, the last king of Syria and a type of the Man of Sin.

Concerning the Man of Sin we hold the following convictions — some of which we have previously mentioned, but which we mention again, for the sake of emphasis:

1. He is to be an actual individual. As stated before, we interpret any passage of Scripture literally, unless there is something in the passage, or in the context, or in some other

Scripture that indicates a figurative meaning. We find absolutely no reason for taking the description of the Man of Sin otherwise than literally. No institution or agency could sit in the temple of God. See II Thessalonians 2:4.

2. He is to be revealed in the interim between the two phases of Christ's coming. As we have pointed out previously, no individual that fulfilled the description of the Man of Sin

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THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

by John M. Alber
6935 Dexter St.
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"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the



John M. Alber

goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

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

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DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

by Doug Newell
Assistant Pastor

Matthew 19:3-9, "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave



Doug Newell

father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh: Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication,

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

PRACTICING IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

The Bethel Missionary Baptist Church (???) of Morrilton, Arkansas, wrote the following letter to the Portland Baptist Church of Plumerville, Arkansas, pastored by Elder Earl Smith. "Dear Portland, This is to inform you that Bethel Missionary Baptist Church voted on July 9th, 1986, in monthly conference, to no longer fellowship with Portland Missionary Baptist Church or any other church who believes and practices the doctrine of Irresistible Grace."

My first reaction upon learning of this was, "how absurd." A second reaction was that this confirms my belief in the infantile mentality of Arminians relative to spiritual matters. Can you imagine the spiritual mentality of a person, even a whole church, who would talk about "practicing irresistible grace"?

How on earth would Brother Earl Smith and his church practice such, even if they wanted to? What on earth does the Bethel Missionary (so-called) Baptist Church mean by a, "church who believes and practices irresistible grace"? I call on this church to explain herself. She has made a serious charge — so serious that she has broken fellowship with a true church of Jesus Christ over it. Now, let her explain what she means by this charge. My third reaction to this letter was that it would furnish a good subject for a sermon. Let me proceed with that sermon.

Let us think first of Irresistible Grace. What is it? Irresistible grace is that work of the Holy Spirit upon one, effectually enabling and irresistibly causing that one to repent of sin and to

savily believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a miraculous, almighty, effectual, and irresistible work. It gets the job of saving the sinner done.

There is a Biblical necessity for this irresistible work of the Holy Spirit. No man can believe what the Bible teaches about the spiritual condition of the natural, unsaved man and believe in the possibility of that man being saved, without believing in Irresistible Grace. What does the Bible teach about the natural condition of the unsaved man? It teaches that he is dead in sin, (Eph. 2:1). It teaches that, "...the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). It teaches that, "No man can come to me, ex-

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Never take a pen in hand while there is a feeling of anger in the heart.

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GRACE

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cept the Father which hath sent me draw him..." (John 6:44). It teaches that man of himself, "...will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). It teaches that for one to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour, he must be, "...born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). It teaches that salvation is not, "...of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. 9:16). It teaches that, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). All these Scriptures, and the number could be greatly added to, teach that apart from an effectual and irresistible work of the Holy Spirit, a man cannot and will not be saved. Man is totally dead so far as spiritual things are concerned. He can no more give life to himself, or cooperate therein, than Lazarus could have come forth from the grave apart from the life-giving power of the Son of God. Are men raised from the dead by the irresistible power of God? Then dead sinners are saved by the life-giving and irresistible power of the Holy Spirit. These Scriptures teach that the life man does have is totally and unalterably opposed to God, so that he would not come to Christ if he could.

Be it known to all readers of this sermon that the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, so called, of Morrilton, Arkansas does not believe these Scriptures. She might talk long and loud about believing the whole Bible, but her letter given above proves that she does not believe the Word of God on this subject. I

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charge this so called church with being a Bible denying organization as to this point.

I call on this so called church to tell us what her Confession of Faith is, if she has one. If it is the Philadelphia Confession, or the New Hampshire Confession, or one similar to either of these; then she does not even believe her own confession of faith. Many of these so called Baptist churches originally adopted a confession of faith which the present organization now repudiates. Most of them do not have the courage, decency, or even common honesty to publicly state this fact. Many of them go on preaching a doctrine that is absolutely contrary to that upon which they were originally founded.



Joe Wilson

The Bible teaches the doctrine of Irresistible Grace. I have given some Scriptures teaching this above. I now give some more. "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee..." (Psa. 65:4). "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power..." (Psa. 110:3). God has an elect people. They are unwilling of themselves to come to Christ. They will be made willing by the power of God. This will take place at a predestinated time. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). God has an elect people whom He has given to His Son. They will come to Christ. They are eternally secure. "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice..." (John 10:16). Christ has some sheep. He must bring them. They shall hear his voice. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead..." (Eph. 1:19-20). Men do not believe of their own so-called free will, but because of the working in them of the mighty, life-giving power of God. I could go on and on, but enough should be enough. If the Bethel Missionary Baptist so-called Church of Morrilton, Arkansas will not believe these multiplied Scriptures, she would not likely believe this many more. I charge that this so-called church is not a Biblical church. I charge that she is not a Baptist church. I challenge her to defend herself against these charges.

I spoke earlier of the necessity of the irresistible work of the Holy Spirit if a dead and depraved sinner is to be saved. I gave Biblical proof of this. I believe that the salvation experience of every truly saved person will confirm this statement. I ask the reader, how were you saved? I asked any saved member of the church to which I refer in this sermon, how were you saved? Did you,

all by yourself, all on your own, without the work of the Spirit, repent and believe on Jesus Christ? Or did not the blessed Spirit of the living God work in you and enable and cause you to do so? Does your salvation experience conform to the doctrine of your church, (the Bethel Missionary so-called Baptist Church of Morrilton, Arkansas) or does it conform to the doctrine which your church opposes and over which she has broken fellowship with the Portland Missionary Baptist Church?

Now, let me deal with the subject of "Who really does practice Irresistible Grace." The Holy Spirit does. That is our doctrine. We do not pretend to practice irresistible grace, though we do believe in this precious truth. What is this which the above church charges against us? We make no such claim - I speak for Brother Earl Smith and his fine church. We believe that the Holy Spirit does the work of calling the sinner to Christ. We believe that saving faith is the gift of God's grace and the work of God's Spirit. We believe that the sinner does not have and cannot produce saving faith. We certainly do not believe that we, as individuals or as a church, can give this to one. Who is the Holy Spirit? He is God. How much power does He have? Almighty power. When He purposes to do something, can He be successfully resisted? Of course not. To say such is to blaspheme against and highly dishonor the Holy Spirit of God. How can His work be anything except that which He intends it to be? How can He try to do something and fail to do it? To believe what the Arminian Bethel Missionary so-called Baptist Church of Morrilton, Arkansas believes; one must believe that salvation is not the work of the Holy Spirit, or that the Holy Spirit is weak and defeated - very close to denying the deity of the Holy Spirit.

Every Arminian church, which doubtless includes the church referred to above, tries to practice irresistible grace. In other words, this church is trying to do what it falsely accuses the Portland church of doing. Arminians teach that one is saved by a faith which he produces himself. They teach that one must, of himself, repent and believe; and then God will born him again. I have often said, who needs it? If one can, without being born again, repent of sin and truly believe in Jesus Christ; please tell me why he needs to be born again. True repentance and true faith are the products and evidences of regeneration, not the cause thereof. Arminians (Free-willers of every sort) teach also that one man or church can play an effective role in the salvation of others - at least many of them do. Some of them have said that there are souls in hell who would have been saved if men and/or churches had done their part. If this is not teaching that a man or a church can practice irresistible grace and save a man who would not have otherwise been saved, what is it?

Arminians speak frequently of "compelling sinners to be saved." They do not understand that only the Holy Spirit can do this. They give long, drawn out invitations. They evidently believe that by doing this, they will compel some to be saved who would not have been saved if they had cut the invitation short. What is this but their version of irresistible grace? They

use many salesmanship techniques in their sermons and invitations. They hope to thereby force one to be saved who would not have otherwise been saved. They use many tricks, schemes of men, and gimmicks; hoping thereby to get some saved who would not have otherwise been

saved. They sometimes almost literally drag people to the front and almost force a profession out of them. I have heard (and read) many Arminians who teach that, if your children and relatives are not saved, it is because you are not doing your

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FROM THE EDITOR

"...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..." (Act. 16:31).

I quote this at the close of every radio program. I preach. I do not know how many editorials I have written on this, or how many times I have referred to this in the pages of The Baptist Examiner. I have insisted adamantly and repeatedly that anyone who believes, with God-given and Spirit-produced faith, in Jesus Christ is immediately and eternally saved. I have fought with all my might against adding anything to this for salvation. I have opposed the Campbellites who add baptism. I have opposed the Arminians who add works. I have strongly and repeatedly opposed Baptists (so-called) who add that you have to be a Baptist or that you have to believe in sovereign grace. I have had some criticism over my strong stand on this point. But, praise God, I have had little criticism, for most of our people agree with me on this matter. Let me say it again, anyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, with God-given and Spirit produced faith, is immediately and eternally saved. Now, accuse me of this if you will. I do not mind being quoted, favorably or unfavorably, on what I truly believe. Criticize, even persecute me over this if you will. I will accept such, even rejoice therein. But please do not slander me. Do not accuse me of not believing what I have repeatedly said I do believe on this point.

I have a brother who is slandering, mis-representing, and falsely accusing me on this point. He is accusing me of teaching that all Arminians, including (by implication) all who were Arminians when first saved, are lost and going to hell. He has accused me of consigning him to the fires of hell. Note, that I call him "brother," though in his last letter to me he refused to call me such, pointing out this fact to me. I believe that the man is my brother, and that he is a saved man. I suppose that those who know this brother will agree with me that he is very argumentative and nit-picky.

The grounds of this brother's slander is the following. He has frequently nit-picked at different things in the Baptist Examiner, by others as well as me. He wrote me some harsh, condemnatory letters over my editorial on John 7:17 - which I thought I wrote in a very kind spirit. I finally wrote the following statement in a letter to him, and I quote, "Surely, you will agree with me that, if a man totally has his professed salvation experience in harmony with Arminian doctrine, he is not a saved man." This man wrote in reply, that I was consigning him, his mother and father, and all Arminians to hell by this statement. He did this in the face of all I have written to the contrary, and he knows I have written such repeatedly.

I tried to carefully explain the statement (which, to a mind as sharp as his, really needed no explanation) to this brother, showing that I did not at all say or mean what he was accusing me of. Let me here give that explanation. Arminianism teaches that men must furnish the repentance and faith by which they are saved. They teach that, if a man will repent and believe, then God will born him again. They do not believe that saving faith is the gift of God. They do not believe, as sovereign gracers do, that repentance and faith are sacred duties and also inseparable graces wrought in the heart by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

Now, to say that one had his salvation experience totally in harmony with Arminian doctrine would be to say that, that one was saved by a faith furnished by himself while in an unregenerate condition. I said to the brother, and I say again, that if that is all the professed salvation experience one has; that one is not saved.

The only salvation experience known to the Word of God is that which is in harmony with the doctrines of sovereign grace. The only salvation experience known to the Bible is that in which the Holy Spirit graciously works saving faith in one by His regenerating work. All who are saved are saved in this one and only way.

I did not say to this brother - I do not believe - I do not say here that Arminians are not saved. I do not say that no one is saved who does not receive Sovereign Grace teaching. I do not say that one is not saved who believes Arminian doctrine. I do say that Arminians who are saved, were saved in harmony with Sovereign Grace teaching. They were saved by God-given and Spirit-produced faith. They were not saved by a faith which they furnished, of and from themselves, while in an unregenerate condition.

Now, I would think that my statement to this brother was very clear to begin with. I would certainly think that my explanation makes it clear beyond the possibility of honest doubt. This brother has a keen mind. He is an able writer. He is very knowledgeable as to doctrine and as to the Word of God. Frankly, I find it a little hard to believe that he cannot see what I am saying. I find it a little hard to believe that he is totally honest in mis-representing me in this matter. I have written him, explained to him, reminded him of my persistent teaching contrary to that of which he accuses me. He has persisted in deliberate or ignorantly (I have trouble believing the latter) misunderstanding me. He refuses to accept my explanation of the original statement. He refuses, evidently, to take into account my continuous position to the contrary of that of which he accuses me. He told me he had sent a copy of my statement to one brother. I do not know how far he will go in this. He has ordered me to never attempt to contact him again, which I will surely honor, except he first contacts me, manifesting a repentant attitude. The man misrepresents me. The man slanders me.

Be it known once for all, and I hope forever, that Joe Wilson believes - and represents Calvary Baptist Church and The Baptist Examiner in believing - that any man, woman, boy, or girl who believes in Jesus Christ with a God-given and Spirit-wrought faith is immediately and eternally saved. Please do not accept any contrary slander or misrepresentation. May God bless you all.

GRACE

(Continued from Page 2)

duty as to winning them to Christ. Please tell me what is this but men practicing irresistible grace. Now, I make the charge that Arminians, including the Bethel Missionary so called Baptist church referred to above, teach and attempt to practice the doctrine of the irresistible grace of men. Let them deny it if they will and can, but their attempts to do so will not deceive the Spirit-taught and thinking man.

