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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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HOLINESS PART IV

by Ray Brown

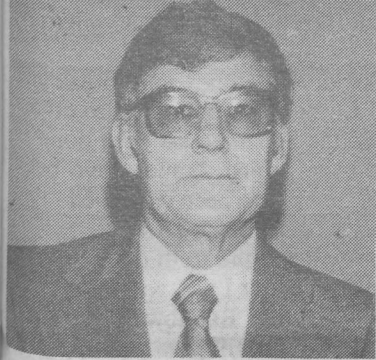
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"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

In the other messages we studied having the fruits of holiness in our life. I have been bringing out a series of things on how we can exercise and maintain this

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Ray Brown

GOD'S GOLDEN CHAIN OF GRACE

by D.M. MacFarlane

(In Glory)

(Preached in Scotland by the late Elder D. M. MacFarlane in 1917.) "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:29,30).

The apostle having stated the words of our text, exclaimed in wonder and admiration, "What shall we then say to these things?" But there is one thing manifest, that God was for His people, and that no evil creatures, men or angels, could be successful in their opposition to them.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" Some said that there is a golden chain in the text. A chain is made up of several links, and the great and profound doctrines we have here may be called not only a chain but a golden chain having several links united into one whole. One end of the chain—if we can speak of an end—is the past eternity, and the other reaches forward to the heaven of everlasting glory and bliss.

In speaking from the text we

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GRAVESIDE SORROW IN MOAB

by Waldo Whiddon

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"And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons" (Ruth 1:3). How easy it is to pull up stakes, move, and begin to disobey God to the fullest. This was the case of Elimelech and Naomi. This was a model family, a father, mother, and two sons. Let us take a look into the lives of this model family. Let us consider several points that can cause a very great need for revival among God's people. The book of Ruth is usually referred to as a romantic book. It is also a book of sorrow, as we shall see in this family.

First, let us look at the meaning of their names. One should read the first two verses in chap-

ter one to get started. The name Bethlehem means "house of bread," Judah means "praise." So here is a family that is living in a



Waldo Whiddon

"House of Bread and Praise." They decided to pull stakes, backslide, go into a country

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THE SIGN POST TO REDEMPTION

by John M. Alber

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"And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation... The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for

they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."



John M. Alber

Introduction: I Corinthians 1:22 says, "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom." Many times in the Word of God, we are given different signs and that for various reasons. Would you notice with me several of those "Sign Posts" and what they mean.

First, would you turn to Isaiah 7:11-14. "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above... The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call

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JACOB'S LADDER PART I

by T.B. Freeman
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"And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up



T.B. Freeman

on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Gen. 28:10-12).

Jacob was truly a sojourner as he went out from Beer-sheba, to

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PREDESTINATION AND CALLING PART I

by Charles H. Spurgeon
(Now in Glory)

"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (Rom. 8:30). The great Book of God's decrees is fast closed against the curiosity of man. Vain man would be wise; he would break the seven seals thereof, and read the mysteries of



C.H. Spurgeon

eternity. But this cannot be; the time has not yet come when the book shall be opened, and even then the seals shall not be broken by mortal hand, but it shall be said, "The lion of the tribe of Juda, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

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THE WORD OF GOD

by Doug Newell
Assistant Editor

Psalms 19:7-11, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD



Doug Newell

are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."

In this 19th chapter the Psalmist tells us of the heavens declaring the glory of God, and

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

EFFECTUALLY CALLED AND HASTILY COMING

"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully" (Lk. 19:5-6). Read vs. 1-10.

The Bible teaches that salvation is not by the decision or works of man, but by the effectual and irresistible work of the Holy Spirit. Men are not willing of themselves to come to Christ;

they are made, "...willing in the day of thy power..." (Psa. 110:3). Scriptures could be multiplied showing that man is unable and unwilling, of himself, to come to Christ; and that he is brought to Christ by the power and work of the Holy Spirit. The salvation experience of every believer confirms and illustrates these truths. A saved man knows that he did not, all by himself, just up and decide to get saved. He knows by his own experience that the Holy Spirit wrought within him and caused and en-

abled him to come to Christ.

The examples of the salvation experience recorded in the Bible illustrate, confirm, and teach these same truths. Christ is found of those who sought Him not (Rom. 10:20). Paul is a case in point. He was engaged in enraged persecution against the Lord's people when he was saved by unconditional grace and irresistible power. Zaccheus, in my text, is another Bible example of the effectual and irresistible work of the Holy Spirit in salvation.

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EFFECTUALLY

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ually and irresistibly in him. "...ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph.2:2). The devil works effectually in and through the unsaved to the accomplishing of Satan's will. The unsaved man is totally a slave of Satan, totally under his power, until and unless the Lord sets him free. The unsaved man cannot deliver himself from the devil's power. He is a slave to Satan.

The effectual call is necessary because of the power of the things of the world over the hearts of the unsaved. There is an unbreakable affinity between the desires of the unsaved man and the things of this world. The rich young ruler went away from the Lord. He was grieved in doing this. But he had great possessions, and those great possessions held him in their grip. The seed sown among the thorns was choked by those thorns so that the fruit of the salvation experience could not come forth. The thorns, Jesus said, are the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. The call of the world is overpoweringly strong in the ears

of the natural man. He loves the world and the things that are therein. The love of the Father is not in him.

The effectual call is necessary because of the influence of the unsaved upon one another. Zaccheus was hindered from seeing Jesus because of the crowds "the press" around him. Peer pressure is a terribly effective thing. Many people will not come to Christ because of the influence of so-called friends around them. They love the praise of men more than the praise of God. They are afraid of what their companions in sin will think about them. I know that this was a powerful hindrance to my coming to Christ. Praise God for effectual and irresistible grace. These mentioned things so blind and bind the unsaved that no one will ever overcome these hindrances and be saved apart from the effectual work of the Holy Spirit.

What are the results of the effectual call? I want to speak of three things, but understand that I do know that the effectual call is the work of an instant of time. I speak of some preliminary things. The effectual call will cause one to realize his lost and undone condition. Oh, we need to get people lost before we can get them saved. I know that all men are lost, but all men are not lost in their own consciousness. Men must be made to feel their guilt

before God. Sin must become a heavy burden before one will desire to have it lifted. One must be made aware of his sickness before he will seek the physician. One must know that he is unrighteous before he will repent. Men must be slain by the law before they will be quickened by the gospel. Psychiatrists often tell their patients to get rid of any guilt feelings. Friend, the lost sinners of this world need to go on a "guilt trip." A man must be made to feel his guilt before he will seek forgiveness.

As a result of the effectual call of the Holy Spirit a man is made to realize that he is totally helpless, so far as salvation is concerned. So long as a man believes he can be saved by his own works and efforts, he has not yet been the subject of the effectual work of the Spirit. The Spirit shows one his inability, his helplessness, his undone condition; and this prepares one to trust Jesus Christ all the way.

As a result of the effectual call, one has a burning desire, an unquenchable thirst, and a great hunger for Jesus Christ. He must have Christ. He cannot go on; he will not go on without Christ. He wants Christ more than anything and everything else. I remember when, to me, Christ had no beauty that I should desire Him. I cared nothing for Him. I wanted nothing to do with Him.

But there came a night, oh, blessed night; the Holy Spirit wrought within me, and I wanted Jesus Christ more than anything else. It seemed to me that there was nothing else worthwhile or important in life, except coming to know Christ. I felt that I must have Christ; that I could not live without Him; that I did not even care to live without Him. See this in Zaccheus? He must see Jesus. He will not let the crowd successfully hinder him. He runs ahead of the crowd. He climbed up into a sycamore tree, all because he wants to see Jesus. People laughed at him. Oh, how undignified was this chief of the publicans. He cared not what men thought of him. He must see Jesus.

As a result of the effectual call, one believes what the Bible teaches about the person and work of Jesus Christ. The man who denies that Jesus is God, who denies the virgin birth, who denies His sinless life, who denies His substitutionary death, who denies His bodily resurrection - that man has not yet been the subject of the effectual call of the Holy Spirit. Those who have been effectually dealt with by the Holy Spirit have no trouble believing all that the Bible says about Jesus Christ. The Jehovah's Witness is not saved. The Modernist is not saved. The Jew is not saved (I mean, of course, so long as they believe their religious teachings). The Mormon is not saved. The Unitarian is not saved. No man is saved who does not believe that Jesus is the virgin born Son of God, that Jesus is God, that Jesus died on the cross, and that Jesus rose from the dead. The effectual call of the Holy Spirit will teach a man these truths.

Now, let us look at the immediate results of the effectual call in the salvation experience. Zaccheus made haste and came down. It is easy to pick ripe fruit. So long as you have to plead with one, to pull, to drag, to beg; that one has not yet been effectually dealt with by the Holy Spirit. The effectually called one is in a hurry to get to Jesus. A few weeks before I was saved, nearly the whole church took turns trying to get me to go up and get saved; but I would not budge. The night God saved me, on the first verse of "Just As I Am" I almost ran to the front. I know now that I was saved before I left my seat, that is why I left and went to the front. But, of course, I did not know all then that I do now. But I was saved, and I knew I was saved.

The effectual call moves one to Christ and causes one to joyfully receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. Zaccheus, "received him joyfully." When the Spirit has done His effectual work, the sinner is done with excuses and done with delays. He hastily comes to Christ and joyfully receives Him. Oh, the excuses that sinners make. Why? Because they have not yet been effectually called. The effectually called one will climb a mountain, swim an ocean, go through a raging fire, run over hypocrites, reject false doctrine as to how to be saved, refuse to trust in anything or anyone but Jesus Christ. He closes with Christ. He throws down the arms of his rebellion. He unconditionally surrenders to Jesus as the Lord of his life and the Saviour of his soul.

Let us look at some of the following and continuing results of the effectual call. There is the

great joy of salvation. Oh, how happy is that soul that now knows it is saved. Zaccheus received Christ joyfully. When the prodigal son came home, they began to be merry. When Christ was preached and believed on in Samaria, there was great joy in that city (Acts 8:8). When the Eunuch was saved under the preaching of Philip, he went on his way rejoicing. The Philippian jailor "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." Those who believe savingly in Jesus Christ rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Then there was the changed life of Zaccheus. What had he been? A despicable, money-grabbing; publican - out for all he could get, any way he could get it. What did salvation do in him? "And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore, him four-fold" (Lk.19:8). He was a different man now. He was a new creature in Jesus Christ. His life had been changed by the saving work of the Spirit of God. And, my friend, whatever experience you have had that you are trusting in for salvation - if it did not change your way of living, you are not yet saved. This is seen in every example of salvation in the Bible. It is also seen in genuine experiences of salvation in every day, including today. You do not change to be saved, but salvation changes you. It turns you around. It heads you in a different direction. It's different now, yes, it is - if you are truly saved.

My friend, have you had this experience of the effectual call? You say, how can I know? Have you come to Jesus Christ and trusted Him as Lord and Saviour? Yes? Well that is how you know you have had the effectual call. No man will come to Christ without the effectual call. All who are effectually called, evidence the fact, by hastily coming to Jesus and joyfully receiving Him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." May God bless you all.