Now let me deal with the matter that Sovereign Grace Baptist Churches should practice in harmony with the Biblical and Baptist doctrine of Irresistible Grace. We believe this doctrine. We do not even attempt to practice it, but we do want our practices to be in harmony therewith. We do not want to preach this precious doctrine and then practice Arminianism. We want our practices to conform to our doctrines which are those of the Word of God. We should not weaken nor compromise our strong doctrinal convictions in order to get professions of faith from people. A so-called sovereign grace believer once told me that he believed in unconditional election, but he would compromise on this in order to win a soul. Wow! He proved by that statement that he really did not believe the doctrine. We believe in the doctrines of grace. We believe that God has an elect people. We believe that Christ died savingly for those elect. We believe that the Holy Spirit will effectually and irresistibly call the elected and redeemed to the experience of saving grace. Believing these things, we do not have to compromise our doctrines in order to see people saved. I would urge my sovereign grace brethren to carefully ponder this matter. I do fear that sometimes some of our brethren have felt like and acted like they were afraid that a strong stand for what they believed would keep them from having revivals and seeing souls saved. I have known men who believed as I do, but did not want the doctrines preached in a revival meeting in their church. I have known men who believed these doctrines but would use Arminian tactics in their efforts to win souls.

A preacher once told me that he believed the five points, but he would not have a man for revival who believed and preached them. Thank God that this man has grown out of that babyhood and no longer practices such. A man told me about another preacher, that he was a sovereign grace preacher with Arminian gimmicks. I have seen much of this. I lift up my voice against such. I call on my brethren to make every part of their ministry and their church services to be in harmony with the truths of sovereign grace.

I have a pet peeve. I do not, praise God, believe that it is as prominent as it once was. This peeve is that of sovereign grace churches and pastors believing (and practicing) that they must use Arminian preachers for revivals. I have seen much of this. Again I say that I do not think there is as much of it now as there once was. Let our kind of churches use our kind of preachers. The Arminian preachers have many more opportunities and places to preach than our kind do. What a shame for a sovereign grace (?) church

to use an Arminian preacher, while sovereign grace preachers have so few places to preach.

We should practice in harmony of all of the Word of God. I think we are all aware of the fact that in Arminian churches there is not anywhere near a preaching of the totality of the Word of God, even disregarding the truths they do not believe. They make such a one-sided effort at winning souls that they do not have time to give attention to all of God's Word. We do not have to change our intended message for a service just because we see or learn that some unsaved are there. Sometimes we seem to think that we must preach a totally evangelistic message if any lost are present, or we cannot see them saved. Most of the lost who attend our services have heard the gospel many times.

We should not preach totally evangelistic messages everytime we preach, just in case some unsaved are there as if they could not be saved otherwise. When we do this, we are not practicing in harmony with our belief in Irresistible Grace.

We have a radio program. I have preached on the radio for many years. I major on doctrines that I know few, if any, others are preaching on the radio. I am sometimes criticized for this (to each his own). I believe that the gospel is being preached almost continuously on the radio. I believe my radio preaching gives me an opportunity to preach to many what they may not otherwise ever hear. Of course, I preach many evangelistic sermons and much gospel on the radio as well. We can, and should, preach many gospel sermons in our churches. We can, and likely should, bring the gospel into nearly, if not totally, every sermon we preach. But we should not forsake a well rounded preaching of the total of the Word of God in order to unduly present gospel messages. If we do this, we are not practicing in harmony with our belief in Irresistible Grace.

We who believe the truth of Irresistible Grace should not give long drawn out invitations at the close of our services. I am not preaching against an invitation. Neither am I saying that every service must close with such. I am speaking against the Arminian type of invitation service. I was in a service where over thirty verses of invitation were sung, and where every unsaved person present was repeatedly hounded by groups seeking to get them to come up and get saved — whatever coming up has got to do with being saved, I do not know.

There are many Arminian songs that we should never, never, never sing in our churches. "Almost Persuaded," "You Must Open The Door," "Let Him In," etc. We just should not sing songs that contradict our doctrines. How foolish to preach a doctrine in the pulpit, and then close the service (or sing any time in the service for that matter) with a song that contradicts what has just been preached. We should preach the truth. We should sing the truth as well. Brethren, we who believe in Irresistible Grace should not adopt any of the methods or practices of the Arminians which contradict what we believe.

We should never become despondent or give up in despair when folk are not saved in our services. I have been going through a struggle over this matter for a while. I do desire to see

people saved. I have preached more evangelistic sermons in the last four years than at any like period in my ministry since seeing sovereign grace. I have almost despaired at times because of lack of results in seeing folk saved. I fear that I have almost fallen into that against which I warn at this time. I fear that I have not been the strong doctrinal preacher I was. I fear that it may be that I have not preached the total of the Word as I should. I fear that I have become despondent and despairing over this matter. I trust that this message will help me as well as others. Let us remember that God has an elect people and that they will be saved. These things are true, and these truths do not depend upon our activities in order to make them true.

However, let me hasten to add a safety check to the above. We should never, never use the doctrine of Irresistible Grace to excuse or justify our indifference, neglect, lack of concern over, and effort toward reaching the unsaved with the gospel of Christ. Oh, for wisdom to walk the line of truth without going aside into error on either side of the truth.

I think I see something in our kind of churches. I see a movement in our kind of churches toward more concern for the unsaved. I see our kind of churches becoming more evangelistic. I praise God for this. I have tried to promote this in our kind of churches. At the risk of being criticized by some of my dear brethren, I have written articles designed to promote this. I hope I have been of some help in some of our churches becoming more evangelistic.

Please note that I am for this, and I praise God for it. But I think also that I see a danger ahead. I think I see it already present with some preachers and churches. I think that some have become so evangelistic that they are neglecting to preach the whole counsel of God. I think I see some adopting and advocating Arminian principles in efforts to see folk saved. I could name some men and churches which I fear are doing this. I warn against this, even as I have warned against the other.

Brethren, let us believe and preach the truth of Irresistible Grace. Let us practice in harmony with this truth. Let us not misuse this truth to the excusing of our failure to be evangelistic. Let us not become so evangelistic that we ignore this truth. May God bless you all, and give us all wisdom to walk in the truth.

DIVORCE

(Continued from Page 1)

tion, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

In the years gone by the Examiner has presented the whole counsel of God. This paper has been used by God to instruct many in godliness. Our text deals with a very controversial subject. The subject of divorce and remarriage has caused divisions among the people of God. I will use the Bible as the final authority on this subject, and not the opinions of men. Jesus said some very important things in these verses, and it would benefit us all to study these verses.

Jesus makes it plain how long a marriage should last, "What

therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Marriage is a holy institution. The Bible teaches that when a couple marry, they should continue in that marriage. I believe this holds true for the saved and the unsaved. Divorce is the result of sin, by one party or both. If men and women were faithful to one another, and obedient to the Word of God there would be no need for divorce. So, understand that sin is the cause of divorce. God instituted marriage, and divorce came about because of the hardness of men's hearts. I believe there is entirely too much divorcing going on in our land. It is all too common and has done much to hurt our country. Divorce has become too easy. Our young people are growing up with the idea that if they get married and are dissatisfied with their spouse, they can cast them away and get another. This is sinful and rebellious thinking. I am afraid Christians are falling into this also. Divorce happens because of sin, and it always will. The Bible has much to say about marriage, and it would do us good to study it before we get the main part of this article.

The first thing I would have you consider is, who should marry? There are those whom we as Christians should marry, and then there are those whom we should not. A Christian should never marry an unsaved person. Jesus said in our text, "and they twain shall be one flesh." When a child of God marries an unsaved person, there are going to be problems. Now I know there are marriages like this, and the couples are very happily married. But I would not recommend such. When a Christian marries an unsaved person, he or she doesn't know what is going to happen. For one thing, the unsaved are not interested in your spirituality. They are not concerned whether you serve the Lord or not. They are not concerned whether you go to church or not. The Bible says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Thus you see a couple should not enter the marriage bond unequally yoked.

Let me say further that, if you are a Baptist, you should seek a Baptist mate. Sound Baptists are different from all people in the world. Those who stand for the whole counsel of God are different from even saved people who are not Baptists. All saved people have a common bond in Christ Jesus. All are saved and eternally so. They all love Christ, but there could still be problems. Before Baptists marry those who are not, they should explain to them their beliefs on the church and Bible doctrines. Even saved people can give you trouble in marriage.

After you find a suitable mate, there are Biblical commandments to follow to make a happy and successful marriage. Ephesians 5:22-25 says, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore, as the

church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." The husband is to be the head of the house. He is to be the spiritual leader, and the wife is to follow his leadership. Now you see why it is important to marry the right person. Now I don't believe a woman could sin against God to follow her husband's leadership. Acts 5:29 says... "We ought to obey God rather than men." For instance, if a man commanded a woman to go to a bar with him, she ought to refuse to go. So the best marriage is one which has the husband seeking the will of the Lord, and the woman following her husband.

Net, the wife is to submit herself unto her husband. Her love and desire is to be for her husband. Many divorces result from women tiring of their marital duties and seeking excitement elsewhere. How many divorces have resulted in the women going to work in a factory, where they are surrounded by men? There are jobs women can work. I think that, if you put a man in a beauty parlor, he would be out of place, just as the woman in the factory. Well enough said about that.

In the next place, the man is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. This means that men are not to put sports or other activities before their wives. The Bible says men are to love their wives as their own bodies. Now the man can't expect his wife to obey his every command and wait on him, while he pays little attention to her. He should encourage her and comfort her and love her with a great love. Many divorces occur because the man wanted to be out with the boys instead of at home with his wife. I could say much more about marriage. We all need to consider how we treat our husbands and wives. It would do us all good to work on our marriages, for our good and the glory of God.

Our subject is "Divorce And Remarriage." I want to prove with the Bible, that there can be a Scriptural divorce. Jesus said in our text, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Jesus clearly stated that there is a Scriptural divorce. He said it was not so in the beginning. He said it came about because of sin, but there is a cause and justified reason for divorce. Men and women have a natural sex desire. But this desire is to be satisfied between husband and wife. To satisfy it any other way is to commit fornication. The Bible teaches you have the Scriptural right to divorce your spouse for fornication. Now, to argue this point is to argue with the Lord.

One other Scriptural reason for divorce is desertion. Notice in I Corinthians 7:15, "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace." The Bible teaches you may file for divorce for two causes and only two. Fornication or desertion are the

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The Baptist Examiner Forum I

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER — P.O. Box 60 - ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

What do you think about a church having a school teaching regular, secular education?

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"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, — teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: —" (Matt. 28:19, 20). "And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4:11-13).

These passages tell us that the churches are to teach the saints of God the things of God, "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." But I find no place in the Scripture where the churches are to teach the "three R's."

First, I would like to discuss the need for such a school. As a former public school teacher I realize there are many things wrong in the public school and some of these can be corrected in a church school. Yet there are some draw-backs in such a school. One is that we are isolating our children from the world, and Christ, in His prayer for His people prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil" (John 17:15).

The apostle Paul wrote the church at Corinth not to keep company in the church with fornicators yet, "—not altogether with fornicators of the world — for then must ye needs go out of the world" (I Cor. 5:10).

Instead of another school it seems to me it would be better for Christians to take a more active part in the public schools in positions such as teachers, principals, board members, P.T.A. members, etc.

Now that that is off my chest, back to the question, even if there is a need for a school teaching secular education apart from the public school, I do not believe it is right for a church to have one. This would be going beyond what the Lord commanded His churches to do.

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Please keep in mind when you read my answer that the question is asking my opinion on this subject.

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It is my opinion that a church has some very specific things to do. Ofttimes our churches become so involved with "things" that we neglect our responsibilities.

For instance, while it is true that we must have a concern for the needy, a church is not a benevolent organization. Too many people seem to think that the Lord's church is to be considered an organization like the Union Missions or the Salvation Army.

When the Lord gave the church her commission (Matt. 28: 19, 20), He gave her three things to do. The first is to "go". This is a missionary, evangelistic responsibility. We are to preach the gospel to the lost. The second is to baptize those who are saved, and the third is to teach those who are saved and baptized the commandments of the Lord.

In my opinion, the only "school" a church should have is the teaching responsibility of the church relative to the doctrines of the Word of God.

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Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Before I answer this question let me make a couple of comments. First, I want you to understand that what your church does is your church's business. I am not, in this answer, trying to tell you how to run your church. I am not trying to condemn or speak against your church in any way. But, I will not change my opinion just to appease you. Secondly, I want you to know that where you send your children to school is your business, and not mine. I would not try to tell you where to send your children. But I also want you to realize that where I send my children to school is my business. I don't think you have a right to try to tell me where I should send my children. I do not believe for a moment that the parent who sends his child to a public school is any less of a parent because of it. Nor do I feel that you are a better parent just because you spend the extra money to send your child to a private school.

Now, let me briefly give my opinion on the question at hand. First, I have chosen the text above because I believe that most of us will agree that this is God's commission given to His

church. I see no place in this commission for the teaching of secular education. The "teaching of the all things whatsoever I have commanded you" does not and cannot apply to secular education. Jesus never taught, nor did He command that His church teach secular education. I personally feel that when the church moves into the field of secular education, she has added to this commission. I do not believe the Lord's money is to be used in secular education. The Lord's money is to be used for the furtherance of the gospel; not reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Secondly, I think it is somewhat a weakness to pull our children out of public schools and send them to private ones.

We are not to run from the world, we are to fight to make it better. How many of you who have taken your children out of public schools have gone and fought with the board and tried to change things before you moved your child? Is it right for us to go down without fighting for the truth? Don't say it won't do any good. I can prove that wrong by the case just recently in Tennessee. There, some Christians fought the school system and won. If the public school is that bad, shouldn't we try to change it for the good of all the children? Wouldn't this help our children more in the future than pulling them out. If we don't change the public schools, which many say are totally corrupt, what kind of world will our children grow up in? To be honest with you, I deal a great deal with the public school system here in Gladwin. I have not found it to be terribly corrupt. I do not feel that you can produce as much Scripture for taking ourselves out of the world, as I can to show that we must and should have some contact with the world. I most certainly can produce much Scripture to prove we should be trying to change the world.

The third thing I want to mention is that I feel many times, the private schools are more dangerous than the public. Perhaps I should not make this statement, because I do not have sufficient space to explain it, but I will make it anyway. I would about as soon my child be taught evolution as Arminianism. If by God's grace my children are saved, then they will reject evolution. However, they could be saved and see how much more these Arminian churches have to offer in the form of programs than most sovereign grace churches and like Arminianism. I also do not want my children influenced into making a false profession. I would rather them hear about evolution than have the Arminian games and gimmicks played on their soul. I know of one religious school who tried to force students to participate in their Xmas programs. I don't want this for my children. I have found that most public schools will not force this on students.

The fourth thing I mention is that I am afraid that a lot of parents send their children to these schools because they will not do the job of teaching their children at home. They are trying to make the religious school the parent in this aspect of responsibility for bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I am not saying this is true of all parents, or even of most parents. I do think it is true concerning some parents. I honestly feel that if we raise our children at home as we should and if we teach them the Bible as we should; the school will not be able to overthrow our teachings. I personally do not feel that our children attending a public school is as dangerous as us working in a public job, but I would not advise people to give up their jobs. There are no Biblical examples of children of saved people being sent to different schools. I might add that if we take all the Christians out of the public schools, what then will become of them? Will they not only wax worse and worse. Isn't it our Christian duty to fight this evil, rather than to run from it? There are many other things I could say, but Daddy will probably edit much of this because of its length. I ask you to keep my opening remarks in mind. You do as you please, and I will do the same. I know that, as a pastor, I would strongly oppose the church I pastored starting a school, teaching secular education. I possibly would oppose it to the point of resignation. I say, let us spend the Lord's money trying to save souls, not educating them in secular matters. May God bless you all.

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Most public, state-controlled schools functioning across our society and nation today are, at best, offensive to true Christian doctrine, standards, and practice. It would seem that Satan has been successful in his influence on our schools and their appeal to the flesh. Atheism, humanism, evolution and worldliness have long supplanted even basic Christian oriented views in public schools. Today it is a continual battle for those few who care, to try to reintroduce even the most liberal Christian aspects of education. We must indeed share some of the blame, because the people have allowed the State to take control of the school system and to change, or do away with the basic Christian values once at their center. Part of their funding from liquor and gambling revenues only enhances the wicked influence and ultimate results of our present system.

We all have need of a certain amount of basic secular education in this world in order to get along. By that, I mean reading, writing and arithmetic. These, and other needed studies, however, need to be God centered and Bible oriented. In the majority of public systems, the God-centered, Bible oriented parts have been replaced with man-centered, and situation

oriented parts. The result of our educational systems is evident in our society and its condition. God says in Proverbs 3:13, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding." In fact, read Proverbs 3:13-18. We are told there of the benefits of wisdom and learning. Unfortunately, our children cannot find that in the public school system as it exists today, nor from the portion of teachers who practice the vile and base views and life styles prevalent today.

For the above reasons, I am in favor of Christian schools, i.e., church authorized and supported schools. When I say church, I mean the Lord's church; the only true church. I realize that there are some dangers to be avoided in this. The school is not to become the primary function of the church, nor is it to become a business. It is not to become after all, a Christian school that is subject to the State through some subtle means such as funding, etc. It should be a school that teaches in a clear and forth-right manner, the Bible and its applications toward a given subject, as well as it being the origin of that subject. It must be remembered that secular education is not a primary duty of the church, but it can fall under its teaching ministry. Proverbs 23:23 says, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."

DIVORCE

(Continued from Page 3)

only two Scriptural grounds for divorce.

The next question then is, can a divorced person remarry? I believe the Bible was very plain in the previous Scriptures. Paul said, that if the unbelieving depart, the other could sue for divorce, and not be under bondage. He, therefore, would be able to remarry. If God gives grounds for a Scriptural divorce, then who are we to say any differently? Paul, when he spoke of bondage, was referring to the marriage bond. The one who was left is free to remarry. The one who left is not to remarry. I Corinthians 7:10-11 says, "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife."

Jesus made it plain when He spoke of adultery, that the one who was cheated on could Scripturally divorce and remarry. He said that anyone who puts his spouse away for any other reason than fornication, and then remarries, is an adulterer. In other words, if you divorce your spouse for any other reason than desertion or fornication, you cannot remarry. If you do you are committing adultery. Oh, how our land is full of adultery today. We ought to stand firm on what the Bible teaches about divorce and remarriage. We shouldn't back down one little bit. We ought to be careful that adultery is not committed in our churches. Don't you women fool around with a man who is divorced according to man's laws, but not according to God's. Don't you men get involved with such a woman either. People can get a divorce and remarry, but it must be a Scriptural one, or else it is

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It sometimes takes rough tools to remove the rust from our hearts.

The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER — P.O. Box 60 — ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

See I Peter 3:7 and Col. 3:19. What does "giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel" and "be not bitter against them" teach concerning the husband's behaviour towards his wife?

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I have sometimes heard a man refer to his wife as the "old woman." What a disrespect this is! It is like he is speaking of his wife as a piece of furniture around the house. It seems to me that a man who thus speaks of his wife has her around so his meal can be ready when he comes home, or that she is to act the part of a maid, just to sweep and dust the house, and make up the beds, clean the yard and hoe the garden.

A man should speak to his wife using endearing terms. Use terms that will make her feel good, feel lifted up, feel like she is counted worthy of the work that she does in caring for the children and the many other things she does around the house.

To give honor to the wife is to respect her with deeds and words. The wife should have gifts brought home to her, at least once in a while. In this way the husband shows that he cares for her and loves her. The husband is not only to tell his wife that he loves and cares for her; but he is to show her that he loves her by providing her with the conveniences of life, especially those things that are needful.

When a man gives honor unto his wife, her life will be a happy one and not a dreadful one. Some women are fearful for the husband to come home and are glad when he leaves. How sad this is for the wife.

When the husband honors his wife, it will be known in the place where he works. His fellow workers can tell that the husband honors his wife by his actions and his language. The public can tell if the husband honors his wife by the way he dresses. The passers-by can tell that the husband honors the wife by the way he keeps the yard. If the husband honors the wife this simply means that he loves her.

To give honor to the wife then, means to respect, to have a high regard for her, to esteem and to treat her with dignity. If the husband will give such honor to his wife, she will look well to the ways of her household.

The wife is spoken of as the weaker vessel. This, I, think refers to both the mind and the body. I do not mean to have disrespect by saying this. It is my belief that God has given the man to be the head of the wife and the head of the home. The reason for this is that she is the weaker vessel, and she needs the care of the husband. She needs his protection. God did not endow her with the strength that He did the man. He did not give her wisdom to carry on in the business world as he did the

man. This is the teaching of the Word of God.

It is very unbecoming of the husband to be bitter against the wife. To be bitter against them is to be the very opposite of giving honor. To be bitter means to use harsh words and show a hatred toward them. To be bitter means to deny affection towards them and for them. Men sometimes try to rule their wives as a dictator would rule a country. To be bitter should be to deny the wife the necessary things for the home. If a man loves his wife, he will surely not be bitter toward her, but will be kind, gentle, loving, and compassionate.

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The husband's behaviour towards his wife is outlined in various places in the Word of God. Both Peter, and Paul devote space in their writings to this very special relationship between man and woman. God created man first, and then He created woman to be his companion. They are both God's instruments for His service. They are both His vessels, with the woman being described as the weaker of the two. The word weaker is a descriptive adjective of the vessel. This is very unacceptable in today's society, but God's order has not and will not change. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (I Cor. 11:3).

Before these two conditions can exist, there must be a foundation of love; the love of the husband for the wife. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself" (Eph. 5:28). In verse twenty-five this love is likened to the love that Christ has for His church, and He gave himself for it. It is also necessary that the woman love and reverence her husband. Now, when this love exists, we can show what the behaviour of the husband should be.

The word honour means to value. The word give means to portion out. The man then, is to portion out or give value to his wife. I do not know what the value of a wife could possibly be, but man is to recognize that his wife has a value. To me, that value can never be estimated. My wife could not be replaced. Love and honor are due wives from their husbands. "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husbands." (I Cor. 7:3). The word benevolence means good will.

"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." The context of

this verse seems to deal with the idea of mistreatment. The word bitter means sharp or pointed. The actions most associated with anger. The husband should treat his wife as he would want to be treated. Notice again, that the verse in question substitutes love for bitterness. The absence of these conditions are reflected in the many problems that husbands and wives face today.

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It used to be that a lady was respected and admired by men, not as a sex symbol, but rather as a lady. But now, as women are taking over where they have no business, wearing their hair short like men, trying to look like men, cursing like men, dressing like men; they are losing the place of honor and respect that God intended them to have.

Peter had instructed the women to be in subjection unto their own husbands previous to instruction to the men. I Peter 3:5-6 "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands. Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." Also read Ephesians 5:22.

Now, when women live as God directed them, men will give them the honor that they deserve. I speak of men in general, lost and saved, concerning women in public.

The Bible was written to saved people. I say this because Paul said in I Corinthians 2:14, "For the natural (lost) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." So you see the lost man only goes by what he sees and not what God says.

Now we who are saved know and are commanded to honor our wives. Colossians 3:19 "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." Beloved, we are to love our wives and give honor to them because they are part of us Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:31... And shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. Our wives carry and give birth to our children, keep house and honor us men; so it's only reasonable that we honor them and thus obey God's Word.

If we don't honor our wives our text tells us that our prayers will be hindered; therefore, we are out of fellowship with God. Paul made the statement once where he said, "When I'm weak then am I strong."

Beloved, women are the weaker vessels but are stronger than men in compassion, love, and can endure more pain than men. Women are not inferior to men, but rather equal in a different way than men. They are not muscle-bound and can not do many things as men do. However, men cannot give birth to babies and give love and compassion and many other things as women do.

DIVORCE

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adultery.

Now I don't think many, if any, will argue with what I have said thus far. If you do, you are just not facing up to Scripture. I want to deal with the preacher concerning divorce and remarriage. Some say the preacher is excluded from this part of the Word of God. Some say all Christians are entitled to a Scriptural divorce except the preacher.

The only problem with this statement is, that there is no Scripture to back it up. Paul said, "a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases." According to the teaching of some men, a preacher is not a brother in the Lord. This doctrine of a preacher not being able to get a Scriptural divorce like any other brother is not found in the Word of God. Now, I know that some of them already have I Timothy 3:2 on their lips. Well, good. Notice in this verse. "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach." No where is it found in this verse that a preacher cannot get a Scriptural divorce. It says the bishop is to have one wife. Well if you have a Scriptural divorce and remarry, that is what you have — one wife. Now if you divorce for some other reason than the right reasons, and then remarry, you would have more than one wife. You would be an adulterer and not fit for the pulpit. Those who hold to this teaching take this verse and put it against what Paul said earlier, and what Jesus Himself said. I think if these men would abandon pride and self, and face up to the Word of God, they would drop this teaching. There is fellowship lost between preachers and churches over this very thing. Much hurt has been done to preachers because others will hold this against them. Let me give you a little advice, though. Before you try to hurt a God-called preacher's ministry you had better think long and hard. If God allows for a divorce, he allows it for all of His people. And if He allows it, you would be better off not saying that He doesn't and thus preach a lie.

In conclusion, marriage is a holy institution. Those who enter it should enter expecting and desiring it to last as long as they both live. Marriage should never be entered into with the thought that divorce is an easy out. Again let me remind you, divorce comes as a result of sin. There has never been a divorce, nor ever will be, of which sin was not the cause.

COMING

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has yet been revealed on the earth. Some think that the papal line is the Man of Sin. But no pope has ever sat in the temple of God. The Vatican is not the

temple of God. Apostate Christianity is not the temple of God. Instead it is the habitation of devils (Rev. 18:2). The revelation of the Man of Sin is now being hindered by some individual (II Thess. 2:6, 7). We believe this hinderer is the Holy Spirit indwelling every true believer (I Cor. 6:19) and every true New Testament church (I Cor. 3:16). It is the Holy Spirit's restraining influence exercised through believers that now prevents the revelation of the Man of Sin. Thus believers are the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13). The taking out of the way of the hinderer, then, will mean the removal of the Holy Spirit from the earth. This will require the taking out of the earth of every true believer. Since this will occur at the first phase of Christ's coming (I Thess. 4:15-17), the revelation of the Man of Sin can not come about until after the first phase of Christ's coming. And since he is to be consumed and destroyed at the second phase of Christ's coming (II Thess. 2:8), he must be revealed and run his course during the interim between the two phases of Christ's coming.

3. He and the Beast of Revelation are to be the same individual. We hold this conviction for the following reasons:

(1) Both are to run their course during the interim between the two phases of Christ's coming. Above we have shown this to be true of the Man of Sin. And in a previous article we have shown that the section of the book in which is recorded the career of the Beast belongs to that period.

(2) Their activities are similarly described (II Thess. 2:4-10; Rev. 13:6-8).

(3) Both are to be destroyed at the final coming of Christ to the earth (II Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:11-20).