SIGN POST

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his name Immanuel." The Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, was speaking unto King Ahaz and because the King would not do what was right, God gave unto him a sign. The Lord told King Ahaz through the Prophet of God that when the Messiah would be born, He would be born of a virgin. In other words, a clear cut sign was given so that Israel would know who the Messiah was when He appeared on the scene.

Secondly, Ezekiel was told by the Lord that he would be a sign unto the House of Israel. "For I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 12:6). God used that Prophet of God as a sign post and that for His children because of their great sin. God wanted the people to know what was going to happen to them, because they had refused to obey the Lord.

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GRACE

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shall notice the links of the chain in the order in which they are given here.

1. The first link is God's foreknowledge of His people, "whom he did foreknow." By His foreknowledge we are not to understand His omniscience, for by His omniscience He sees and knows all men. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." His foreknowledge signifies the knowledge He took of the people from all eternity, setting His mind and heart upon them in order to do them good and save them from sin and misery. This is taught in other parts of Scripture as well as in our text, such as the following: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (I Peter 1:2), and "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Rom. 11:2).

2. The second link is predestination, "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." Predestination means election of some of the human race unto salvation. Many deny the doctrine of election; but we have it in the Bible, and we believe it. Men may take it out of their creed, but they cannot take it out of the Bible. We have this profound doctrine not only in our text but in other parts of Scripture; for instance, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children" (Eph. 1:5); and "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). They were chosen or elected, not separate from Christ but in Him. "Chosen in him." Not only that they were elected, but Christ their Saviour was elected and set apart from all eternity. The Fa-

ther calls Him, "mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." They were elected in view of their fallen condition. The fault was not on God's part, but on man's. Man was left to the freedom of his own will, and fell from the state in which he was created. Some ascribe great power to free-will, but if man by his free-will, when he was in the state of perfection, brought himself to ruin, can man in his fallen state do better by his will? If the will is not renewed by grace, it will bring him to everlasting ruin.

They were not elected because they were better than others. Some of them were worse, such as Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, Saul of Tarsus, and many others. By nature all are equally in the same condition. There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But by practice some are worse than others. There are some elected to gospel privileges who are not elected to salvation. God elected the people of Israel to such privileges, but many of them were not elected unto salvation; but some of the elect were among them. There was an election within an election. "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it" (Rom. 11:7).

3. The third link is the call. "Whom he did predestinate them he also called." The call here is not the common call of the gospel which is addressed to all hearers of the Word indiscriminately -- "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man" (Proverbs 8:4) but the effectual call of the Spirit. The common call is addressed to the ear of the body, but the effectual call is addressed to the soul that is spiritually dead. Of this effectual call Christ speaks when He says -- "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God:

and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). The effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, and the first thing the Spirit does is to convince us of our sins. When God called Adam, who was fleeing from God and trying to hide himself from Him among the trees of the garden, he had to respond to the call and appear at the bar of the Judge; and although Adam tried to lay the blame upon Eve, and Eve upon the serpent or the devil, he had at last to take all the blame himself--when God revealed to him the way of salvation by the death of His Son in human nature as the seed of the woman. The second thing the Spirit does in this effectual calling is to enlighten the mind of the sinner in the knowledge of Christ; and the third thing is to renew the will so that the sinner is now able and willing to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the gospel.

The effectual calling is the effect of election, and it is by making sure our calling we make sure our election. Many are convinced of their sins who never believe in Christ to the saving of their souls. These may undergo a greater measure of law work than those who close in with Christ in the offer of the gospel. To know our malady is not the cure. However deep our conviction of sin may be, we cannot be saved without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Great Physician. The effectual calling begins with conviction of sin and ends with faith in Christ. This call is complete in itself and not to be repeated, and while God foreknew and predestinated those whom He purposed to save in the past eternity, He calls them in time between their birth and their death. Faith, by which the sinner receives Christ, is a wonderful thing, and the manner in which it works in closing with Christ is so mysterious that the believer cannot explain it. By faith there is a union formed between the living soul and the living

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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

In I Corinthians 12:13: What is the "one body"? Who are the "we all"? Is this water or Spirit baptism?

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"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Verse 27 tell us that the body is, "the body of Christ". In Colossians 1:18 we find it said, "he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church." Therefore, we see that the body is the church into which "we all" are baptized. In Ephesians 4:5 we are told that there is only one baptism, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism". This one baptism we find to be water baptism for that is the kind God sent John the Baptist to administer. In John 1:33, John said, "He (God) sent me to baptize with water". In Matthew 3 it is said that John the Baptist was baptizing in Jordan, and it was there he baptized the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 3:16).

In Acts 1:22 we find that one of the qualifications for one to take Judas' place as an apostle was that he had received baptism from John the Baptist. Therefore it is certain that the charter members of the church which Christ started had water baptism at the hands of John. From a study of the New Testament we see that the early churches continued to receive members by water baptism. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). "But when they believed Philip they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). It was said of Saul (Paul) "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: -- and arose and was baptized" (Acts 9:19). From these and other passages we see that the baptism is water.

The fact that the first church had about 3000 souls "Added to them" on the day of Pentecost by water baptism proves that it was a local visible body (Acts 2:41). Since all the churches named in the New Testament were local bodies we must conclude the "one body" means a local body one enters by water baptism. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized" tells us that it is by the Spirit we are baptized, not in the Spirit. It is

the Spirit that brings us to Christ. It is the Spirit that brings us to seek baptism into a local true church.

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I. Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

We have before us a three part question. Let us answer each question one at a time. First, we have the question; "What is the one body?" The first thing I mention here is that one body is not a universal invisible church as many would like for us to think. No one ever has or ever will see a universal invisible body. If the universal invisible view of the church is true, then this verse seems to teach baptismal regeneration. I assure you the Bible teaches no such heresy. We all must admit that the word "body" here represents the church. The problem with many is that they do not understand what a church is. If you go back to I. Corinthians, you will find that Paul is writing to the Church of God which is at Corinth. This is a local visible church. There is a specific reference here to the church at Corinth. There were at that time many divisions in the church at Corinth. Paul is making an effort to bring the church back into unity. He uses the fact that they are one body to try and do this. I will explain more on this later. Let me leave you with this interpretation; The word "body" refers to the church at Corinth specifically and to any other church generically. It does not and cannot refer to a universal invisible anything.

The second question is; Who are the "we all"? I recognize that Paul was not a member of the church at Corinth. I do not believe he is implying that he is. Neither is he implying that they are all baptized into the one universal invisible church. The point Paul is making here is, it is by the leadership of the Holy Spirit that we are led to join a true church. He is referring, to both Jew and Gentile, bond and free. He is trying to restore unity by pointing out to them that it was by the Spirit of God that they were brought together into this church. The rest of the chapter will bear this out. There Paul points out that one member is not better than another based on the fact that the Spirit led both of them there. The "we all" refers to any saved person who has been led by the Holy Spirit

to unite with a true Baptist church.

The last question is: Is this water or Spirit baptism? There is no question in my mind that this refers to water baptism. When we see Spirit baptism referred to in the Bible, it has a reference to saved people only. Spirit baptism was reserved for the church, not the individual. The Holy Spirit indwells all believers. He baptized the true church of God. Many make this out to be Spirit baptism to try and do away with church authority for baptism.

Their efforts are all futile. There is an abundance of evidence giving authority to the church for baptism. Baptism is the door into true Baptist churches. It is strange that those who deny this will not allow people to be members of their church until they have been baptized. Again, I mention that Paul is using the fact that they were all baptized into the church by the leadership of the Holy Spirit. This was water baptism. This should produce unity in our churches.

May God help us to realize this church relationship is one that was brought about by the Holy Spirit. May we seek for unity based on this rather than division. If you do not have Baptist water baptism, you do not have baptism. Rush to the nearest true

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"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Chapter 12 primarily deals with spiritual gifts, that were still being practiced at that time. Verses 1-11 deal specifically with the fact that these special gifts though different in character and purpose, all come from the same source; God the Holy Spirit. Then, beginning in v. 12, Paul begins to teach that there is something even more important than being able to exercise the spiritual gifts, and that is spiritual unity; in other words, oneness of mind. He uses the human body as an illustration of unity in the church; every member being different in personality and having a different function while at the same time working together as a unit. That unity, or oneness of mind, begins with water baptism. Paul often included himself, along with the church that he was ministering to because of the closeness he felt toward them, but he was in no wise implying a universal church doctrine. Baptism was and is today a common denominator between God's people who walk

after the Spirit. The one body has reference to the institutional body, or each body, and not one universal body. Remember Paul addressed the people as "the church which is at Corinth." (1 Cor. 1:2).

Now to answer the three questions more directly (1). The "one body" is the local church.

This is the only kind of body Christ is a part of. He is the Head of that body. Of course He is the Head of every true Baptist church because in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head. (2). Paul alludes to the fact that no matter which local church you are a member of, it is always the same Holy Spirit which dwells in and works through you. This is why Paul includes himself in this analogy. (3). There is only one kind of baptism that puts you into the local body, and that is water baptism. I am not denying the fact that during the early days of the church age there was a special baptism of the Holy Spirit upon certain ones chosen to receive special gifts of the Spirit as this chapter points out; but this special baptism of the Holy Spirit is never "into" anything, but "with" the Spirit. On the other hand, water baptism is always "into" something, and that something is referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:27 as the body of Christ. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

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"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews, or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Greek reads, "in one spirit." Many people teach that this verse is speaking of a "spiritual baptism" into a universal, invisible church which, as they falsely believe, is the "body of Christ". In doing this they err on several accounts, but as to our subject in particular, they err in assuming that the Holy Spirit baptizes individuals. The Holy Spirit is never said to baptize anyone. There is not one verse that supports the Authorized Version translation of this verse that the Spirit baptizes anyone, let alone into something that doesn't exist, ie., the universal church. Ideal unity and member to member relationship in His churches is what is being taught here in verse 12 - 26. To universalize this passage destroys its true meaning. Many books of counterfeit theology have been written which falsely interpret 1 Corinthians 12:13 and thereby build false doctrine and present an entirely erroneous "modus operandi" as to the work of the church in this area.

The "one body" being spoken of here is the local church in a particular place, not the "still-born" universal church. The "one body" spoken of in this passage is identified in verse 27 of I Corinthians 12 as the one church at Corinth. Verse 27 begins, "Now ye are a body of Christ". The New Testament never speaks about a universal,

invisible, true church; but about a local, New Testament, visible church, except on those occasions where the word "church" is used in an institutional sense. The local church is the body of Christ in that place whether Corinth, Ashland, or any other place a true church exists. As such, I believe that the Lord gives it all it has need of to function. It is complete of itself and dependent on no one, or nothing else. The "we all" in this passage refers, I believe, to the Lord's true children; elect, quickened, and led into baptism which is the door to membership in His body, the local church in a particular place.

Since there is no Spirit baptism for individuals, this is of necessity water baptism. There is no hint, no assumption in Scripture that the Holy Spirit baptizes believers "in", "at", or "any time" after regeneration. There no second definite work of grace. This is based on erroneous assumption. All of God's regenerated, "called out ones" should study this entire portion of Scripture and endeavor to better understand their relationship to the other members of the local assembly, especially as to working together. As always, it should produce in us more love one for another as well. May God bless you all.

SIGN POST

(Continued from Page 3)

Therefore, Ezekiel was a visual unto them - of the coming judgment upon the prince of Israel.

Third, Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar that the signs of God were great and mighty. "I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation" (Daniel 4:2-3). My friend, you can not help but notice the "Signs Posts" of God today. They are many. The child of God has been given many signs and they are great. Please don't misunderstand me, those signs come from the Word of God. God is not giving out new revelation today - that ceased with the completion of the Canon - The Word of God.

Fourth, in the New Testament our Lord is found rebuking those of Cana of Galilee because they would not believe without signs and wonders and because they could not discern the signs of the times. "And in the morning, it will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matt. 16:3). There are a number of reasons why these could not discern the times. Most likely the number one reason was because they were not "born again" - they were not rightly related to God. The natural man cannot and will never understand the things of God - (I Cor. 2:14). "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" (John 4:48). Far too many of God's dear children will not obey the Lord unless they see some kind of sign or wonder take place before their very eyes. That

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The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT
THE BAPTIST EXAMINER--P.O. BOX 60--ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

A church excludes a member. Should a sister church, knowing this, use the excluded member in leading in prayer, singing, or preaching? If a church does this, what should be the action of the excluding church as to this?

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When the feelings of a church are wounded by one of her member, who is to say that they were not wounded, or to say that they should not have been wounded.

It matters not what the offense was if a small thing in the eyes of some, or a large thing, that is if it was a smaller or large sin; the offense is the same. A church may have her spirit wounded with some small matter that one of her members did. It still matters and other churches should recognize this. What one can do others may do, and can do; and so communication has and is broken down. Failing to recognize the wounded spirit of another is a serious thing. Too many look at the deed that was done rather than the offense.

Paul said, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend," (I Cor. 8:13). Paul did not say, if he had offended his weaker brother by eating meat, he was sorry for that, but he said that he would not do the thing that offended his weaker brother so long as he lived. This teaches us that even in small matters if any is offended, then one should cease from doing even that. Surely we ought to cease from doing weightier matters when they offend some one or some church, that brotherly love and fellowship might continue.

No, sister churches should not use excluded members of another church.

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"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt 18:18). The context presents to us the directions for church discipline that Christ gave to His church. Since each independent church is an autonomous body, her actions need not be submitted to any other body for approval or disapproval. What the church should expect from those of like faith is the same recognition that Christ said would be recognized in heaven. It will be bound. Any disciplinary action taken by one church should be supported by all those churches of like faith.

When a church disciplines a member, there is a prescribed method for them to follow. This method is vividly outlined in verses fifteen through seventeen, just preceding the above verse. There are three steps given to follow. There cannot be any deviation from these instructions. When these instructions are fol-

lowed, and the result is exclusion for the offending member; it is proper that sister churches support that action. Their support should take the same position as verse eighteen. It is bound. Any sister church should not use in any way an excluded member of another church. They should encourage the member to return to, and seek forgiveness from the church from which they have been excluded. The excluding church should also attempt to regain the excluded one. This method, when correctly used, may bring about the correction of offending members.

Unfortunately, this is usually not the case that is followed today. This is why there is another part to the question. Many, not all, churches ignore the above directions and substitute their own methods of discipline. And when a sister church does this, they violate the instructions given by Christ. The use of excluded members by a sister church makes them subject to the same three steps that were mentioned before. If they will not hear, the only solution is the withdrawal of fellowship.

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No! Matthew 18:17 says, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Verse 18 says, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

I am a strong believer in church authority, and here in our text, Jesus gave authority to the only church He ever started to practice discipline. He told the church that the discipline would be recognized in heaven. Keys represents authority, and the church uses this authority to preach the gospel, baptism, and set up churches. A Scriptural church must be born or set up by the authority of another Scriptural church in order to have this authority.

A Scripturally organized church must practice discipline and keep itself respectful and above reproach. A member that will not go according to the Bible and the church must be brought before the church body, and if they will not repent of that wrong, the church must exclude them from the membership.

I Corinthians 5:4,5 says, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gather: together, and my spirit,

with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

What this means is that when we exclude one from the membership, he is no longer connected with the church and has been set loose to be purged by Satan whom our Lord permits to do his utmost so that the excluded member might run to the church and repent and be reinstated. The problem in our day is that sister churches are waiting and ready to grab them before they have a chance to repent and get their membership back in order. When these excluded members run to other churches and join them, this does not clear the record of their exclusion that has been recorded in heaven. Even though they get on the roll of a law breaking church, they will not be and cannot be a recognized member in heaven.

Should we let an excluded member lead in prayer, sing, or preach? No! but rather we should treat him as an heathen. We would never permit a heathen to do any of these in our services. Yes beloved, it is a sad day when sister churches will not recognize one another's authority. We should withdraw fellowship from churches that do this whether they use an excluded member of our church or an excluded member of a sister church that we fellowship with.

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Exclusion is the strictest form of discipline the Lord's church is authorized to perform. It should be exercised sparingly and prayerfully. But, in order for a church to continue in service for her Lord, it must be done. It is truly a tragedy when a member gets into a position that exclusion is even considered.

The Lord's church is commanded to discipline. Preaching, teaching, rebuking, are all forms of church discipline; as well as exclusion. When a sister church differs with or opposes another church's teachings and discipline, fellowship is strained to say the least. I personally consider it a slap in the face of the church for another church to ignore her actions. We are admonished not to gender strife, or cause division.

When another church knowingly uses an excluded member in prayer, singing, or preaching, that church is actually making a public statement of opinion concerning the authority and judgment of her sister church, expressing openly their disagreement with the action of that church. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?"

I believe the offended church has every right to an explanation and apology. If neither is received fellowship could be broken.

SIGN POST

(Continued from Page 4)

my friends, is an evil generation. All you need to know is "what

does the Bible tell me to do!" This idea of putting out the fleece every time is not of God. We have the Word of God, and it tells us everything we need to know.

Fifth, the Apostle Peter told the church at Jerusalem that our Lord was approved of God and that by miracles, wonders and signs. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know" (Acts 2:22). There was no question to those first century believer's as to whom Jesus Christ was. John the Baptist was a great man of God. He introduced the Lord to his followers and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). After that, John took a back seat - his ministry was over. While he was in prison and just before his life was taken, John questioned the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ and sent his followers and asked, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:2). Our Lord answered that question very carefully - He left no room for doubt. Jesus said, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:5). When John heard those words, he no longer had any doubts. He knew that Jesus was the promised Old Testament Messiah. These were the very signs and wonders that told the early church that Jesus was the Son of the Living God. No wonder Peter could make such a declaration in Matthew 16:16 - "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." The works of this man were His identification marks.

But here in our text we have the sign post to redemption. "and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet" (Luke 11:29). Here we are given a preview - a peek as to what will take place in just a few days or weeks. But there was a problem then as there is now.

I. Rebellion - "...This is an evil generation..." (Luke 11:29).

1. The Word of God teaches us that sin is the reason behind man's rebellion. The reason that man does not see or understand the sign post to redemption is because of their rebellious heart. This has been the battle right from the very beginning of man's history. Man is born with a sinful nature - (Romans 5:12). And the Word tells us that from his mother's womb he goes astray - (Psalm 51:5). Furthermore, that he cannot do anything about his sinful nature - (Psalm 14). In the Word of God one can note several examples of rebellion that was caused by sin. On that account, would you follow along as we travel back in time as we look at these examples from the pages of the eternal Word of God.

In the Book of Genesis and the fourth chapter, we find that Cain rebelled against God's law and thus killed his own brother Abel, (Continued on Page 6 Column 1)

SIGN POST

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because he was not about to obey the Word of God. All of this was done because he was a sinner and he could not understand why God required a blood sacrifice. He literally had no spiritual understanding or desire to want to understand. Nimrod was another person who had no knowledge of the grace of God. Moses tells us that he was a mighty hunter before the Lord God - in other words, he hated the very truth of God and destroyed those who believed in that truth.

Many years after Nimrod, in the days of Moses, one was raised up in the camp of Israel that was religious but lost. His name was Korah. He refused to let God rule over his life and attempted to make havoc of the plan and program of Moses. Achan rebelled and disobeyed the command of God by stealing that which was not his. The sons of Eli rebelled and made a mockery of the Priesthood of God. King Saul rebelled and, time and time again, refused to obey the orders of almighty God. King David rebelled and committed adultery, murder and cover up, and that because of sin. Absalom, David's son, rebelled and tried to take his father's kingdom away. King Solomon rebelled and let his many wives lead him away from the Lord God of Israel. King Ahab rebelled and killed Naboth for his Vineyard and did many other evil things. King Ahaz rebelled and worshipped the false gods of the day, and that because of sin. King Manasseh (perhaps the most wicked of all kings) rebelled and continued in the evil footsteps of his Grandfather Ahaz. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, rebelled and refused to acknowledge Almighty God.

2. Thus the Word of God paints for us a very clear picture as to why these men rebelled and sinned against the Lord God of Israel. David tells us that we are born sinners - Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." The Apostle Paul tells us that we are children of wrath and disobedience - Ephesians 2:2, 3, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Furthermore, Paul tells us in that same chapter that we are aliens from God and without hope - Ephesians 2:12, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:" Thus, we are helpless - Romans 3:9-23 - on our way to a Devil's hell and we can do nothing about that. Jeremiah the Prophet tells us that our heart is desperately wicked - Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all

things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

We have rebelled because of our sin nature that we received at birth. The natural thing for man to do is sin, and sin he does, without even thinking about it. That is the reason why God must intervene in our behalf. Left to himself and his depraved nature, man will never come to God.

II. Rebuke - "He began to say"

1. Our God has always hated sin - yes, He still does today! The Bible tells us that our God changes not and that He is the same today, yesterday and forever. "For I am the LORD, I change not" (Malachi 3:6). "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).

2. Furthermore, our God has always rebuked sin. It can be shown in the Old Testament that God rebuked the men and women who sinned against Him. Yes, He severely rebuked men and women for their sin during His earthly ministry. The apostle Peter rebuked Ananias and Sapphira in the name of the Lord, because of their wicked sin. Simon, the sorcerer, was also rebuked because of his sin. The Apostle Paul had to rebuke the Apostle Peter when he caused problems for the believers in the churches of Galatia. In the last book of the Bible, our Lord is found rebuking the churches of Asia Minor because of sin that had found its way into their midst.