4. He is to be a world king with his seat of power at Rome. See Revelation 17: 1-11. We hold the seven mountains (vs. 9) to be the seven celebrated hills of Rome. The five fallen kings we hold to be Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and Greece. The one that then was, we believe was pagan Rome. The one that was yet to come was "Christian" Rome, or the so-called Holy Roman Empire. The former six kingdoms (the term for kings meaning either kings or kingdom) culminated in the seventh. The Beast is to be the eighth king and his kingdom will combine all the power and evil of the seven. The deadly wound on one of the heads of the Beast (Rev. 13:3) we take to represent the fall of Rome, A.D. 476. We refer the healing of the wound to the re-establishment of the Roman Empire with its capital at Rome under the reign of the Beast. The sea out of which the beast is seen to arise (Rev. 13:1; 17:1, 15) we take as representing the seething, turbulent, revolutionary mass of humanity to which the inhabitants of the earth will be reduced by the rapture of the saints.

5. He will first support, and also receive the patronage of, the Roman Catholic Church; but later he and his ten kings will turn away from and destroy her (Rev. 17: 12, 16). We take the great whore to represent the Roman Catholic Church (Rv. 17: 1-7). Her clothing and or-

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COMING

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naments picture the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church. The abominations are her unscriptural doctrines and practices. Fornication represents her spiritual adultery in being espoused to the pope instead of to Christ. The harlots of which she is the mother are Protestant denominations. Her being "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" pictures her persecution against true believers (particularly Baptists) through the dark and middle ages. From Revelation 18:4 we find that even at the very hour of her destruction she will have some of God's people in her, as she doubtless has at this time. And God's command now is the same that it will be at the end: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues." We say that the Beast will support the Roman Catholic Church because we first see the whore riding on the Beast (Rev. 17:1-12). We say the Beast will receive the patronage of the Roman Catholic Church because we regard the second Beast (Rev. 14: 11-17) as the Pope. Note that this second Beast has the appearance of a lamb. This represents the professed sanctity of the Pope. Note also that, in contrast to the first Beast, the second Beast will arise out of the earth (Rev. 13:11). The first Beast will arise out of (the sea) turmoil and revolution. The second one will have a solid, compact, orderly source — the Roman Catholic system. Then Revelation 17:16 is our authority for saying that the Beast and kings that are with him will finally turn against the Roman Catholic Church and destroy her. And we might say that we regard the second Beast and the false prophet (Rev. 16:13; 19:20) as the same individual.

6. The length of his career will be forty-two months (Rev. 13:5).

7. He will sit in the temple of God pretending to be God. See II Thessalonians 2:4. The temple that the Man of Sin will sit in is doubtless the restored Jewish temple, which will be the center of worship during the millennium. (Of this worship we shall see more in a later article). Every New Testament church is a temple of God (I Cor. 3:16). But this could not be what is meant in II Thessalonians 2:4. To be seated in a local church would not be sufficient to satisfy the ambition of this monster of iniquity. And surely the Scripture indicates a more daring and far-reaching exaltation than this. The reference in II Thessalonians 2:4 could not be to apostate Christianity, for, as we have remarked already, apostate Christianity is not the temple of God; but instead is the habitation of devils (Rev. 18:2). The reference is certainly to the Jewish temple that is to be restored by the Jews at Jerusalem some time during the great tribulation period. This, it seems clear, is the temple that comes into view in Revelation 11: 1, 2. It is also pictured in Ezekiel Chs. 40-48.

8. He will persecute the Jews and other believers (Rev. 11:7;

13:7; Dan. 7:25), and will finally gather the kings of the earth and their armies against Jerusalem for the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:14-16; 19:17-21). The Lord willing, this later will be the subject of our next article.

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JUSTIFYING

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throne judgment. Today we wish to speak on one segment of justification in the church age; that of baptism.

Now saved people know that baptism is for the already saved believer. Until one is saved, baptism has nothing for him. Baptism is a declaration of one's salvation. To reverse that order is to miss the whole point and meaning of baptism. Now the Book declares that God has saved a multitude out of every kindred and tongue; so there is a multitude to be baptized. Our Lord Jesus Christ was baptized to set the example for all future believers to follow. His apostles were baptized with this same baptism, and they were told (commissioned) to go and baptize other believers. Baptism is the second step in the threefold great commission that God has left His churches. You would think that with it holding that important a place with God and His work, people would set baptism forth as something of eternal importance.

However, after the mystical body theory came in and the two baptisms came in (the second being a Holy Ghost baptism that supposedly all saved get.); the old God-ordained, God justifying, Church commissioned Baptist baptism just wasn't that important any more. So, slowly but surely the religious world has done what it could to play down baptism by telling Christians that baptism isn't that important. Sadly, they do not know that baptism is the beginning walk of the believer. It is the starting point of service for Jesus Christ. Many have been deluded into thinking that they can properly serve the Lord without proper baptism and outside His church. This of course, is just another of the devil's lies, and our text verse proves that, even though the Christian is saved, he is not justified without Baptist baptism. We also know that this ruffles the feathers of many because they are proud, puffed up, and unwilling to humble themselves to the authoritative method and means that God has set forth for the worshipping of Him — even the sound doctrine of New Testament baptism.

Men justify themselves. Have you ever heard a person say, "Well, I'm satisfied with my baptism." You would think that the only thing that mattered was if self was satisfied. If you justified your own little person, it matters not what God thinks about it. There are a lot of reasons why people do not want Baptist baptism. First, it adds you to a local body of believers. There are a whole lot of people who just do not want to be a member of a local church. Members are required a few things: like attendance, tithing, stewardship, labor, offerings, preacher care, work on the church building or grounds, etc., etc. To say it bluntly — people are shirkers!

Secondly, it nullifies and voids

all Protestant immersions. By declaring only one valid you declare all others misnomers. Instead of taking a stand against a wrong, people will pacify. They are afraid of what others will say. It makes no difference to them what Jesus Christ thinks or is going to one day say. They sacrifice the eternal on the altar of the immediate. The immediate says, get along with Mr. Reverend Protestant or the religious doctor. By getting Baptist baptism one would show whose side he was on, instead of being a fence straddler. (One of the dear sisters in the church, who went on to be with the Lord, used to say, "When you straddle the fence, you're gonna get the barb.")

Thirdly, after becoming a church member, one has some proper living to do. In God's church, (which the Apostle Paul says he is going to present to Christ at the wedding as a chaste virgin) there is not to be those defiled ones — that is, saved people out committing spiritual harlotry. It is so surprising to see the multitude of saved people who know little or nothing of spiritual harlotry. Israel was constantly in this terrible shape. Out worshipping under every green tree (like a lot of Christians will be doing this December 25th), making hot-cross buns (Read Jer. 7:18 and 44:19), wandering down to the tongues-talking house of Baal. Man, just read the book of Jeremiah or Lamentations and see how one preacher cried his heart out to the congregation to do right! But they answered "we will not hearken." (Jer. 6:17). In essence they were saying — on Sunday night if we want to go down with the Armenians, the Nazarenes, the Church of God Pentecostals, etc., we don't want some narrow minded bunch of Baptists setting us to discipline.

But friend, not everyone who thinks he will be in the Bride — will be. There will be in heaven a very large number who will start knowing more than ever about that "barb"! The Lord's bride will be a chaste bride. She will be a faithful bride. She will be a virgin bride. She will be an obedient bride. "If you love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). His bride will have the same kind of baptism that He has. The same kind that justifies God, Amen! It might be in order to here speak another word on "the Baptist Bride." In a very light study of the New Testament one can readily see that whatever the church is, the bride is, or that "the bride" is the church. For those universal, invisible, mystical body churches, (some of whom even wear the name Baptist). They think that the church is composed of the saved. Thus, the bride is made up of the saved. How wrong! The churches of Christ are made up of those who are saved and have been properly baptized. Not even all those who are in the Lord's different churches are going to be in the Bride, but one has to be in one of His churches or they are not even eligible. The only way one can get into one of the Lord's churches is to receive Baptist baptism. (Or the same kind the Groom got.) People are saved apart from church membership. The thief on the cross was saved and went to heaven, but was never a member of any church. There are saved all over, who will go up in the rapture of the saints who have neither baptism nor church membership. Now, I

feel certain there is an elect among the elect, and that Scripture bears this out. I know what we can't all be in the Bride. (Editor's Note: I disagree with this statement. I do not believe there is a sovereign election to be in the Bride. I believe that this is a matter of personal responsibility, and that every believer could be in the bride if he or she would meet the requirement: salvation, Baptist baptism into a true church, faithfulness in that church in doctrine and life till death or the rapture). I know there are going to be some things that different ones do that is going to group them with the "guests" at the wedding or with the "friends" at the wedding. However, we preachers want to see every one ready and qualified. It pleases us to see faithful members, and I know it pleases the Lord more. We try to warn, try to encourage, try to push and pull a little, too. It's for your good. It won't hurt you to walk in that obedient way. It won't hurt you to justify God instead of yourself. Jesus said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." (Luke 9:24).

Now we come to the part of "being baptized with the baptism of John." What is required to have John's baptism? First, one might say that John's baptism was from heaven and not from men. It was a baptism that justified God and not men. Now there were some religious folk who came to Jesus one day and were asking about His authority to do what He was doing. His reply was, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" (Matt. 21:25a). Well, it shut their mouths to say it crudely (and in 1986 with the conditions of sin and rebellion in the people, preachers are even having to speak a little crude sometimes to get the point across). In other words they knew that John's baptism was from God. And again we say, that was the kind that Jesus Christ got and that God the Father was well pleased with. So Brother, it makes it tough to try to put it down. From the passage we see that, as always, there is a counterfeit or one that is not real or should we say, "of men"? Now, even the Apostle Paul saw that the fellows in Acts 19 had been baptized improperly (that of the wrong purpose) and showed that they had no baptism. So upon proper teaching and preaching they were then baptized in a right order. (There are many of our enemies who tag us as Ana-Baptists; who would also tag the Apostle Paul as one of the first Ana-Baptists) So the "baptism of John" was Scriptural, New Testament Baptist baptism, with the needed prerequisites to be valid.

In conclusion to that baptism that "justifies God", I cannot see how anyone would not be able to see that it is the same kind that Jesus Christ submitted to, His apostles had, and that He commissioned His church to put forth until His return for her. He will have His churches that submit to these teachings until He comes. Then there will be those, as verse 30 says, who, "reject the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Then go ahead and read the next five verses (31-35) and see how people are giving excuses for not doing right. Then notice particularly verse 35 "But wisdom is justified of all her

children." Wow! Did you see that? Man has his own smart answers to justify his actions for not being obedient to the Book. So like always, what will you be justified in? The baptism that justifies God or the wisdom that justifies men?

DESTROY

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light of our text, that you can destroy yourself. Your destruction will not in any way take away from the absolute sovereignty of God.

The first point I want you to notice in this message is that we are responsible.

I. Human Responsibility

Our text teaches human responsibility. Here we find that God says,

"...thou hast destroyed thyself."

Now I want you to notice from this that He does not say, the devil has destroyed you. He does not say that your parents have destroyed you. He does not say that the environment has destroyed you. He does not say that others have destroyed you, but He places the blame on the individuals. God's Word is contrary to what the psychiatrists are saying.

It is human nature to shift the blame; blame shifting is human nature. In fact, we find that when Adam sinned in the garden, that Adam was a blame shifter. God asked him what he had done. In Genesis 3:12, Adam answered that question, listen; "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. He is saying, "It was not I, it was the woman that thou gave me." So you see, he attempted to shift the blame from his wrong-doing to Eve. Then God asked Eve the same question, listen: "And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:13).

So you see, Eve was no better than Adam for she said, "I did not do it, the serpent is the one that beguiled me, that is the reason. It was not my fault, it was the serpent." So you see, blame shifting is just simply human nature, but in our text, God removes all blame shifting out of the way. He says, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself..." (Hosea 13:9). You and I are responsible in the sight of God for what we do, for how we live, for the actions we take. It is no good saying, we have done this because of our environment, because of our parents, because of the devil, because of our upbringing, because of others, but rather, we are responsible for our own actions. So then the force of the words, "...thou hast...", comes home.

The first thing we see is human responsibility in all actions. An individual does not do right that does not intend to do right. It does not happen by accident that an individual does right, but rather, they do right because they intend to do right. And by the same token, we do wrong because we intend and purpose to do wrong. We see human responsibility laid down in the Word of God.

The second thing in this message I want you to notice is:

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION

(Read Revelation 8, 9).

We have a divinely-given outline for the book of Revelation. We read: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1:19).

The things which John had seen are in Revelation 1; the things which are, are in Revelation 2 and 3, which have to do with the seven churches of Asia; and the things which shall be hereafter, which refer to all that follows, begins with Revelation 4.

When we come to Revelation 4 and 5, which is in reality the beginning of "things which shall be hereafter," we find that these chapters teach us that there are going to be some gospel results growing out of the preaching of the Word of God. I would like to keep emphasizing the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is not going to be defeated. Even though things look mighty discouraging throughout all the pictures which we have of the seven churches, our Lord isn't going to be defeated. Revelation 4 and 5 show us that there will be gospel results, and that there will be a group of people that will be saved, even during the period which we call the "Church Age," in which we now live.