In the Old Testament we find the prophets of God speaking out and rebuking the children of Israel time and time again because of their sin. On several occasions, that rebuke was leveled against Gentile Nations. Now, during this age, it behooves us as the children of God and particularly the "servants of God," that we stand against sin. Sin always alienates us from God. God told Jonah to "cry against it," and so should you and I. Why? Because God uses the Word of God to bring sinners unto Himself. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18). The saints of yesterday were not afraid to speak up against sin and tell the story as it really was. They were made to pay a price because they took a stand. God never said it would be easy if we served Him. I am convinced, that the preacher who does not rebuke sin is a preacher that does not know the Lord God of Israel. If we are afraid to speak up and tell the truth, the Holy Spirit of God will be forced to use someone else to get the job done. We need to rebuke sin because God hates sin. Many folk are out of the will of God, because we, as preachers, have been afraid to tell them what God expects out of them.

III. Repentance - "They Repented" - Luke 11:32.

1. My friends, the reason for divine rebuke is found right here - God used the preaching of the Word of God to bring repentance. Just as the children of Nineveh responded to the preaching of Jonah, so men and women respond today by the preaching of God's servants. You see, repentance is necessary for salvation. I know - some preachers say it is

not - but what does the Bible teach? John the Baptist came preaching repentance and our Lord preached that same message on many occasions. When the children of Israel asked Peter, "what should we do", when he preached on the Day of Pentecost, Peter said, "repent". The apostle Paul also preached repentance. Without repentance you do not have salvation. Brother Thomas Paul Simmons tells us that there are two kinds of repentance: Evangelical and legal repentance. The first comes when it is accompanied by godly sorrow and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit takes place in our hearts. The second takes place when there is a fear of the consequences of sin, but no godly sorrow is present. Our brother gave an outline that I have always appreciated: (1). Sin Admitted - Conviction; (2). Sin Abhorred - Contrition; (3). Sin Abandoned - Conversion. Thus he writes, "Repentance is not complete until there is an inward abandoning of sin which leads to an outward change of conduct. This is the voluntary or volitional element in repentance. Thus, repentance concerns the whole inner nature: intellect, emotion, and will."

2. But not only is repentance necessary for salvation, it is also necessary for a child of God who intends to walk with God every day of his life. David repented even though we know that he was a man after the heart of God. Peter repented after being rebuked by Paul. What am I trying to say? If you are a child of God and find yourself apart from God, you had best repent. If you don't God will deal with you very severely.

IV. Redemption - "Behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Luke 11:32).

As already indicated, Jonah was a sign post to redemption. How? By the very fact that he is a type. In other words, Jonah pictures for us someone or something that was to take place.

1. First, he was, and is yet, a picture of the nation of Israel. Because of her sin God caused her to go into captivity. In 721 B.C. the northern ten tribes were taken in captivity by the Assyrian Army. In 586 B.C. the southern two tribes were taken into Babylonian Captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. Now Jonah is a type of Israel that has gone into captivity and will be saved when our God decides to do something about their situation. Just as Jonah was literally vomited out upon the dry land, God will cause the whole nation of Israel to come alive and serve the true and only God.

2. Second, he was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Several things can be pointed out at this time. Just as Jonah had an urgent message, so our Lord came with an urgent and noteworthy message. "go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it: for their wickedness is come up before me" (Jonah 1:2). And in Jonah 3:2, these words were given once again: "go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2). There was coming judgment to the nation of Nineveh if they did not repent. The Lord would indicate to the whole world that there is a coming judgment - that everyone will then be forced to answer for their own sin.

But, as we look at Jonah and our Lord, one thing stands out - he was in the belly of that fish

for three days and three nights. The sign post of redemption can be seen clearly right here: Jesus, the Messiah was to be buried for three days and three nights and then be resurrected. No other man had ever raised himself up from the bed of death, but Jesus would and did just that very thing. Ironically, after the entombment of Jonah, came the salvation of the people of Nineveh and we can say, without hesitation, that our salvation was made possible only after the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from His place of entombment.

You and I ought to rejoice in all of this. Why? Because it can be shown from all of this that our salvation began with God. Not only that, our Bible teaches us that the Lord Jesus Christ must bring to the Father all that He hath given to the Lord Jesus Christ from before the foundation of the world. We had nothing to do with our salvation - it was all of Grace. We did not, and will never, deserve God's gift of Salvation.

To me, the Sign Post of Redemption is my guarantee that heaven is my home. It was God who began a work in my heart and the Word tells me that He will perform that work until the day of redemption. I am saved because my God reached down and saved my soul, even though I didn't deserve it. Should not we sing "To God be the glory, great things He hath done for us?" Jonah said, "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). He knew just what he was saying. It was almighty God that caused that fish to vomit up Jonah, and it was almighty God, through His Holy Spirit, that convicted us of our need and, then, brought us unto Himself.

Conclusion: Some eight hundred years before our Lord died on the cross of Calvary, He gave to the world a sign - a sign that they could not mistake. Just in case they missed it - our Lord pointed it out during His earthly ministry. Do you, my friend, see that sign? Has the Holy Spirit of God been working in your heart? May our God bless your heart as you read and ponder over these things! He died for His own - and the Word tells us that through the preaching of the gospel He will bring His own unto Himself. The elect will hear and believe, because our God will do a work in their heart. May God bless you!

HOLINESS

(Continued from Page 1)

holiness that is given unto us and use it for God's honour and for His glory. We defined holiness as a habit of being of one mind with God as we find His mind revealed in Scripture. What isn't revealed to us, God doesn't require from us. What God reveals to us, He requires from us. A holy man will try to shy away from every known sin and to keep every known commandment. A holy man will strive to be like our dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who left us an example.

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:" (I Peter 2:21). Who is a holy man? A holy man is a man who is born again and washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, those that

have been born from above. They have been brought forth from spiritual death to spiritual life. This is what we call a holy man or a holy woman.

Notice in Colossians 3:12. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;" A man who is in Christ Jesus is to put on holiness as the elect of God. This means to take your rightful place in the family of God because you belong to the family. You are responsible for what goes on in that family. You don't want to give that family a bad name. If we don't live and exercise this holiness God has given us and we don't do it Scripturally, then we are going to be a reproach upon the Lord's house, His church. Men will say, "if so and so lives like that, then why should I believe anything they say?"

"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6). We are accepted in the beloved. God has given us this holiness so that we might see holy fruits of our labor in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God" (I Thes. 1:3-4).

Faith is a working faith. Faith always has its hands full doing for the glory of God and working for the glory of God. Faith is never idle. Faith is always working and always busy. Faith exercises works of holiness. He tells them they are the elect of God. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame.

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance: as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia" (I Thess. 1:5, 6).

Isn't that a wonderful thing? The gospel came not only in word but also in power, and in giving much assurance to the heart that you are saved. You are a new creation in Christ Jesus. You know what manner of men or women it is that you fellowship with, and that you worship with from day to day. You become followers of them as the flock of God. He is the great shepherd and the pastor is the under shepherd of this great flock. You have received the Word in much affliction of your body and all the things of the world that persecute you by doing all manners of evil against you because of your testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. A man that is holy will stand his ground for a testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. He will find his rightful place in the family of God. He will find his rightful service in God's service. There he or she

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PLAIN PROPHECIES FOR PLAIN PEOPLE THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH PART I

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

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new..." (Rev. 21:5).

I have studied with you in the preceding messages, prophecies concerning the people of the Lord, and the people of the devil - all the way from the time of creation down through the millennial age - and I am glad that after a while, God is going to then give to us a new heaven and a new earth - something that is absolutely perfect.

I have been impressed of recent date in learning that there are three organizations who are trying to plan a perfect city.

There is an international city-planning firm - a corporation set up for the purpose of planning a perfect city.

Then, in Washington, among all the various uses of all the letters of the alphabet, there is the SDC, which is known as the System Development Center, which is likewise planning a perfect city.

Then, in the state of California, not to be outdone - out there in the land of the lemon and the nut - they have a corporation set up known as the System Development Corporation of California.

All three groups - the private corporation, the national group from Washington, and the state group of California - are working on the idea of building and developing a perfect city. They claim that by mobilizing science, and by working with all the facts that are known in life today, that they may make some progress toward a universal city in every country of the world, yet every one of these organizations are frank to admit that a perfect city will never be built.

I have been rather impressed in reading about this, that they have all admitted that though they will do their best, they do not expect that they will ever be able to build a perfect city within this world. Beloved, that is where God comes in. That is why I love to talk about a new heaven and a new earth. This crowd admits that they are going to do their best, but they have no thought of ever being able to make a perfect city in this world. God is going to take over at just that point, and God is going to give us a new heaven and a new earth, right here within this world. Revelation 21 and 22 gives the entire story.

I. What man is utterly unable to do, God can do, and God has already done. In the mind of God, this perfect city - this new heaven and new earth, is already established. We read concerning Abraham: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

Abraham lived two thousand years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. We live nearly two thousand years since the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. During these four thousand years, men have been searching for, and looking for that city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. I thank God that some of these days, in due time, this heavenly city is going to be revealed. It is going to be an absolute and perfect reality.

Doesn't it thrill your heart to know that Abraham started looking for that country back yonder four thousand years ago? Though he didn't find it, he searched for it, and looked for it. Some of these days, we are going to have that new heaven and new earth. Listen: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1).

Thank God, we are going to have it. This old world isn't always going to bring forth thorns and thistles. This old earth isn't always going to bring forth as it



John R. Gilpin, Sr.

has in the past. Some of these days, God is going to give us a new heaven and a new earth. I say, in due time, it is going to be revealed.

II The new heaven and new earth will come down from God out of heaven. We read: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven" (Rev. 21:2).

When I read this, I get on shouting ground. I am like the old Negro when the preacher said to him, "You oughtn't to shout so much in church," who said, "Well, I try not to, but when I get to thinking about how good the Lord is to me, and when I get to thinking about how much He has done for this poor Negro, I tell you, I just want to shout. Here, hold this mule so I can shout."

Beloved, that is just the way I feel when I get to thinking about the new heaven and the new earth - you hold the mule, for I want to shout.

I say to you, this new city, this new earth, is going to come down from God out of heaven.

Have you ever stopped to think that everything that is perfect has come from above? The Lord Jesus Christ came from heaven to this earth, and He was perfect. The Bible came from heaven. God spoke it from heaven, and men recorded it. It is perfect. The Lord Jesus Christ is perfect in every detail, and the Bible is perfect in every detail, and this new heaven and new earth that we are going to have, is going to be perfect, because it is to come down from God out of heaven.

III We read: "...prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2).

I have married lots of folk in my life and I have seen some mighty sweet little girls that were prepared as brides for their husbands. Of course I have married some that looked like they thought they got married three or four times every day - they took it that lightly. But most of them don't look at marriage like that. They think of marriage, "Mine is going to be the perfect marriage. It is going to last forever." When they come to get married, they are all dressed up, and my, how sweet some of

those little girls have looked!

"A bride adorned for her husband." Can you think of anything sweeter than that? Can you think of any figure of speech that would be more descriptive than this, when it speaks about this new heaven and new earth as under the comparison of a bride that is adorned for her husband?