When we come to Revelation 6 and 7, we get actually the beginning of the Tribulation period. The Tribulation period is that period that extends between the rapture and the revelation — that is, in between the time that Christ comes in the air and catches the saints away, and the time when He comes back to this world to set up His millennial kingdom. Other Scriptures, particularly in Daniel, indicate that the Tribulation period will be about seven years, with approximately the first half being very peaceful, when it looks as though the Anti-Christ is really a God-send to the world. Along about the middle of the Tribulation period he begins to show his true colors. Then it is that one plague after another falls upon this world that has been forever in rebellion against God, with the result that the Tribulation period is not only a time of Jacob's trouble, but a time of trouble and sorrow to all the nations of the world.

When we studied Revelation 6 and 7, we saw that when each of the seals was broken, a terrible plague fell upon the world. Now when we come to chapters 8 and 9, we find as the trumpets are blown, that likewise a plague falls upon humanity. Just as with the breaking of each of the seals a plague came upon the world, so with the blowing of each of these trumpets, a plague falls upon the earth.

I. The Silence In Heaven.

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's

hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound" (Rev. 8:1-6).

Notice that it tells us that there was a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. One old boy back up in the hills said that the fact that there was a silence in heaven proved to him that there wouldn't be any women in heaven. Beloved, I think he was very much wrong in regard to his application of the Scripture. I think that there is a reason for that silence. I think that God caused the activity of heaven to come to an end long enough that He might hear the prayers of the saints of God that were being saved dur-



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ing the Tribulation period.

In the preceding chapter we have the story of a group of people that are saved even out of the Tribulation period. It tells us that there are 12,000 out of each tribe, or 144,000 Jews in all, and in addition to these a mighty remnant of Gentiles out of each nation which no man was able to number. Now, beloved, these individuals that are saved, pray; and God causes the activity of heaven by way of plagues that come when the seals are broken and later when the trumpets are blown — God causes this activity by way of judgment falling upon the world to cease, that He might hear the prayers of those that have been saved during the Tribulation period.

Might I remind you of the words of the poet, when he said: "The mightiest force of the universe, It is not of wind or air; 'Tis the fervent prayer of God's redeemed, Poured out at a throne of prayer."

Beloved, I believe with all my heart that there is no greater privilege that has been given to the sons of God than the privilege of prayer; yet we use that privilege but very, very little. Notice how important prayer is. It was so important that our Lord stops the activity of heaven for half an hour and He causes all the plagues that are falling upon the world with the breaking of the seals and with the subsequent blowing of the trumpets to come to an end for a space of half an hour, that He might hear the prayers of those who have been redeemed during the Tribulation period.

Let me remind you that it is the Lord Jesus Christ who makes these prayers acceptable unto God, for we read: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before

the throne" (Rev. 8:3).

If you will go back to the Old Testament, you will have the historical background for this. The high priest, in order that he might illustrate to us the fact of Christ as our Intercessor, would put incense upon the golden altar where there was continually burning coals, and as the incense was placed upon the burning coals, the smoke would ascend up as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ as our High Priest, who makes our prayers acceptable unto God.

I would remind you also that it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is our Priestly Intercessor today. Listen; "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34).

Just as we find in the book of Revelation that this individual takes the golden censer with the incense and offers it with the prayers of the saints of God to make those prayers acceptable unto the Lord, so the Lord Jesus Christ is continually in the business of acting as Intercessor in our behalf.

Beloved, do you realize that if it were not for the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Intercessor, that even our prayers would not be acceptable unto God? We are saved by grace, by what Jesus Christ does; we are kept by the grace of God, and even when we pray it is the grace of God that makes our prayers acceptable unto the Father. Listen: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

Notice that expression, "helpeth our infirmities." In the Greek language, the original of this, there is but one word, "sun-anti-labeti," which means that our Lord works over against us, but when it was translated into the English language, we have the three words "helpeth our infirmities." I will give you an illustration that you might not forget this one word in the Greek language, "sun-anti-labeti."

Have you ever seen men working along side of the railroad track? Perhaps you've seen them pick up a cross tie or a railroad iron. They will put a grab hook on each side of that which they are going to carry and with one man on each side of it, they pick it up and carry it along together.

Beloved, the idea of this Greek word "sun-anti-labeti" is that the Holy Spirit works over against us. This means that the Holy Spirit works over against us, to help us along with our infirmities, for the simple reason that we don't know what to pray for. As I have said, God saves us by grace, He keeps us by grace, and when we pray, if it were not for the grace of God, not a prayer that we would pray would ever be acceptable unto the Father.

For what are these individuals praying? Beloved, I rather imagine that they are praying for

judgment to fall upon their enemies. We read: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).

When these individuals pray and when God given silence in heaven for half an hour to hear the prayers of these saints that are saved during the Tribulation period; I think that as they pray, God's trumpet judgments that fall, come as vengeance upon the world, in answer to their prayers. These individuals are saved during the Tribulation period. When they are saved, they refuse to give allegiance to the Anti-Christ any longer. As a result, they seal their testimony with their life's blood, and accordingly, they pray to God for vengeance, and for God to pour His wrath upon their adversaries.

Beloved, that is the way you and I ought to pray so far as our enemies are concerned. You have no business taking your enemies into your own hands. You have no business trying to handle your enemies yourself. The only thing that you and I ought to do is to look to the Lord, and depend upon Him that He will avenge His own. We read: "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7, 8).

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19, 20).

These individuals prayed for vengeance to fall upon their enemies. Beloved, when we have enemies we are not to seek to do them wrong. We are not to take vengeance upon those who differ with us. Instead, if I have an opportunity, God's Word teaches that I ought to give a cup of cold water to my enemy. I am taught that if I have an opportunity, I am to do good to that individual that has done evil to me, but at the same time I am to call upon God for vengeance to fall upon that enemy.

As these individuals thus pray, God stops all the activity of heaven long enough to hear the prayers of the saints of God.

I ask you, do you have some problems, some difficulties, some burdens? Has somebody slandered you? Has somebody spoken ill of you? Has somebody treated you in a way that has caused you to realize that that individual is definitely an enemy to you? Beloved, all I can say is: "Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there." That is the place for all the problems of this world.

When these saints that are saved during the Tribulation period take their burdens and problems to the Lord, God causes all the activity of heaven to cease for half an hour in order that He might hear their prayers.

II. The First Trumpet.

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up" (Rev. 8:7).

The archangel is now closing up the history of a doomed world and a judgment of hail

and fire mingled with blood falls upon the world.

Did you ever read in the Word of God that there is going to be a repetition of those plagues that are found in the book of Exodus? Listen: "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous things" (Micah 7:15).

Beloved, it is going to be like it was in the days when the children of Israel were coming out of the land of Egypt. Let's notice what happened: "And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and east; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunders and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer" (Ex. 9:23-28).

If God could do this in Moses' day, God can do the same thing today; and He can do the same thing in the Tribulation period. When this first trumpet blows, the arch-angel that is now closing up the history of a doomed world causes a judgment of hail, fire, and blood to issue upon the world, just like it happened in the period of the plagues of the Old Testament, and just like Micah tells us it will be repeated again at some future date.

Notice the result of this plague upon the world. It says that a "third part of trees was burnt up." Imagine a world that is burnt over like a forest fire. Imagine a world that is black to walk upon. Imagine a world with one-third of the trees gone. Imagine a world with the stumps of the trees left. Imagine a world with all the green grass gone.

Beloved, when all Christians are caught away, and the Holy Spirit is taken away, and when the Anti-Christ takes control, God gives this world over to those who are completely in rebellion against Him, and yet, when He does so; He sends upon them plague after plague.

III. The Second Trumpet.

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed" (Rev. 8:8, 9).

Beloved, this was not an ordinary mountain. John said that it was something which looked

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REVELATION

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like a burning, fiery mountain. Notice the effect when this burning fiery mountain was cast into the sea. A third part of the sea turned to blood, a third part of the creatures in the sea died, and a third part of the ships were destroyed. I tell you, beloved, God is showing His hand by way of vengeance with the blowing of each of these trumpets.

Let me pause long enough to say that I believe in the miraculous and the supernatural of the Bible. You can't understand anything about the Bible if you rule out the miraculous and the supernatural. This is nothing short of the hand of God and the power of God. These trumpets are blown and miraculously, these things take place. Beloved, I believe it, because the God of the Bible is the God of the miraculous, and the God of the supernatural.

IV. The Third Trumpet.

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters: and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters become wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (Rev. 8:10, 11).

This is a star-like meteor which falls out of the sky, with the result that it embitters the waters and the fountains of the waters. John says that it fell like a star, literally, a torch; and it fell upon the waters and put a curse upon the waters, with the result that when the waters were embittered, many died because of the poison that was imparted into those waters.

Can you imagine what wormwood tastes like? I can't, for I never did taste it. They say that quinine is a forty-first cousin to wormwood — that it is far removed from wormwood. Beloved, when God worked this miracle, the result was that many people died because of the poison that was imparted into the waters.

Now, beloved, this isn't the final hell; this is just hell on earth. This is just what happens during the Tribulation period. This is what happens when the saints of God are up yonder in the sky being married to the Lamb. This is what takes place here on earth when God pours out His vengeance upon a world that has forever been in rebellion against Him.

V. The Fourth Trumpet.

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise" (Rev. 8:12).

Here the luminaries of the skies are darkened by this judgment. One-third of the day becomes night and one-third of the night has neither moon nor stars. Let's notice what happened when the children of Israel were coming out of the land of Egypt: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even

darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings" (Exodus 10:21-23).

Notice, they had a similar darkness when the children of Israel were coming out of the land of Egypt. God put a judgment upon the land of Egypt — a judgment when they had darkness for three days time — the kind of darkness that they could even feel. During the Tribulation, God puts a curse upon the world in that the luminaries of the skies are darkened by way of judgment, whereby one-third of the day becomes night and one-third of the night has neither moon nor stars. I tell you, beloved, God is going to pour out His judgment of woe upon this world.

VI. Announcement of Future Judgments.

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound" (Rev. 8:13).

So fearful are the judgments that are yet to come that a special messenger is sent to announce them. What has happened is only preliminary to what is yet to follow. It is bad enough when the sun turns black and the moon refuses to shine, and when star-like meteors fall out of the skies and embitter the water so that men die from the drinking of the fountains of waters. It is bad enough when the world is burnt over so that one-third of the trees are gone and only the stumps are left, and only blackened ground remains to walk upon, with all the green grass gone. Beloved, that is only play in comparison to the judgments that are yet to come that God sends a special messenger to announce what is about to take place.

VII. The Fifth Trumpet.

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of that pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And

they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two more hereafter" (Rev. 9:1-12).

The star that is spoken of is Satan, and with the key that he has in his hand, Satan himself opens the bottomless pit and breaks down the wall between earth and hell. As the people of this world have preferred to serve the devil, God now allows them to have a full experience of his administrations.

These locusts that are let loose are supernatural, infernal and not earthly locusts. Furthermore, these locusts couldn't hurt anybody but the unsaved. It says, "but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

Talk about the security of the saved! When I saw this for the first time to realize that when hell is turned loose, it can't hurt the person who has the seal of God in his forehead, it thrilled my heart to know that God's child is secure forever.

As these supernatural locusts were unable to hurt the saints of God who had the seal of God in their foreheads, so all hell can't hurt a child of God. If you have the seal of God and are a child of God, then you have the greatest assurance in this world that all hell can't touch you. Listen: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38, 39).

Here Paul mentions nine agencies — infernal, internal and external — and he says that none of these nine, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.

Notice again; "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand" (John 10:28, 29).

I'll never forget when I was in a little country town in eastern Kentucky waiting to see a man. I sat out in front of the courthouse and read my Bible. While I was there an old country boy came by, and seeing me reading my Bible he wanted a conversation. As always, I was glad to listen to anybody who wants to talk about the Lord. That country lad sat down beside me and the more he talked with me the more I listened with rapt attention. He might have looked "seedy" but he certainly knew something about the Word of God. He said, "Martha and Mary were two unusual characters, but Mary chose that part that shall not be taken away from her." He said, "That is security." I said, "Thank the Lord for this old country boy who came along and gave to me a lesson in the Bible that I had never seen before."

Beloved, as Mary chose that

which shall never be taken from her, so every child of God has something that can't be taken away from him. Even in the tribulation, those that have been sealed of God can't be hurt by hell.

I am not one bit afraid of hell. I am not in the least alarmed about it. All hell can't hurt the man who has been sealed by God.

Notice whom these locusts did hurt. It tells us that they tormented the unsaved people for five months. These locusts couldn't kill them. They had the sting of a scorpion in their tails. Even though they tormented them for five months time, they couldn't kill them.

Even the unsaved couldn't kill themselves, for it says, "And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

I read a few weeks ago about a man in California who was determined to kill himself. He decided he would take a big dose of sleeping pills, which he did. He decided he would hang himself and shoot himself at the same time. He got up on a chair and thought by hanging himself and shooting himself and taking a big dose of sleeping pills that he was sure to die. As he stood there to shoot himself, he shot the rope in two and he fell. The people heard the noise and came to see what had happened. When they discovered the empty bottle of sleeping pills they rushed him to the hospital, and they pumped his stomach. He tried to kill himself by the sleeping pills, by shooting himself, and by hanging himself, yet he failed in all three ways.

Beloved, this crowd will seek death, but they will be unable to die.

There is no indication that these locusts could be caught or killed. Their leader was none other than the devil. The word "Apollyon" literally means "destroyer." No wonder after the first four trumpets had blown, that God caused that special messenger to glide through the heavens to announce the judgment that is to come upon them.

VIII. The Sixth Trumpet.

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God. Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and the them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that

they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev. 9:13-21).

Notice these four angels that are loosed from the great river Euphrates: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (II Peter 2:4).

These particular individuals in the realm of evil powers are superior to other demons, and they are loosed from the great river Euphrates.

I wish you would think with me for a moment concerning the river Euphrates. It has been the sea of Satan's work all through the years. The Garden of Eden was located along the Euphrates River. It was there that the devil first came into the Garden of Eden. It was there the devil told the first lie that was ever told. It was there that the first murder was ever committed. Now, these four angels that were bound in the great river Euphrates are loosed. They had been prepared for thirteen months difficulty so far as this world was concerned. A day, a month, a year and an hour is thirteen months.

There was a host of infernal cavalry that followed them. It says that there were two hundred thousand thousand, or, in other words, two hundred million of these infernal cavalry that followed these four angels, and as they went forth. Out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. In other words, this crowd literally belched hell upon the world, and as a result, one-third of the human family was killed.

Beloved, what happened to the two-thirds of humanity that was left? Don't you think that they had seen enough trouble that they should have repented and turned to the Lord? God's Word tells us concerning them: "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands" (Rev. 9:20).

"Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev. 9:21).

Notice that there were murders, sorceries, fornication and thefts going on during the tribulation period. In other words, it shows us the state of society both before and after the plagues.

Notice it says that this crowd did not repent. Can you imagine a world passing through one trumpet judgment after another and not repenting? Can you imagine a world suffering as they suffered as each of these trumpet judgments fall upon them? Can you imagine a world that is overrun by two hundred million calvary-men, with one-third of their friends killed? Can't you imagine how much they must have suffered, yet they did not repent of their sins.

We read: "Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him" (Prov. 27:22).

"And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

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REVELATION

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How many times have people thought surely when trouble comes it will cause men to turn to God! Look at all the trouble that comes upon this world during the tribulation period, yet men don't repent. Beloved, if a dead man were to come through yonder door and come up here and preach to you of the world beyond, you wouldn't believe it one bit more than you would when a preacher stands here and tells you he same thing. It would not have one bit more effect. Why? Because you don't receive the Word of God except as the Holy Spirit reveals it unto you, and if the Holy Spirit doesn't enable you to receive it, you are not going to receive it, regardless of who preaches it unto you.

Look at this world — trouble, trouble, trouble! God sends one heartache after another but they don't repent. They go right on in their sins.

In the Old Testament we have a picture of Pharaoh as the lightning danced all around him. He would lift one foot to let one bolt go by, and he would lift the other foot to let another bolt of lightning go by. He said, Pray to the Lord that He will stop this lightning and I will let you go free. Just as soon as God stopped the disturbance of the elements and the lightning ceased, old Pharaoh was just as big a devil as ever. Why? Because the Holy Spirit wasn't in it — he had not been drawn of God.

I want to insist upon this fact that men are not saved because trouble comes upon them. They are not saved because of any emotional experience that they might have. Rather, the Spirit of God must bear witness within their hearts before they will ever be saved. That is why it is absolutely foolish for a preacher to tell an emotional story at the end of his sermon and think that this is going to be the means of causing men to be saved.

One of the boys at Asbury College at Wilmore, Ky., told me himself that they taught the young preachers at that school just when to cry in their sermon to have an effect on their congregation. Can you imagine anything much more artificial than that? Let me tell you, beloved, all the pathetic stories that you might tell, and all the tears that you might shed will never be the means of saving one single soul. The Holy Spirit must draw men if they are saved. Listen: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44).

Beloved, if the Holy Spirit doesn't draw him, he will never be saved. Let all the trouble you can think of come to a man, but it won't change his heart one particle. Nothing, I say, will change a man except the Holy Spirit as He applies the Word of God to that man's life.

May God help you to realize this, that the one thing that we need to do is to preach the Word, and when we preach the Word we need to depend upon the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and applies it to the lives of men, then and then only, may we expect results. Then and then only may we expect men to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God bless you!

DESTROY

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II. How Individuals Destroy Themselves

1. The first way that individuals destroy themselves is through sin. When you do something wrong, you think no one is going to find out about it. Sometimes, nobody does find out about it, but by and by, it comes to the surface and that sin destroys your life. In Numbers 32:23, we read this, "...be sure your sin will find you out."

Sin might not find you out today, it might not find you out tomorrow, it might not come to the surface next year, but as the time rolls on, by and by, that sin will find you out. Through sin, individuals destroy themselves. When we sin, God knows about it because the sin testifies to God that we have done wrong. In Isaiah 59:12 we read this, "For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us..."

You understand, that when you and I sin, those sins go up before God and they testify against us. Unless we have had those sins washed away in the Blood of Calvary's Lamb, they will meet us in the judgment. Unless we have been judged at Calvary, those sins will stand before God and condemn us. So then you see, an individual is destroyed through sin.

Some destroy themselves through selling themselves to a sinful life. We read about King Ahab in the Bible, "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up" (I Kings 21:25). Ahab's wife, Jezebel, was wicked; and she planted thoughts in the mind of Ahab, she propelled him in wickedness. But God said, Listen Ahab, you are guilty, you are responsible for your own sins. What did Ahab do? He sold himself to work wickedness, he destroyed himself through sin.

2. Being unconcerned about God is another way that individuals may destroy themselves.

As a matter of fact, we have a man like that in the Bible. In the book of Daniel and chapter 5, we have the case of Belshazzar. You understand that Nebuchadnezzar had one of the greatest kingdoms the world has ever seen. He reigned over Babylon and Babylon at that time was the greatest power that ever existed. By and by, Belshazzar came to the throne. Belshazzar was unlike Nebuchadnezzar who had an unusual experience. There was a time when Nebuchadnezzar did not recognize God at all. God caused him to be driven out of the kingdom as a wild man. God took his sanity from him, and Nebuchadnezzar lived in the fields like a wild animal. Then, one day Nebuchadnezzar recognized that God was on the throne, and God restored his sanity to him. God caused him to ascend back into the throne of that great kingdom. Belshazzar, as a little boy, knew about that story. It was the talk of the kingdom. Belshazzar knew all about it, but do you know what his attitude was? He was unconcerned about God. We read of a night when Belshazzar threw a party, listen: "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have

brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified" (Daniel 5:22, 23).

He had no concern for God and as a result, we read in verse 30, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain." He had destroyed himself by being unconcerned about God. Maybe you are destroying yourself because you are unconcerned about God. You are too concerned about the things of this life, and the things of this world. Maybe in your unconcern, you like Belshazzar, trample the things of God underfoot. You are on the road to destruction.

3. The third way in which individuals can destroy themselves is through being unprepared concerning God, by having an unprepared heart.

We have the case of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. The Bible says this about him, "And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD" (II Chronicles 12:14).

From this verse in the Bible, you understand that Rehoboam was on the road to destruction because he had not prepared his heart to seek the Lord. Rehoboam ascended the throne as Solomon's son. Solomon had a great kingdom; and Rehoboam, his son, was about to take command of this great kingdom. The kingdom then split into two parts — ten tribes made up what is called Israel, and the other two tribes made up what is called Judah. Rehoboam found himself to be king over the two tribes that made up the kingdom of Judah. Rehoboam still had a wonderful opportunity at the beginning, even though the kingdom had split, God blessed him, but he lost that opportunity. The true believers that lived in Israel, in the other ten tribes, those that were God's people, were fed up because the government had brought in a calf to worship. They did not want to live there in that kingdom. Do you know what they did? They moved over into Rehoboam's kingdom, and with this godly element God blessed Rehoboam's kingdom. Listen to what the Bible says, "And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts." They are the godly people, they are moving out and they are moving into Rehoboam's kingdom.

"For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam (that is the other king) and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord:

And he (that is Jeroboam) ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made.

And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers.

So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years:

for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon" (II Chronicles 11:14-17).

From these verses in the Bible, we understand that this man, Rehoboam, had a wonderful opportunity as he walked in the ways of his father Solomon and David. God blessed the little kingdom. He destroyed himself by not preparing his heart. Now I want to give you a little insight into what that means. That means that he was wishy-washy concerning the Word of God. That means that he was not strong concerning the Bible, but rather he was wishy-washy about it. We have a clue given us as to his unprepared heart in II Chronicles 13:7, it says,

"And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them."

The word "tenderhearted" means "a soft heart" in other words, Rehoboam did not have any backbone. He was wishy-washy. There are many people like that, and there are many preachers like that. We usually think of this as a preacher's sin, but it can be anyone's sin. Whatever you might be, if you are like that, you are on the road to destruction; and you will destroy yourself. This attitude led Rehoboam to forsake the Bible. In II Chronicles 12:1, we read this, "And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him." This individual forsook the Bible. Why did he do that? All because he had not prepared his heart; all because he was weak in the Word of God.

4. The fourth thing that destroys individuals is false religion.

King Ahaz destroyed himself through false religion, listen to what the Bible says, "For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were in the ruin of him, and of all Israel" (II Chronicles 28:23).

From this verse in the Bible, we see that he was ruined through false religion; and not only he, but all of Israel likewise was ruined. False religion and false teaching destroys more people than anything else. If you want to destroy yourself just get away from the anchor of the Bible. You are in trouble when your religion does not regard this book as God's verbally inspired Word. When you get away from that, you are into false ways and into a false religion, and it will destroy you just like it destroyed Ahaz. False religion not only destroyed Ahaz, but it destroyed those whom Ahaz had influence over. He had great influence over Israel; and because false religion had gotten to him, he destroyed himself and Israel with him. Those that go that way destroy many. Those who preach that which is contrary to the Bible do more harm than all the weapons of war. One sin always leads to more sin. Do you know what else Ahaz did because of false religion? He abandoned the house of God. Listen:

"And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD.." (II Chronicles 28:24).

Here is a man that closed the house of God. You say, "Well, I would never do anything like that, preacher." Listen, do you ever attend the house of God? If you do not attend God's house, you might just as well nail the door shut. Ahaz through false religion destroyed himself. Our worship and religion must be based solely on the Bible. Maybe you are on the road to destruction like Ahaz.

5. Individuals are destroyed through the love of money.

In I Timothy, chapter 6:9-10, we read this, "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

I have often heard people say that, money is the root of all evil, but the Bible does not say that. The Bible says it is the love of money that is the root of all evil. You know, it is, more times than not, a grater blessing when God keeps us poor than when God gives us riches. Riches will hurt you more than being poor according to the Bible. When a person is rich, when they acquire much money, they are placed in a very slippery place, a very dangerous place, where the temptations are far greater than when a person is poor. You and I ought to pray to be poor instead of praying for worldly goods. Many are on the road to destruction because of their love of money and their efforts to get that money. You understand, that you can destroy yourself through the love of money.

III. God's Stop Sign

I have been talking to you about the various roads of destruction. Perhaps you are on such a road. God has put a stop sign in your pathway, listen: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but..." (Hosea 13:9).

This word "but" is like a stop sign on the road to destruction. When you see that word "but," it means stop; it is a stop sign. God says "stop" when He says "...but in me..." He is saying that you have got to look to God, that God has got to be your only hope. You are on the road to destruction, but God has thrown up a stop sign. In this book of Hosea, there is an interesting prophecy just a few verses below our text that tells us the one to look to. Listen: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction..." (Hosea 13:14).

You understand that this verse in the Bible can refer to only one individual. There has only been one individual that defeated death, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ when He rose from the dead. We are to look to the One that rose from the dead, Jesus, who died on Calvary's cross to save sinners, who took

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sin in His own body and endured the wrath and the judgment of God and paid for those sins. He was buried and then God raised Him from the dead. He is alive forevermore. He is the One to look to. He is the only mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. You say, "How can I be saved by looking to Him?" It is a matter of faith. In the last six thousand years, from the days of the garden of Eden until now, God has never saved one individual on the basis of their prayer to Him. He has never forgiven one sin on the basis of their asking to be forgiven. You say, "How has He done it?" He has done it on the basis of redemption. Jesus died and rose again and shed His Precious Blood. That is the only basis on which God forgives any individual's sins. Stop on the road to destruction, look to Him. Trust in Jesus as your only hope. May God bless you!

THE TRUTH

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apples. Besides; what does the beginning have to do with the now?

Let us make an honest examination of country music as it is now and decide whether or not God's people should be listening to it. We want to examine this in the same way we examined rock music. I must admit that I do not have as much information concerning country music as I do concerning rock. However, the information I have is conclusive. I had someone tell me concerning country music, after they heard this sermon, that some of it is good. I told them that none of it is good. Some of it might not be bad, but it is not good. I think the reason I have less information on country is because it is easier to offend young people than old people. I have books and sermons against rock music, but have not been able to find the same material against country music. It is time we preachers preached the whole truth and let the chips fall where they may. If the old deacon who is the best tither we have in the church gets angry, then so be it. We have hit only the youth long enough. When I preached this sermon in Gladwin, I preached two sermons. Sunday morning against Rock and then told the young people to relax, that at night we would deal with the older folk's country music. I have found that a lot of times, young people will be more honest about things such as this than the older people. Before we begin with this assault on country music, I urge you to be honest in examining what I have to say. Be honest with your children about your music and theirs. If you feel I misrepresent country music, I issue a challenge to you that you prove me wrong.

Let me now begin to examine the men of country music. Just because many of them are a little more clean cut and dress a little nicer than rock singers, does not mean their morals are any better. First, let us look at Waylon Jennings. Is this man any better than most rock musicians? He is an admitted user and seller of drugs. If I unders-

tand correctly, some of those drugs went to youths. The same could be said about his sidekick Willie Nelson. I know what you are thinking, "Willie did all that good for farmers."