Beloved, I want you to notice that it is a prepared place, this new heaven and new earth. What has our Lord Jesus Christ been doing for the last two thousand years since He left this world? Listen: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

For two thousand years our Lord has been putting on the finishing touches to the new heaven and the new earth, that is some day going to come down out of Heaven here to this world. Beloved, He is preparing it. He is making ready this new heaven and new earth for His people, where we will live as inhabitants throughout all eternity.

IV. This new heaven and new earth are going to have new people. We read: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3, 4).

This new heaven and new earth is going to be inhabited by new people - God's people, and God is going to be with them. He is going to be their God. During the Millennial Age there will be unsaved people here on this earth, but during the age that I am talking about now, the new heaven and the new earth, there will not be a person here but that individual that has been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It says that God is going to wipe away all tears from their eyes. There have to be some tears there, because it says that God is going to wipe them all away. You say, "Tears in heaven? Tears in this new heaven and new earth?" Yes, and I'll tell you one reason why they will be there. You and I will cry when we realize how much we could have done that we didn't do. You and I will shed tears when we realize how we failed our Lord so many, many times.

I think about the individual that has been saved, but never been baptized. You can't tell me that man isn't going to be sad when he stands in the presence of God to realize that here is his Saviour who did so much for him, yet he has failed Him, in that he never was baptized.

I think there will be people in heaven that never were baptized - saved by grace, yes; but never baptized. I think about that individual that is not a member of any church - saved, but not a church member. You mean to tell me that individual who is saved and is not a church member, is

going to stand in the presence of Him who saved him, and who established His church, and said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against that church - do you mean to tell me that individual is going to stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and say, "Lord, I just wasn't a member of your church." I tell you, beloved, men are going to weep when they stand in His presence, and then, God is going to wipe away all tears.

Without dwelling too much on the emotional side, I go back to a day and an hour in my own life when a very dear friend wiped tears from my eyes. I say to you, my brother, my sister, there isn't anything more precious than to have a friend to stand by you in the hour of grief.

We are told when this day arrives, that we have a new heaven and new earth, there isn't going to be any more crying. After God wipes away all of our tears, there will be no more crying.

Furthermore, there will be no more death. There will never be a hearse to creep along the golden streets of the new Jerusalem. You will never send flowers on account of the death of a loved one. There will never be a crepe on a doorknob in heaven. There will never be any graveyard on the hillsides of glory. I tell you, beloved, there are going to be new people in that new Jerusalem.

There isn't going to be any pain there. How much pain we have now in life - pain as a result of sickness; pain as a result of accidents; pain as a result of heartaches; pain as a result of disappointments. How many pains we have all known! There will be no pain, no tears, and no death in the new Jerusalem - the new heaven and the new earth will have new people.

V. In this new heaven and new earth there is going to be a perfect temple. We read: "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Rev. 21:22).

Here, we go into a church building in order to worship. There we will go directly to the Lamb Himself. This new heaven and new earth has in it a brand new temple, the like of which we have never known before. Here we go into a church building to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, but then, we will go directly to Jesus Christ Himself. He is the Temple of the new heaven and the new earth.

VI. This new heaven and new earth are going to be perfectly lighted. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23).

We won't have to worry about electric bills. We won't have to worry about leaving the lights on when we go away from home. The new heaven and the new earth is going to be perfectly lighted.

I was reading sometime ago about a prospective multi-million dollar jet airport that was in prospect of being constructed. It was said that if it went through, when that jet airport was completed, that when a jet plane would land there, which they said would take place on an average of every five minutes throughout the day - that every time a jet plane came in to land, the light

would be strong enough that you could read a newspaper two miles away from the reflection of the light from this jet airport.

Beloved, I don't know if they will ever get that big airport built or not. I don't know that they will ever have that kind of lights in this world. I don't know whether it will ever become a reality or not. However, I know one thing; one day we are not going to need the sun, and we are not going to need the moon to light the new heaven and the new earth, because the Lord God Himself is the light of the new heaven and the new earth.

HOLINESS

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will labor favorably. They will labor with love and strive with patience.

"So that ye were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing" (1 Thes. 1:7-8). We need not to speak anything. Our faith is in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are examples of the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will be seen in our testimony and in our lives. We are going to make our stand on this old earth until the Lord comes or we go by the way of the grave. We will exercise faith, the labor of love, patience, and hope in our life. We will have the hope of the second coming of Jesus Christ. We will have hope that God one day will come in the clouds of glory. We will have hope in the glorification of our body which will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye and be made in the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will have all of these wonderful things. We will serve God in holiness. We will not serve Him in the things of the flesh, but serve Him in holiness.

"In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:75). This means our earthly pilgrimage here upon this earth. This means that as long as we live here upon this earth we are to walk with God, talk with God, stand before God in righteousness and holiness in all things God has given to us. We are to exercise these wonderful graces in our life for His honor and His glory. We must exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. We must serve in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. This is not a one day thing. It is a seven days a week and twenty-four hours a day matter. Many people want to stand before God in holiness and righteousness on Sunday, but the rest of the week they live like low-down, dirty dogs. This verse of Scripture is saying you are walking before almighty God. He sees everything that you do. He knows everything that you do.

"To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father,

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at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (I Thes. 3:13). When we come back with the Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of glory, and Christ sets up His millennial kingdom upon this earth, we will take our rightful positions which we earned in our earthly ministry and work. God preserved and kept us in holy living.

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1). We are to perfect holiness in our life. We are to clean up this whole body. We are to cleanse ourselves from all the filthiness of the flesh. We should fear God and not displease God. We are not to transgress against Him. We are to live as close to perfection as we possibly can. We can't live in sinless perfection, but we should strive for it.

How do we cleanse ourselves of the filthiness of the flesh and spirit? What He is talking about is your going to filthy places you don't have any business going to, and when you do things you don't have any business doing. The Holy Spirit comes in your life to abide eternally and forever. When we sin and go to these places we bring all of this upon the Holy Spirit. What a terrible thing it is when we do something like that.

"Flee fornication. Every sin that man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (I Cor. 6:18). "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19-20). You were bought with a price. We are to glorify God in our bodies because we are bought with a price, even the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we are to perfect holiness in the fear of God. God has given us a call. God has given us His holiness and His righteousness and put it in our hearts, and we should go on and live for the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (I Tim. 2:15). We need to continue in faith and in holiness. We need to walk continually in faith and holiness in the sight of God. "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things" (Titus 2:3). We should be teachers of good things and live a good life before this world. We should be partakers of God's holiness. How are we partakers of God's holiness? Notice in Heb. 12:10. "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure;

but He (God) for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Yes, God chastens those whom He loves. The Bible plainly says it. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6).

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;" (I Peter 2:9). God is going to have a nation of people, and they are going to be a holy people. They are a people that is going to live eternally. They are a generation that are going to live upon the earth because this is going to be heaven one day. The way we live our life here is the way we're going to be assigned in the millennial reign of Christ. We're going to lose many privileges if we are not careful by doing things of the flesh and things of this world. We must exercise holiness. We must adhere to this holiness that God has given unto us at the new birth. We must exercise it in our life that we might set forth praises of God and set forth holiness in our Christian life.

"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, (that is the Lord Jesus Christ) by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Col. 1:20, 22). How is Christ going to present us to the Father? In the body of His flesh through death. What? The cross that tore His body and brought the suffering upon the Lord Jesus Christ nearly two thousand years ago when He died for God's people. He is going to present us before God holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable in the sight of almighty God. We are going to be justified completely and forever. We will stand in the presence of God as if we had never sinned. Jesus Christ took our place. He became our substitute. He took our condemnation and our judgment and through His blood, Jesus can present you unto God the Father holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable in His sight. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 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." (Romans 8:33-34).

We will continue to discuss this and other wonderful points of God's infallible Word in the fifth part of this series.

JACOB'S

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Padan Aram. He was on a long journey, and it was a rough road he traveled if it could be called a road. It was in many places savage and dreary, uninhabited - without men; and infested with wild beasts. It was filled with hazards of many sorts. Thus, a foreshadow of the Christian life, so full of the shadows of death.

After a hard day of foot traveling, the sun went down upon him. He was now travel-worn and tired with his journey. Fatigued and weary, he must have rest and sleep, but where will he pillow his head? "...the waste howling wilderness..." (Deut. 32:10), and the desert land must have been all but desirable for a resting place.

The sleep of a laboring man is sweet whether he eat much or little. So the way-worn traveler lighted upon a certain place, and lay down in that place to sleep. God provided him a place, and He giveth His beloved sleep. It was not a palace, or stately mansion, or any sort of a luxurious edifice. It was a natural bed of earth with a pillow of stone, under the open canopy of heaven, but he slept. He thereby showed his inward serenity and confidence. David, when the rebellion of his son Absalom, raged around him said, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." (Psalm 4:8).

Peter, the night before his intended execution, was sleeping so soundly, behind prison walls and chained between two soldiers, the angel of God was compelled to strike him, in order to awaken him. The mighty Jesus was asleep in the storm of Galilee, (Mark 4:38).

What adversity poor Jacob was subjected to here. What a foreshadow of his coming Lord, who would have not where to lay His sacred head, who was in the wilderness forty days without food and with the wild beasts. Such experiences called for the ministering of angels, as was truly manifested in both cases.

Jacob nevertheless, lay down to sleep. Alas! there are many who live in mansions and luxury, who lie down too weary, so filled with the cares and anxieties of life until they have insomnia. Notwithstanding the trying circumstances, Jacob was not murmuring. The hope of an agreeable scene for the future reconciled him to his hard condition for the present. It becomes us therefore in patience to possess our souls, and go on our way rejoicing.

And he dreamed, and beheld a ladder set up on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. While many dreams are frivolous and vain, it was not the case here with Jacob. For this dream has the signature of God upon it. So it has been in sundry times and divers manners.

"For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction. That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword" (Job 33:14-18).

This was not the only time God spoke to Jacob in a dream, for years later in Padan-Aram, when he was near a hundred years old, through a dream God called him back to Bethel (Gen. 31:11-13). Thus, the father of the beloved Joseph dreamed his dreams in Divine light from above.

What sort of a vision did this

way worn traveler see, that memorable night, while sleeping under the open sky? Behold a ladder set upon earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. What could this ladder signify? Was this designed to intimate the providence of God as observing all things, and keeping up a perpetual correspondence between heaven and earth? Rather read the words of our Saviour to Nathaniel "...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John 1:51). These words reveal obviously, the significance of this ladder.

The Old Testament is the New Testament sealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. Jesus said to the Jews: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." The Scriptures testify of Christ, whether in the Old Testament or the New. Christ is the grand hero of both the Old and the New Testaments. He preached to the disciples the day of His resurrection, while on the road to Emmaus, and what was His theme? It is found in (Luke 24:27): "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Thus! The end of all true preaching.

Christ has always been the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25), and so poor Jacob was to be consoled by this foreshadow of the coming Messiah. Manifold are the prefigures and foreshadows of Christ in the Old Testament. Beautiful similitudes and metaphors appear on every milestone of the road, from the promise of the seed of the woman to the time of its fulfillment, in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

At the waters of Marah, where He proved the murmuring multitude, He showed Moses a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, were made sweet (Ex. 15:25). Thus, a foreshadow of Christ cut down in death, for the transgression of His people (Isaiah 53:5-8). Transforming their guilt and bitter waters of condemnation into the sweet water of life and justification. He suffered our bitter agonies of condemnation and turned our sorrow into salvation and eternal joy. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified (Isaiah 61:3). So, Christ, the tree of life, gave His life that we might have the water of life freely.

Again another day came in the wanderings of Israel when they were bitten by serpents. "And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (Num. 21:9). It was many years afterwards when our blessed Lord spake of this symbol, while preaching to Nicodemus. Giving to him the proper interpretation. The brazen pole and fiery serpent, both are typical of the judgment of God which upon Christ for our awful

sins, He bore in His own body, when He was lifted up on the cross. The bitten man who looked upon the serpent lived. So, the Son of man was lifted up that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15).

It was also in Israel's sojourn, in the wilderness at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink, Moses smote the rock, and God gave them water from the great deep (Exo. 17:1-7). Here again we observe so obviously, the portrait of the smitten Christ, from whence cometh the water of life (I Cor. 10:4).

Alas, time and space would fail here to record the many other symbols in the Old Testament, representing our Lord Jesus Christ. These I have mentioned will amply suffice to support the true representation of Jacob's ladder. Therefore, the Scriptures are they that testify of Christ, whom to know is life eternal, our God, our heaven, our all.

Now in what way did the ladder in Jacob's vision, at Bethel, represent Christ? Do we not behold in this ladder a beautiful figure of Christ in His two natures combined in one person? As the ladder extended from earth to heaven, so, Christ our Lord, had both an earthly and heavenly nature. He was both human and Divine. On the one hand He was as much man as if He had never been God, on the other hand He was as much God as if He had never been man. He was God manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (I Tim. 3:16). As man He would say "My Father is greater than I." As God He said "Before Abraham was, I am."

Being a man, He attended the marriage of Cana of Galilee, but as God He transformed the water into wine. A man He was when He slept in the ship, and God He was when He rebuked the winds and hushed the storms to silence. The winds and the waves obeyed His voice. He maketh the storm a calm so that the waves thereof are still (Psalm 107:29). As man He resorted to the mountain for prayer, as God He walked upon the sea. He wept at the tomb of Lazarus as a human being; but as the Resurrection and the Life, He raised the corruptible man from the dead. He was slain and put to death as a man but as the mighty God He arose from among the dead in that same body He suffered. He dangled the keys of death and Hell through His vesture and chained death to His chariot. He said "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death" (Rev. 1:18).

Like Samson at Gaza, who arose at midnight and carried the gate and posts away, taking them to the top of the hill that is before Hebron (Judges 16:3). Christ arose from the dead and carried away the keys of both death and hell and ascended into heaven the holy hill of God (Psalm 24:3).

There are those who are so wicked and stupid, as to speak of Christ as being a good man, but no more divine than any other man. How could it be that He was a good man, if He were not all He claimed to be? Hath He not spoken the words "I and

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read in His Word where He has declared Himself equal with the Father. He was therefore all that He claimed to be or else He was not truthful. The fact is, however, that He is the truth and shall ever be the same. "...let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). These wicked religious deceitful workers of Satan, disguising themselves to be ministers of righteousness and denying the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Scripture are liars. For the Scripture says "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" (I John 1:22). "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed" (I Cor. 16:22).

"The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." This the apostle writes by the Holy Spirit. This all true ministers and Christians believe. This also, the Holy Spirit witnessed in the Old Testament saying, in the book of Psalms and other books as well. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12). He declares the decree in the same Psalm saying "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Again we read of Him in (Prov. 30:4). "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"

One of the most beautiful Scriptures in the Old Testament that seals this whole matter of Christ's complex being, is found in Isaiah 9:6. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Here we have the child born, and the Son given, and the government resting upon His shoulders. He is the strong one, upon whom the angels ascend and descend. He upholdeth all things by the Word of His power. He is the unshakable foundation of His Church (Matt. 16:18). The living stone (I Peter 2:4), and the only foundation (I Cor. 3:11). This foundation of God standeth sure (II Tim. 2:19).

On Christ the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand. The Christ who bears up angels, and the government upon His shoulder, will bear my soul safely to glory. He hath laid help upon one that is mighty (Psalm 89:19). He is the mighty conqueror and mighty to save.

Moreover Jacob's ladder bears the resemblance of Christ Jesus, in His humiliation and exalta-

tion. The ladder extended from earth to heaven. It was set up on earth and the top of it reached to heaven. So Christ in His unique person, fills heaven and earth. "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool", He declares.

Come along now friend, a pace further and consider the profound humiliation that Christ endured in His first advent to earth in the flesh. He who was rich, for our sakes became poor (II Cor. 8:9). He who is greatest of all was born in a barn, where the cattle low, the sheep bleat, and the pigeons and the doves coo. There where the sacrifices utter their groans, the new born King, pillowed his noble and sacred head, upon the straw, in the manger, where He lay, He had come to be the supreme sacrifice for our sins, and so, among the sacrificial beasts, lay the Son of God in the ox stall, in the Bethlehem of Judea.

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16). He was like unto his brethren. For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8).

Behold, He was subjected to a lower state of adversity than the foxes that have their dens, or the birds that have their nests. For He had not where to lay His head. While in Jerusalem, at the Feast of Tabernacles, when every man went to his own house, Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.

Seven hundred years before He descended to earth, to be born of a virgin, the prophet Isaiah moved by the Holy Spirit, wrote of His awful state of humiliation and sorrow. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: And we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows: Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:3, 4). In the preceding chapter the prophet also writes of Him saying "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

In the book of Psalms we read of His deplorable and lamentable condition, while in His first advent to earth. He was treated as a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people. At the cross He was laughed to scorn. Dogs compassed Him, the assembly of the wicked inclosed Him. They pierced His hands and His feet.

Reproach broke His heart and He was full of heaviness; and He looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters but He found none. They who sat in the gate spake against Him, and He was the song of the drunkards.

He was continually encountered with the opposition of religious leaders, who full of hatred and antipathy, ever sought to kill Him. He was given the most unfair trial ever found in the annals of history. He was lied on and delivered to death without a verdict of condemnation. Pilate's only verdict was, "Take ye Him and crucify Him, for I find in Him no fault."

He was exposed to the mock Coronation of the Roman soldiers, crowned with thorns, and He hid not His face from shame and spitting. He was beaten in the face with blows from wicked hands. They tore the hairs from His haggard cheeks. He was scourged and His back was laid open with long furrows like a plowed field, until His bones must have shown like islands of ivory in a sea of gore.

Bleeding and suffering in agony, writhing in pain He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, all the way from Gabbatha to Golgotha. He is nailed to the wooden gibbet and extended between earth and heaven, hanging in streaming torrents of blood, with all His bones out of joint, exposed to the hellish glee of the mocking hypocrites and religious leaders. Alas! what a terrible spectacle to behold. Surely, the most doleful and horrible exhibition the eyes of man ever gazed upon. He cried for water but was given vinegar to drink. Oh! in the summits of His dreadful agony hear Him cry "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me"? He was made sin for us, and a curse (II Cor. 5:21-Gal. 3:13).

Well might the sun in darkness hide, and shut its glories in, when Christ, the mighty maker died for man, the creature's sin. He died the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. See from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did ever such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown? Let it be said here, that it ill fares any Christian to desire to be rich and famous in this life, when our blessed Lord fared so ill and mean. Forbid it Lord, that our hearts be inclined to ease and riches. May the Holy Spirit work in us the mind that was in Christ.

While the ladder was set up on earth, yet the top of it reached unto heaven. So, we behold the Son of God not only in His humiliation but also in His exaltation and glorification. The man child was caught up unto God, and His throne (Rev. 12:5).

When Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, was dying at the time of his birth, she called his name Ben-oni, the son of sorrow, but Jacob called him Benjamin, the son of my right hand. What a dual foreshadow of Christ as the man of sorrows, and also the Son of God's right hand, for He is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

The prophet, Isaiah, not only saw Him in His suffering as the man of sorrows, but he saw Him in His elevated glory and majesty. For he wrote of Him saying "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high" (Isaiah 52:13).

Peter writes of Him by the Holy Spirit, saying, "The prophets testified beforehand, by the Spirit of Christ which was in them the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow". Thus the message of the Old

Testament, and the New as well. The true ministry of the Lord's Church is to preach the cross of Christ, and to magnify the Lordship of Christ.

Our Lord, just before His ascension, said to His disciples, "...Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. and ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:46-48).

Now hear the message of His church after his Ascension, "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

The work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, for Jesus said before His death "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Thus the end of all true preaching is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. He hath ascended into the heavens and is Lord of all.

The apostle Paul after announcing the seven fold self humbling of Christ, in the book of Philippians, follows to say "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Men of this world can endure the preaching of Christ in most every way better than they can hear of Him upon the throne. They say, "We will not have this man reign over us" (Luke 19:14). However, someday they must bow their knee to the King, upon the Holy Hill of Zion, for He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision (Psalm 2:4). Yes, He who once was crowned with thorns is now bedecked with many diadems of fadeless glory.

The keynote of the Epistles is the exaltation of Christ. They present Him as being the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. The creator of all things. The head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him

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PREDESTINATION

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None but He shall ever unroll that sacred record and read it to the assembled world. How then am I to know whether I am predestinated by God unto eternal life or no? It is a question in which my eternal interests are involved; am I among that unhappy number who shall be left to live in sin and reap the due reward of their iniquity; or do I belong to that goodly company, who albeit that they have sinned shall nevertheless be washed in

the blood of Christ, and shall in white robes walk the golden streets of paradise? Until this question be answered my heart cannot rest, for I am intensely anxious about it. My eternal destiny infinitely more concerns me than all the affairs of time. Tell me, oh, tell me, if ye know, seers and prophets, is my name recorded in that book of life? Am I one of those who are ordained unto eternal life, or am I to be left to follow my own lusts and passions, and to destroy my own soul? Oh! man, there is an answer to thy enquiry; the book cannot be opened, but God Himself hath published many a page thereof. He hath not published the page whereon the actual names of the redeemed are written; but that page of the sacred decree whereon their character is recorded is published in His Word, and shall be proclaimed to thee this day. The sacred record of God's hand is this day published everywhere under heaven, and he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto him. O my hearer, by thy name I know thee now, and by thy name God's Word doth not declare thee, but by thy character thou mayest read thy name; and if thou hast been a partaker of the calling which is mentioned in the text, then mayest thou conclude beyond a doubt that thou art among the predestinated, "For whom he did predestinate, them he also called." And if thou be called, it follows as a natural inference thou art predestinated.