Let me remind you that his partner in farm-aid was John Cougar Mellencamp, a rock singer. Let me remind you that a lot of the artists performing were rock singers. Let me remind you that this sort of aid was started by rock singers. Besides, does a little bit of good make up for a whole lot of bad? Let us look at one of the most popular country female vocalists, Dolly Parton. I don't have to tell you what one of her most famous assets are. I know she sung that precious little song, "Coat of many colors." I know she used to sing a lot of gospel songs with Porter Wagoner. I also know she starred in the movie "Best Little Whorehouse in Texas." A movie that I understand had an excessive amount of profanity and nudity. Is she the kind of idol God's people should have? Should we, as God's people, be supporting such a woman as this? Should we be buying her records and making her the popular person she is? The answer is a resounding, No!

Think for a few moments about the ever popular George Jones. Every one knows this man is an alcoholic. He is controlled by alcohol. He didn't get this way by just having an occasional drink. Am I wrong in thinking that he has been married and divorced several times? Is he really any better a person than the rock singers, or do you just like his singing through his nose better than you like theirs? Think about Hank Williams Jr. This is a man that I have no use for at all. Dan Phillips sent me a clipping from a newspaper, where people wrote in and complained about him at a concert by him they attended. In the day in which we live, I assume things must have gotten pretty bad for people to write and complain to the newspaper. Their complaint spoke about extremely foul language and lots of it. They complained about sexual references made by him. They complained about the way he treated his band. Should we support people such as this? How can you stand to listen to someone who is so immoral. We know his history of drinking and drug use. Everybody feels sorry for him because he is walking in his Daddy's shoes. I'm walking in my dad's shoes, but I don't go out and get drunk and worry about everybody comparing me to daddy. Take a look at "The Killer", Jerry Lee Lewis.

Here is a most famous country singer who has almost killed himself with his indulgence in alcohol and drugs. He is a man who was guilty of tax evasion. This man presents an attitude that is totally foreign to God's Word. That attitude is one of great arrogance. I will admit, that he can really play the piano, but so can a lot of our women who play in our churches every Sunday. Should we be supporting this man so he can cheat the government?

Think about the "great high priest" of country music, Conway Twitty. To me, the name itself implies blasphemy. Jesus is the great high Priest and to compare anything on this earth to Him is blasphemy. There is no one living, in any style of music that sings more ungodly and filthy songs than Conway Twitty. His songs are mostly filled with sexual innuendo. Maybe that's why you like it.

This should be repulsive to us as God's people. I have heard it said that some listeners try to live vicariously through these songs. Is that true of you? Then why do you listen? Why is it that you catch yourself singing along with this trash? Perhaps the worst of the bunch is Johnny Paycheck. He is one of the most godless men in the entertainment world. Here is a man involved in drinking and drugs. He is a man who was recently brought up on assault and weapons charges. He sings songs about almost nothing but rebellion. He sings songs that are very sacrilegious. It is an insult to the God who saved you to listen to this man sing. He is not just a disgrace to saved people, he is a disgrace to society.

The Kendals are a very popular father and daughter duet. Their songs rank up there with the filthiest of all songs. The father should wash the daughter's mouth out with soap, but he has not been much of an example to her. I think every song I've ever heard or seen by this duet has to do with sex. Either pre-marital or adultery. God's people have no business listening to this trash. Before you are too hard on Madonna being shown nude in Penthouse and Playboy magazine, let me ask you a question. Do you watch Hee-Haw? You should be ashamed! There have been at least two of the girls from that show to pose nude. Are they any better than Madonna? Surely not.

Before leaving this part of the subject, let me deal with one more point. Someone once told me: "at least they sing a little gospel music too." Bless their hearts. They must all be saved then. The fact that they sing a little gospel means we should overlook all the trash they sing? I consider it an insult to good gospel music to be sung by these people. They sing their filth all night and then close it all up with a gospel song. Indeed, the Devil is a sly old fox. I think he works in these singers to do this just to keep the Christians coming back. You have fallen for the trap. Maybe these singers think that God will forgive them all their filth if they just sing an occasional hymn. I might mention that the practice of these artists singing gospel music is not as popular now as it once was. Thank God for that. If they pull this stunt, you and they should feel like hypocrites. One of the most popular country groups today sold out gospel music for the money of country. (The Oak Ridge Boys). Surely after reading about the men of country music, you will give it up. You will shut that trash off your radio. You will not allow that blasphemous stuff to be played in your home. You will tell your children that you have been just as wrong as they have and you both will give up this ungodly music.

The second thing we want to notice about country music is its message. I hope to illustrate to you that there is no message in country music for saved people. I think the best way to do this is give you some titles and words to country songs. Many of these you will recognize. Some are old and some are new. I feel they are a fair representation of country music. I know I am not just picking out the bad and neglecting the good. There is no good. Don't misjudge me and appease yourself by saying I am not being fair to country music.

Let us start with the words

from a number one song of a few years ago. It goes like this. "Somewhere between Playboy Magazine and next Tuesday nights P.T.A.; Somewhere between a honky-tonk queen and what all the dog did today:

If a wife and a lover could be one and the same, what a beautiful world this would be, and there would be us, somewhere between lust and sitting home watching TV" Is that the type of music we should be listening to? If we heard those words from a rock singer from our kids' radios we would have a fit. We would tell them just how sorry and low down those "rockers" are. These words are a slap in the face to the institution of marriage. They make a mockery of a sacred and Biblical state. They imply that it is not possible for a married couple to have a satisfactory sex life without adultery. No wonder there are so many divorces amongst those who say they are saved. You are listening to songs such as this that tell you your marriage is doomed unless you cheat. The music many of you listen to, advises you to commit adultery. This song, as well as many others goes contrary to everything the Bible teaches about marriage. This trash should not be listened to by saved people. To argue this point is to bring shame upon your profession of faith. Don't think for a moment that when this song or songs like this come on, you will turn the radio off. It just doesn't happen like that. Music can be like a drug, the more you hear it, the more you want to hear it. I want you to read those words one more time. Is it possible to be more ungodly in an approach to marriage. There was a time when a song such as this would not have been allowed on the radio. Now it is not only allowed but does very well. Country music has gone the limit and this song is an example of the limit they have gone to.

Barbara Mandrel is a very popular female country vocalist. If I am not mistaken, she has, in the past few years won several country music awards. The words of her song, "Burning the midnight oil" are filthy words about cheating. She sings: "Tonight, I'll cheat again, and tomorrow I'll be sorry." There seems to me to be the implication that if you are sorry tomorrow, then cheating is all right. There are other songs by her that are as bad, but I must hurry this article to a close. I said earlier that there is probably not a more filthy mouthed singer than Conway Twitty.

Listen to the words of one of his biggest hits. "I can tell you've never been this far before." I will stop right there. I assure you the words are not about him trying to get her not to go that far now. How about his song, "Lying here beside you with Linda on my mind." Are these songs that we should listen to? Is this a man we should support by buying his records, listening to him sing or attending his concerts? God forbid that we sink that low. I believe it was Mel Tillis that sung the song: "I got the hoss and you got the saddle, let's ride, ride, ride." Someone told me that there was nothing wrong with that song other than my own imagination. There must have been some others with the same imagination. This song was banned from some country radio stations. In this day and time that is not a good sign that there was nothing wrong with it. Any person who can listen to that

song and think they are just talking about going for a horseback ride together is either mentally deficient or willingly ignorant. For times sake let me run through some words and titles without so much comment. I think the comments I have made on the preceding songs will suffice in the main concerning the following songs. Jerry Lee Lewis spurs middle aged men to cheating and divorce with his song "Middle aged crazy, trying to prove he still can." How about the song, "If loving you is wrong, then I don't want to be right." Forget what the Bible says. The attitude taught here is that right and wrong, don't matter. That it is better to be wrong in God's eyes and go to hell than to do what is right. There is the song: "It don't feel like sinning to me." We all know what they are talking about. The "it" that don't feel like sinning is illicit sex. This doesn't surprise me. The evidence is against them for knowing what sinning is. They are showing us that they have no moral standards. They are portraying a philosophy that if it feels good, then it must not be a sin. Tom T. Hall tells us the key to happiness does not rest in Christ but is found in "younger women, older whiskey and faster horses." Is this the standard we want to hear? Is it right for us to listen with admiration to things that are totally unscriptural?

JUDGMENT

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was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: Naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:31-46).

Beloved, it is a privilege to speak on this great subject: "The Judgment of the Nations." It is with delight and enthusiasm that I preach on this great subject. My heart leaps

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Throw mud and you will have dirty hands, whether or not the mud hits the mark.

JUDGMENT

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with joy at the opportunity to speak on the judgment of the nations.

Beloved, a quick and short review of the various judgments of the Word of God becomes very important with regards to our present subject if we are to properly understand the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are five judgments that I want to very briefly consider. (1). The believer's sin. Now, beloved, that was taken care of on mount calvary when our Lord Jesus Christ paid the ransom price that God the Father required for His elect.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (I Corinthians 6:20).

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:4-7).

Now, I do not have enough time to develop this subject, only to say this, I am so thankful that God saw fit to save me and then place me into His church and allow this poor wretched sinner to proclaim the grace of God. (2). The Believer's Works. Brethren, that will take place when almighty God raptures the saints of God before the great tribulation period begins. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).

(3). The Nation of Israel, The Jews. Again, the Word of God is very clear that "the great tribulation period" is basically determined upon God's chosen elect people, the Jew.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but

not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Daniel 9:24-27).

During this particular time (Judgment of the nation of Israel), they will be chastened of the Lord and brought into subjection. God is the one that will bring about national forgiveness on the part of the Jew. That has been His business along and will always be His business.

(4). The Wicked Dead of all Ages. That judgment will take place after the 1,000 year reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. All those present without exception will be cast into the lake of fire.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11-15).

(5). The Judgment of the Nations: Matthew 25:31-46. Beloved, the Word of God is very clear in my personal opinion as to when this judgment will take place. It will take place at the close of "the great tribulation period" (Jacob's trouble — Jeremiah 30:7) and just before our Lord Jesus Christ establishes His 1,000 year reign.

Furthermore, let me take just a moment of your time to define for you folk that are involved and to show the differences between this judgment of the nations and the great white throne judgment of Revelation twenty. (1). The Son of Man as found in verse 31 is the Lord Jesus Christ. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory" (Matthew 25:31). (2). The holy angels as found in verse 31 are those "good angels" that refused to follow and obey the command and wishes of Lucifer (Satan) — Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:1-26. "And all the holy angels with him" (Matthew 25:31). (3). The sheep, as found in verse 32 are those believers that are described as righteous. "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32). (4). The goats, as found in verse 32 that we have just read are those unbelievers that are described as wicked. (5). The King, as found in verse 40 is the Lord

Jesus Christ. "And the King shall answer and say unto them" (Matthew 25:40). (6). The brethren as found in verse 40 is the nation of Israel, The Jew. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). (7). The nations as found in verse 32 that we have already read, are the gentile people. (8). The church, the bride of Jesus Christ. Now, beloved, these folk are not mentioned in these verses as such. Nevertheless, we do know that our Lord will bring His bride back with Him when He comes to reign and rule for a 1,000 years. Now, I am convinced that there are several groups of redeemed folk present: Israel, the family of God and the Lord's true church. You can make of the church of God what you want, but I am more and more convinced in my study of the Holy Scriptures that when it is done and said, you will find only those who are members of our Lord's true churches making up the bride. Brethren, if I am wrong, and I do not think that I am, the Lord will and can straighten me out on the matter. But until then, I am not going to budge in my own conviction of the matter.

Now, the matter of this "judgment" being totally different from the "great white throne judgment." A number of things needs to be considered at this point in our conversation. (1). A 1,000 years can be found between the judgment of the nations and the great white throne judgment. (2). There is no mention of resurrection in the Judgment of the Nations whereas in the judgment of the great white throne all wicked dead will be resurrected and brought before their judge, the Lord Jesus Christ. (3). All of those at the great white throne judgment will be cast into the lake of fire whereas the judgment of the nations some will be saved and some will be lost.

Lastly, and very important in our introduction remarks, is the time schedule of these events. Some of our brethren have changed their position with regards to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. As to how a-millennialism has crept into our ranks, I'll never understand that development. Beloved, I am convinced that the Word of God teaches a pre-tribulation rapture of the saints of god and that our lord will return before the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ begins. If you have any questions regarding this, may I suggest that you read Thomas Paul Simmons book, "Systematic Study of Bible Doctrines." Twenty some years ago, I bought that book from Calvary Baptist Church when Brother John R. Gilpin was pastor and editor of this great church and paper, The Baptist Examiner. That book made me a believer in the pre-millennial position of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of Brother T.P. Simmons book, The Baptist Examiner and the Word of God, I am more than ever convinced of my present position. Dr. W.H. Griffith Thomas wrote concerning the issue of a general judgment and had this to say. "There is not a general judgment; that is not found in scripture." Dr. Arno C. Gaebelein also wrote along the same idea. "There is not a line of Scripture which teaches such a universal judgment." He then continues, "The scene

takes place after His visible and glorious appearing as Son of Man and later His elect (Israel) has been gathered from the four corners of the world."