Now, in considering this solemn subject, let me remark that there are two kinds of callings mentioned in the Word of God. The first is the general call, which is in the gospel sincerely given to everyone that heareth the Word. The duty of the minister is to call souls to Christ, he is to make no distinction whatever, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The trumpet of the gospel sounds aloud to every man in our congregations, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man," (Prov. 8:4). This call is sincere on God's part; but man by nature is so opposed to God, that this call is never effectual, for man disregards it, turns his back upon it, and goes his way, caring for none of these things. But mark, although this call be rejected, man is without excuse in the rejection; the universal call has in it such authority, that the man who will not obey it shall be without excuse in the day of judgment. When thou art commanded to believe and repent, when thou art exhorted to flee from the wrath to come, the sin lies on thy own head if thou dost despise the exhortation, and reject the commandment. And this solemn text drops an awful warning: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." But I repeat it, this universal call is rejected by man; it is a call, but it is not attended with divine force and energy of the Holy Spirit in such a degree as to make it an unconquerable

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PREDESTINATION

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call, consequently men perish, even though they have the universal call of the gospel ringing in their ears. The bell of God's house rings every day, sinners hear it, but they put their fingers in their ears, and go their way, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise, and though they are bidden and are called to the wedding, (Luke 14:16,17,18) yet they will not come, and by not coming they incur God's wrath, and He declareth of such, "none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (Luke 14:24). The call of our text is of a different kind; it is not a universal call, it is a special, particular, personal, discriminating, efficacious, unquerable call. This call is sent to the predestinated, and to them only; they by grace hear the call, obey it, and receive it. These are they who can now say, "Draw us, and we will run after thee."

In preaching of this call this morning, I shall divide my sermon into three brief parts. First, I shall give illustrations of the call; secondly, we shall come to examine whether we have been called; and then thirdly, what delightful consequences flow therefrom. Illustration, examination, consolation.

I. First, then, for illustration. In illustrating the effectual call of grace, which is given to the predestinated ones, I must first use the picture of Lazarus. See you that stone rolled at the mouth of the sepulchre? Much need is there for the stone that it should be well secured, for within the sepulchre there is a putrid corpse. The sister of that corrupt body stands at the side of the tomb, and she says, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." This is the voice of reason and of nature. Martha is correct; but by Martha's side there stands a man who, despite all His lowliness, is very God of very God. "Take ye away the stone," saith He, and it is done; and now, listen to Him; He cries, "Lazarus, come forth!" That cry is directed to a mass of putridity, to a body that has been dead four days, and in which the worms have already held carnival; but, strange to say, from that tomb there comes a living man; that mass of corruption has been quickened into life, and out he comes, wrapped about with grave clothes, and having a napkin about his head. "Loose him and let him go," saith the Redeemer; and then he walks in all the liberty of life. The effectual call of grace is precisely similar; the sinner is dead in sin; he is not only in sin but dead in sin, without any power whatever to give to himself the life of grace. Nay, he is not only dead, but he is corrupt; his lusts, like the worms, have crept into him, a foul stench riseth up into the nostrils of justice, God abhorreth him, and justice crieth, "Bury the dead out of my sight, cast it into the fire, let it be consumed." Sovereign Mercy comes, and there lies this unconscious, lifeless mass of sin; Sovereign Grace cries, by the Spirit of God, "Come forth!" and that man lives. Does he contribute anything to his new life? Not he;

his life is given solely by God. He was dead, absolutely dead, rotten in his sin; the life is given when the call comes, and, in obedience to the call, the sinner comes forth from the grave of his lust, begins to live a new life, even the life eternal, which Christ gives to His sheep.

"Well," cries one, "but what are the words which Christ uses when He calls a sinner from death?" Why, the Lord may use any words. It was not long ago there came unto this call, a man who was without God and without Christ, and the simple reading of the hymn, "Jesus Lover Of My Soul," was the means of his quickening. He said within himself, "Does Jesus love me? Then I must love him," and he was quickened in that selfsame hour. The words which Jesus uses are various in different cases. I trust that even while I am speaking this morning, Christ may speak with me, and some word that may fall from my lips, unpremeditated and almost without design, shall be sent of God as a message of life unto some dead and corrupt heart here, and some man who has lived in sin hitherto, shall now live to righteousness, and live to Christ. That is the first illustration I will give you of what is meant by effectual calling. It finds the sinner dead, it gives him life, and he obeys the call of life and lives.

But let us consider a second phase of it. You will remember while the sinner is dead in sin, he is alive enough so far as any opposition to God may be concerned. He is powerless to obey, but he is mighty enough to resist the call of divine grace. I may illustrate it in the case of Saul of Tarsus: this proud Pharisee abhors the Lord Jesus Christ; he has seized upon every follower of Jesus who comes within his grasp; he has haled men and women to prison; with the avidity of a miser who hunts after gold, he has hunted after the precious life of Christ's disciple, and having exhausted his prey in Jerusalem, he seeks letters and goes off to Damascus upon the same bloody errand. Speak to him on the road, send out the apostle Peter to him, let Peter say, "Saul, why dost thou oppose Christ? The time shall come when thou shalt yet be His disciple." Paul would turn round and laugh him to scorn, "Get thee gone thou fisherman, get thee gone—I a disciple of that impostor Jesus of Nazareth! Look here, this is my confession of faith; here will I hale thy brothers and thy sisters to prison, and beat them in the synagogue and compel them to blaspheme and even hunt them to death, for my breath is threatening, and my heart is as fire against Christ." Such a scene did not occur, but had there been any remonstrance given by men you may easily conceive that such would have been Saul's answer. But Christ determined that He would call the man. Oh, what an enterprise! Stop him? Why he is going fast onward in his mad career. But, lo, a light shines round about him and he falls to the ground, and he hears a voice crying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Saul's eyes are filled with tears, and then again with scales of darkness, and he cries, "Who art thou?" and a voice calls, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." It is not many minutes before he begins to feel his sin in having

persecuted Jesus, nor many hours ere he receives the assurance of his pardon, and not many days ere he who persecuted Christ, stands up to preach with vehemence and eloquence unparalleled, the very cause which he once trod beneath his feet. See what effectual calling can do. If God should choose this morning to call the hardest hearted wretch within hearing of the gospel, he must obey. Let God call—a man may resist, but he cannot resist effectually. Down thou shalt come, sinner, if God cries down; there is no standing when He would have thee fall. And mark, every man that is saved, is always saved by an overcoming call which he cannot withstand; he may resist it for a time, but he cannot resist so as to overcome it, he must give way, he must yield when God speaks. If He says, "Let there be light," the impenetrable darkness gives way to light; if He says, "Let there be grace," unutterable sin gives way, and the hardest-hearted sinner melts before the fire of effectual calling.

I have thus illustrated the call in two ways, by the state of the sinner in his sin, and by the omnipotence which overwhelms the resistance which he offers. And now another case. The effectual call may be illustrated in its sovereignty by the case of Zaccheus. Christ is entering into Jericho to preach. There is a publican living in it, who is a hard, griping, grasping, miserly extortioner. Jesus Christ is coming in to call some one, for it is written he must abide in some man's house. Would you believe it, that the man whom Christ intends to call is the worst man in Jericho—the extortioner? He is a little short fellow, and he cannot see Christ, though he has a great curiosity to look at Him; so he runs before the crowd and climbs up a sycamore tree, and thinking himself quite safe amid the thick foliage, he waits with eager expectation to see this wonderful man who had turned the world upside down. Little did he think that he was to turn him also. The Saviour walks along preaching and talking with the people until He comes under the sycamore tree, then lifting up His eyes, He cries—"Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to day I must abide at thy house." The shot took effect, the bird fell, down came Zaccheus, invited the Saviour to his house, and proved that he was really called not by the voice merely but by grace itself, for he said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore unto him fourfold," and Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house." Now why call Zaccheus? There were many better men in the city than he. Why call him? Simply because the call of God comes to unworthy sinners. There is nothing in man that can deserve this call; nothing in the best of men that can invite it; but God quickeneth whom He will, and when He sends that call, though it come to the vilest of the vile, down they come speedily and swiftly; they come down from the tree of their sin, and fall prostrate in penitence at the feet of Jesus Christ.

But now, to illustrate this call in its effects, we are reminded that Abraham is another

remarkable instance of effectual calling. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:" and "by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Ah! poor Abraham, as the world would have it, what a trial his call cost him! He was happy enough in the bosom of his father's household, but idolatry crept into it, and when God called Abraham, he called him alone and blessed him out of Ur of the Chaldees and said to him, "Go forth, Abraham!" and he went forth, not knowing whither he went. Now, when effectual calling comes into a house and singles out a man, that man will be compelled to go forth without the camp, bearing Christ's reproach. He must come out from his very dearest friends, from all his old acquaintances, from those friends with whom he used to drink, and swear, and take pleasure; he must go straight away from them all, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. What a trial to Abraham's faith, when he had to leave all that was so dear to him, and go he knew not whither! And yet God had a goodly land for him, and intended greatly to bless him. Man! if thou art called, if thou art called truly, there will be a going out, and a going out alone. Perhaps some of God's professed people will leave you; you will have to go without a solitary friend, maybe you will even be deserted by Sarah herself, and you may be a stranger in a strange land, a solitary wanderer, as all your fathers were. Ah! but if it be an effectual call, and if salvation shall be the result thereof, what matters it though thou dost go to heaven alone? Better to be a solitary pilgrim to bliss, than one of the thousands who throng the road to hell.

I will have one more illustration. When effectual calling comes to a man, at first he may not know that it is effectual calling. You remember the case of Samuel: the Lord called Samuel, and he arose and went to Eli, and he said, "Here am I, for thou calledst me." Eli said, "I called not, lie down again. And he went and lay down." The second time the Lord called him, and said, "Samuel, Samuel," and he arose again, and went to Eli, and said, "Here am I, for thou didst call me," and then it was that Eli, not Samuel, first of all perceived that the Lord had called the child. And when Samuel knew it was the Lord, he said, "Speak; for thy servant heareth." When the work of grace begins in the heart, the man is not always clear that it is God's work: he is impressed under the minister, and perhaps he is rather more occupied with the impression than with the agent of the impression; he says, "I know not how it is, but I have been called: Eli, the minister has called me." And perhaps he goes to Eli to ask what he wants with him. "Surely," said he, "the minister knew me, and spoke something personally to me, because he knew my case." And he goes to Eli, and it is not till afterwards, perhaps, that he finds that Eli had nothing to do with the impres-

sion, but that the Lord had called him. I know this—I believe God was at work with my heart for years before I knew anything about Him. I knew there was a work; I knew I prayed, and cried, and groaned for mercy, but I did not know that was the Lord's work; I half thought it was my own. I did not know till afterwards, when I was led to know Christ as all my salvation, and all my desire, that the Lord had called the child, for this could not have been the result of nature, it must have been the effect of grace. I think I may say to those who are the beginners in the divine life, so long as your call is real, rest assured that it is, for nature could never produce effectual calling. If the call be effectual, and you are brought out and brought in—brought out of sin and brought to Christ, brought out of death into life, and out of slavery into liberty, then, though thou canst not see God's hand in it, yet it is there.