Matthew 24 and 25 have been called the Olivet discourse and I believe that these two chapters are basically speaking about the great tribulation and the events that will take place after the rapture of the saints. Beloved, in these two chapters (Matthew 24-25) our Lord is speaking about what will happen after the rapture of the saints of Jesus Christ. If we could understand all that, then our doctrine of last things (Eschatology) would not prevent us from mis-using Holy Scriptures. Nevertheless, at this point in time (Matthew 25:31-46), we are looking at our Lord and He is judging the nations — the people of the world.

Verse 31 is very plain as to when this all takes place — "When the Son of man shall come in his glory." As the Lord is ready to establish His Kingdom, then He will gather all nations — vs. 32. Will you please note with me that it is our Lord Jesus Christ who will determine who the sheep and goats are and then, that He will direct them in one of two ways: The right or left hand of the Lord — verse 32-33. There seems to be some what of a disagreement as to who the sheep and goats nations are! Some have argued that this is a general judgment of all who ever lived and therefore they would equate it with the great white throne judgment of Revelation twenty. While others would insist that it is a judgment of nations — nations that have existed from the time of human history until the present hour under consideration. Then, there are those who would teach that it is referring only to those nations present during the tribulation period. The books written on this subject give all of the above ideas with one more — That this is a judgment of individuals within the different nations. Beloved, the Bible gives to us a number of different classes of people: The Jew, the Gentile, the family of God and the church of God. The Church is not in question here, for she has already been judged and has become the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews are here mentioned as brethren and therefore are not being judged. The nations, as such, in the Word of God oftentimes refer to gentile people. It is therefore my opinion that individual persons within the gentile world will be under consideration here in our text. We have already noted that our God is in the business of saving individuals, not nations. We also know that only saved individuals are going to be allowed to enter into the millennial kingdom as citizens. Therefore it becomes very obvious that the new birth experience must be the criterion here. How? Beloved, if you would stop and think for just a brief moment, only those who have been born again by the Spirit of God would want to treat the Jewish people kindly during the great tribulation period. That should not surprise us — the Word of God is plain and clear that the natural man will only do those things that will enhance and help him personally. Beloved, during the great tribulation period it is not going to be healthy to respect and help the Jew. For those that do, their very life is going to be at stake. It is, therefore, only

reasonable to conclude that those who have had a changed heart would ever dare to help the Jew.

Perhaps I ought to take just a brief minute here. The eternal Word of God is clear that one is saved by faith and only by faith. Praise our God, it is not because of what we have done or could do, but by the grace of God. No one has ever been saved apart from the grace of God. No one ever will be. There has never been another way for sinful man to become reconciled to God. It is either God's way or there is no salvation. That was true in the Old Testament (Abraham believed God) and it is still true today (Ephesians 2:8-10). Therefore, we can conclude that the tribulation saints are going to be saved the same way as we were by God's elective grace. The Apostle Paul said, "You hath he quickened (Made Alive), who were dead in trespasses and sin" (Eph. 2:1).

Beloved, because of the work of GOD in the hearts of His elect, they are able to perform good works. Then, regardless of whether they be in the Old Testament period or present age or here in our Text, the great tribulation, those individuals who are saved will have the God-given ability to serve Him. So, these sheep nations will be those who have been saved by the grace of god.

Let me go one step further in this discussion. Their works are going to be the evidences of a work that has been done in their heart by the Holy Spirit. I have been convinced for years that is what James was talking about in his epistle. Works have never saved and will never save anyone. But for the one who has been made alive by the power of the Holy Spirit, that has been made possible.

May God bless us as we consider this great truth and may we thank Him for our salvation and the knowledge that He will not permit us to go through the tribulation period.

IS FOOT WASHING A CHURCH ORDINANCE?

by C.D. Cole

Is the washing of the saint's feet a church ordinance? On that memorable and portentous occasion, when our Lord washed His disciples' feet, saying: "If I then your lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye ought also to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14), was He instituting an ordinance to be observed by His churches during His absence? In reply to this question, human opinion is divided. The antimissionary denomination, the General Baptists, and some Missionary Baptists believe in and practice "foot-washing" as a church ordinance. The writer distinctly recalls having read in the Illinois Baptist a few years ago that the Concord Baptist Church had observed the ordinance of washing the saints' feet. And, no doubt, there are many individual members of Baptist

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WASHING

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churches who wonder why their church does not observe foot-washing. The writer, early in his ministry, faced this question with the resolve that, if the Scriptures so taught, he would recommend its observance to his church. In this article we give a "reason for the hope that is in us" in the hope that others may come to have a Scriptural motive for their attitude toward foot-washing as a church ordinance. We contend that foot-washing is not a church ordinance for the following reasons:

1. Nothing is said about foot-washing as a church ordinance in any of the church epistles.

Surely, if foot-washing was meant to be observed as a church ordinance, there would have been something said in the church epistles concerning its observance. We find ample instructions in the epistles to the churches relative to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, but not a word do we find about foot-washing.

2. It is not needed to picture the gospel of a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper preach the gospel. Baptism is a picture of the burial and resurrection of our Lord, while the supper shows His death till He comes. These set forth a full gospel, and there is no need for a third ordinance.

3. Where the washing of feet is mentioned in the New Testament it is an example of lowly service, but this is not true when it is practiced as a church ordinance.

Where foot-washing is observed as a church ordinance, no service is rendered; for those who practice it are careful to see that their feet are clean before going to observe the ordinance. So, whatever the motive may be, it is a mere ceremony, and no service is rendered.

4. I Timothy 5:10 shows that foot-washing was not practiced as a church ordinance.

This Scripture gives the qualifications necessary for a widow in order that she might be placed on the charity roll of the church. These qualifications require that she must have washed the saints' feet. Now, if foot-washing had been observed as a church ordinance, every member would have practiced it; and it would have been superfluous to specify it as a qualification for support from the church. This passage makes it clear that foot-washing was only an act of humble service in the home. And again we remind our readers that no service is done when foot-washing is observed as an ordinance in the church.

We come now to notice the thirteenth chapter of John, where we have the record of Christ washing the disciples' feet; after which He said to them: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." To prepare us for an understanding of this passage we want to notice the use of the word "water" throughout John's gospel. In the third chapter, where we have our Lord's conversation with

Nichodemus, we read: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Water is here used in a figurative sense, referring to a spiritual birth. In the fourth chapter we have Christ's words to the woman at the well. There Christ said: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst..." (vs. 14). Here it is evident that water is used to represent that which is spiritual, and is not to be taken literally. In the seventh chapter we have the recorded utterance of Christ at the feast of the passover. Here we read: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If anyman thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive...) (vs. 37-39). Here it is expressly stated that water is a figure of the Holy Spirit. In the fifteenth chapter and third verse our Lord told His disciples that they were clean through the Word. The water that had cleansed them was the Word of God. Now, a careful reading of the thirteenth chapter will show that its use there is in harmony with the way it is used in every other place in John's gospel. Jesus Christ is giving, as it were, an illustrated address on the necessity of spiritual cleansing for His disciples. But the disciples were dull of comprehension, and did not get the intended lesson. When Peter expressed surprise that his Lord should wash his feet, Christ said: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (vs. 7). Peter did know that Christ proposed to render lowly and menial service, but he did not understand the spiritual significance of His action. Peter said: "Thou shalt never wash my feet" (vs. 8). To which Christ replied: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." In these words Christ was emphasizing a need deeper than mere physical cleanliness. He was referring to the need of spiritual cleansing in order that Peter might have part with Him (not in Him). To have part in Christ is to receive the legal benefits of His shed blood. Every believer has this once for all. To have a part with Him is to have fellowship with Him in service. To have this, we must take care of our walk in this world, and provision must be made for our failure as we contract defilement in the way. In many passages, both in the Old and in the New Testaments, our feet are made to stand for our conduct. Take the following for examples: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way" (Psa. 37:23). "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105). "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25).

"Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (vs. 9). This is further proof of Peter's dullness, and of the truth of our Lord's assertion that he would not understand His action. "Jesus saith to him, he that is washed (Gr. louo) needeth not save to wash (Gr. nipto) his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are

clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean" (vv. 10, 11). It is clear that the ultimate reference in these verses is to spiritual cleansing. Christ was saying, metaphorically, that he that has had the bath of regeneration will only need to have his walk cleansed, and that all of them are clean, in respect to regeneration, save one. As to physical cleanliness, no doubt, Judas was as immaculate as the others. How obviously plain it is, then, that Christ was illustrating their need of spiritual restoration by washing the feet that had become soiled since they last bathed. The incident is prophetic of a fall and a failure, and of the gracious provision made therefor.

Let us now compare the passage that has been before us with Luke 22:31-34, which reads: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." Thus, in plain words, the Lord Jesus prophesied Peter's fall and restoration; and urges him, when he is converted (restored) — that is, when he has his feet washed spiritually, to strengthen his brethren. How soon the words of our Lord came true. Peter sinned grievously. Communion between him and his Lord was broken. He goes back to his old trade, as do the others (John 21:3). They now have no part with Him. But grace will not let them go. That power and love that effected their salvation, will also accomplish their restoration. Peter must learn the meaning of the foot-washing incident.

"Thou shalt know hereafter." In spite of his sad failure, Peter was to have part with his Lord in the blessing of others. He was to be converted (restored to fellowship with Christ), and then was to strengthen his brethren. When we find him in the twenty-first chapter of John, he is about to have his feet washed spiritually. After returning to their nets, they fished all night and caught nothing. On the following morning, Jesus appears to them and proceeds with the blessed work of restoration, which had been so strikingly illustrated by the washing of their feet.

"Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). How unspeakably blessed is all this! Our Lord had said: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Here He washes Peter's feet, and

him part with Him. Let us note two or three things in connection with the above passage:

First, restoration to fellowship with Christ involves grief and confession. Our Lord brought Peter face to face with his sin and proud boast. He was grieved and humbled, and filled with the spirit of confession. And such a spirit of essential to every restoration after a fall. This is strikingly exemplified in the case of David, when he said: "I have sinned." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

Second, there is a play in the use of the word "love". In the heart-searching question Christ put to Peter, He first used the strong word for love (Gr. agapao), the word used in John 3:16. In Peter's reply, he used the weaker word for love (Gr. phileo). He no longer boasted of his superior love for his Master, but he did insist that he loved him a little. The third time Christ put the question to him, he comes down to Peter's word for love, and asks if he really loves him a little. And then, with a consciousness that he could not impose upon his Lord, he said: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Peter would not boast, but he would stick to it that he did love his Lord and Master. May grace be given to both writer and reader to do the same.

Now, let us, in concluding, return to John 13. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have

washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (Vv. 14, 15). Christ set an example of lowly service that should be followed by His people. And we are following His example when we stoop to do menial service for one another. But, this does not exhaust the meaning of His command. We are to seek the restoration of a fallen brother. As Paul says in Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, if man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." But alas! how few undertake such service in behalf of a sinning brother. How sadly the erring one is neglected! How few are qualified to perform such a work — "ye which are spiritual." Still fewer go at it in the divinely specified way — "in the spirit of meekness." To wash a brother's feet we must get down on our knees. No "holier-than-thou" spirit will do. Oh, that our Lord and Master may wash our feet daily and give us part with Him in washing the feet of our brethren. And may the erring brother be "easy to be entreated" (Jas. 3:17). Oh! the dirty feet that need to be washed. It is the source from which all our troubles come. No child of God can be happy with dirty feet. Lord, restore unto thy people the joy of thy salvation.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

by Roy Mason

"What does it matter?" This is what a professing Christian of many years asked. He had made a profession of faith in Christ years before, but he stopped right there. He was led to understand that church membership does not save, and he had observed the faults and failings of many church members so, although he attended church once in a while, he never felt any urge to take membership, and when urged to do so, in connection with a revival, his reply was, "Why should I? What does it matter?"

That's a good question. Suppose we ponder it for a few moments in the limited space at our disposal.

Every saved person ought to identify himself with the institution that Jesus started to carry on His work. That means a Baptist church, for all others were started by man. The Roman Catholic church didn't exist for several centuries after Christ. Protestantism, with its churches, sprung from Catholicism, and the swarm of "churches" that have come into existence later than the Catholics and Protestants, were all started by men and women in more recent times.

When one belongs to a Scriptural church, he or she belongs to the most important institution in the world. Some wealthy high-brows get membership in certain organizations. Some join clubs where the membership is restricted to just a limited number. Such persons are proud to belong to such. A Baptist church, if genuine, has Jesus as founder, and will hold the closest tie to Christ — His Bride.

We have a lot of bunk today,

to the effect that when one becomes a Christian, they are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into the church. Those who hold this view, believe in two kinds of churches, one local and visible, the other universal and invisible. This is the most foolish of all church theories. This is an imaginary church that doesn't exist, never has, and never will exist!

When one belongs to a Scriptural Baptist church, he or she belongs to the most precious of all institutions. This institution has committed to it the Great Commission, to make Christ known to the whole world. (See Matt. 28:19-20). The work we do for Christ through His churches, is work that endures forever. When people involve themselves in all kinds of organizations of this world, eventually they will see that they labored in vain, but those who work for the Lord through His church, will find themselves rewarded beyond measure. I thank the Lord daily that He called me into the ministry. I thank Him that He enabled me to preach over radio stations. I had as many as fifteen stations at one time, and five of these I broadcast over each weekday. For forty straight years, I have not failed a single Sunday to broadcast the gospel over the air.

If you are not a truly born again Christian, let me urge that you turn to Christ now without delay. If you are a Christian, but not a church member, let me urge you to confess Christ publicly, and request a church to baptize you without delay. Then set out to serve Christ through the church.

(copied from The Park Ridge Baptist Messenger).