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WORD

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then the greatness of the Word of God. David, by inspiration, tells of the mighty handiwork of God as he says in verse one, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." Before David tells of the Word of God, he tells of the greatness and sovereignty of God. David is not telling of the words of men or of the thoughts of men: but he is declaring that God is the ruler and sustainer of heaven, and that His Word is above every word spoken by man. David, by showing the greatness of God, makes it plain that men should believe that God is, by merely observing His creation. Did you know that a man is a fool who does not believe there is a God? Did you know that every atheist is a fool headed for hell? Yes, a man who can walk outside on a clear night and look up into the heavens at the stars and galaxies and not believe in God is a fool. There are those who will tell us that all of this just came about by chance. They will tell us that the stars just fell into place, and that there is no order at all. But, this is also foolishness for the 147th Psalm says in the 4th verse, "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." Yes, beloved, the creator knows and is acquainted with His creation. Thus, in this 19th Psalm, God's sovereignty is declared; and by doing so, the power of His Word is also declared.

Our text does not tell us all there is to know about the Word of God. I will not deal with every subject concerning it. I will deal with some things that are mentioned in our text in hope that they will be a blessing to you. The first thing the text deals with is the conversion of souls. In the 7th verse he said, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul." The word law, in this verse, is a word that can be translated "doctrine." In other words the doctrines of the Word of God are perfect. They

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If we were as patient and swift to hear as we are to speak, there would be less wrath and more of profit in our meetings.

WORD

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cannot be improved. Every doctrine is perfect and should be handled as such. Some men believe they need to change Bible doctrines or sugar coat them to make them effective. Some men believe they must hide some of them and never preach them because they say the common man does not need to hear them. Well, this is rubbish. Every doctrine in the Bible is perfect. We do not have to apologize for any of them. We ought to feel at liberty preaching any part of the Bible to any group of people as we are led of the Spirit of God. When a preacher preaches the truth of the Word, he is preaching that which is perfect. When men become upset at us, they are upset over perfection. Jesus was perfect and they hated Him, will they not feel the same toward His perfect Word? So, Bible doctrines are the perfect Word of God that are used in the conversion of souls. I have heard men say they grow weary of doctrinal preaching. I don't know what they mean, for there is no other kind. The Word is doctrine. We see in our text that it takes doctrine in order for you to be saved. It takes the perfect Word of God for you to be saved. All of your salvation depends upon perfection. It took a perfect God in heaven to choose you unto salvation. It took a perfect Saviour to die for your sins, and it took a perfect Spirit to call you unto salvation. This perfect God took a perfect Word and used it in this calling. James 1:18 says, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." I Corinthians 1:21 says, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Now you can argue all you want to my friend, but the fact is you cannot be saved unless you hear of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Hardshells are bold to declare their ignorance on this subject. If a man can be saved without the gospel, then God is a liar and the truth is not in Him. The Hardshell will not face up to the fact that he believes in Christ because he heard of Him and believed in Him by the aid of the Spirit of God. Beloved, we are saved through the preaching of the perfect doctrines of the Word of God.

The next thing our verse tells us about the Word is that it makes wise the simple. The Word is sure. There is no error in it. Did you know the Word has never lead anyone off into error or astray. The Word is perfect, it is sure and makes the simple into very wise people. I believe the wisest people on the face of the earth are those who believe the Word of God. They are the wisest who can understand the Bible and believe it is God's Word. There are different kinds of wisdom, but the only wisdom that counts is Biblical wisdom. What other kind will amount to anything ten thousand years from now anyway? What difference does it make if you are a brilliant executive of some corporation making much money, if you have no knowledge of the Bible? Thousands of years from now, what difference will it make if you can build an automobile or if you are some great engineer? My friend it will make no difference at all. All that will matter in eternity is

your wisdom concerning God and His Word. So, Bible wisdom is the greatest wisdom there is. There are many who are not educated in worldly learning and they are not making the money that others are who would not trade their Biblical wisdom for all the money and lands in the world. Isn't it marvellous how the great truths we believe are hidden from the wise and revealed unto the simple? There are men who have studied the Bible for many years who cannot grasp the plain teachings of the Word of God. They cannot see predestination, election, or other such great doctrines. They try and reason with their minds and they fail to comprehend these truths. What a wonderful thing it is then for the Spirit to reveal these things unto us.

In the next place our text says that it leads to rejoicing of heart. In the 8th verse we read, "The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart." The Word of God leads to rejoicing because it is right. The statutes are right: they are perfect. The statutes of the Lord are right in every case. The Word has never been wrong. The Word of God always has the best solution for any problem. You can go to the Word and get the right advice for your problems. The Word is right for all of the needs of the heart. How often are we comforted by the Word of God when surrounded by troubles and trials? Oh how blessed are His Words when we are so burdened down and in need of His grace. The Word is just what we need when we are troubled. How often have tears been turned into smiles through the reading and preaching of the Word of God? Yes, His statutes lead us to rejoicing. Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 15:16, "thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts." It was the Word that brought rejoicing to the heart of Jeremiah. One might ask, "How do these words bring joy?" Well the Word of God tells us who God is and what He is, and then it tells us what we are. It tells us of how God through His mercy and grace chose to save some of mankind. It tells us of His love for them and how He watches over them. Here is a portion of Scripture which brings great joy to the heart of the believer. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Does this not make you rejoice in heart? How could a Christian read this and not be overwhelmed with great joy?

Another thing the Word does is enlighten the eyes. Verse 8 says "... the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes". A man has not seen until he has seen God through spiritual eyes. A

man has not seen the Word of God until the Spirit has enlightened his eyesight. This Bible opens our eyes to things that men have never seen nor heard of. Since God saved me in 1981, I have seen some marvellous things in the Word of God. I have been enlightened on such things as a great tribulation period, a time of the outpouring of God's wrath upon the earth. I have been shown a thousand year reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth, where there shall be peace, something this earth has not known since the fall of Adam. I have read of the devil and the work of the demons on this earth. I have seen in the Word a heaven that is so beautiful and wonderful that there are not words to describe it. I have seen a hell that is so terrible that, like heaven it cannot be described. I have seen the holiness of God and the depravity of man, and I can marvel at the grace of God in salvation. Oh beloved, the things I have seen in the Word of God by God's grace! Psalm 119 says, "Thy word is a lamp...". Oh, dear reader, may the light be turned on as you read the blessed Word of God.

The Word endureth forever (v. 9). The Bible is something that is always going to be around. Though men have tried to destroy it, they could not. It is not possible to. It endureth forever and forever. Our Lord says in this verse it is clean and endures forever. Beloved, the Word of God is the cleanest thing on the earth today. In this day where everything tends to lead to something dirty and filthy, the Word of God is here in its purity and cleanness. The Word is incorruptible. There is nothing in it that is evil or leads men to evil. Only God could have written such a book. Only God, who is without corruption, can make this claim that His Words are without corruption. This fact gives the assurance and promise that God's Word will endure forever. We know that no corrupt thing will enter into heaven's gates. I Corinthians 15:52-53 says, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on in corruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Saved people must be changed before they can go there. We cannot go into to heaven in this sinful flesh, but we must be changed. Aren't you glad of that? What would heaven be if this were not true? Yes, we will be changed. But one thing will enter that will not have to be changed, and that is the Word of God. There is nothing corrupt about it. It has not been corrupted by sinful man. It is true that men wrote this book, but it was through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. The Word is not the depraved thoughts of men, but rather the revealed Word of God. This Word of God can offer eternal salvation because of its eternal existence. All who have trusted Christ through the preaching of the Word of God have everlasting life. Oh, praise the Lord that His Word endures forever, and that we can believe all we read therein.

Verse 9 says, "...the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether." His judgments are true because they are righteous,

and they are righteous because they are truth. Man claims to be truthful, but all men fall short when compared with the Word of God. Even the most honest man at times, will lie or mislead someone. But God's Word is not like that. You can believe every warning that is found in this Book. When you read about the judgment of God, you can take it for what it says. When you read of God casting men into hell because of their sins, you can count on that. You live your life any way you want to and rebel against God and trust in yourself to be saved, and you will die and open your eyes in hell; and then you will see the judgments of God are true. You will see I have not lied to you, and that God is not just a God of love, but one of wrath also. God is true in His warnings of the chastisement of His people. You had better believe that God will chasten His people. He will not allow them to rebel and sin against Him. Now, I'm not saying that we can live in sinless perfection in this life, but at times we do sin willfully and deliberately against God and His Word, and He will not let us get by with this. Hebrews 12:6 tells us, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Yes, every warning stands true and sure in the Word of God. Not only is every warning true, but so is every demand. Some people seem to think that God does not have the right to demand anything of His children, but this is not so. Our God has every right to demand of us, and we are obligated to obey His demands. Our lives are not our own. We belong to the Lord. He bought us, and we are His to use as He sees fit. Our service to Him is demanded and rightfully so. And then every promise is true in the Bible. All that God says He will do for us, He will do. All that He has promised for us in heaven is there waiting for us. Oh, how many are the great and precious promises of God. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:3-4). God has not failed in one promise yet, and it shall never happen. God is faithful to His promises.

Lastly, verse 10 tells us the Word is desirable. It is desirable, our text says, because it is better than gold. Now, gold is something that all can relate to. The unsaved man can relate to that. The Word of God is desired over gold. Our text says even the best gold. Gold can do no more than make you rich until you leave this world and its riches behind. The Word, on the other hand, can make the soul rich in heaven where that treasure never fades away. Now, do you see why God's Word is better than the best of gold? Luke 9:25 says, "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" If believed, a man is saved from hell and given eternal life in Christ Jesus. If adhered to a man, after he is saved can

obey the Word of God and gain great riches in heaven. Of course the Bible should be desired above the best of this world's gold. Nothing could be better for you than the blessed Word of God. Yet, men scoff at it and ridicule it. Men belittle the preacher of it and do harm to him. How sad it is that man rejects that which is so good for him. Our text also says that it is sweeter than honey. Jackie Gleason used to say, "How sweet it is." Beloved, we who are saved can say, "How sweet the Word is." We who are born from above could not get along without it. We love to hear it and to preach it. That is a mark of the new birth; that love for the Word of God. Do you love God's Word? I hope so. May God bless you.

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Saviour that can never be broken. Once in Christ, forever in Him.

4. The fourth link is justification. "whom he called, them he also justified." There are two things in justification. First, forgiveness of sin. All the sins of those who are justified. Not only are their past sins forgiven, but all the sins that they shall commit to the end of their time in the world. This is no encouragement to sin. All their sins, past, present, and future, are blotted out in the eye of the law. This is done by God as a judge, and if they sin afterwards (as they do, for there is no man that sinneth not), God will deal with them as a Father in chastising them.

It is God that justifieth. Pardon of sin is a very sweet and precious blessing. The Psalmist found it so when he said, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." The ground upon which God pardons sin is the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to those whom He justifies. Their sins were imputed to Him which cost Him His humiliation unto death that they might be freely pardoned without money and without price.

Justification is a change of state, and does not in the least change our corrupt nature. A change of nature is the work of the Spirit, which necessarily precedes a change of state. It is the guilt of their sins that was removed in justification. The removal of their depravity belongs to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, which begins in regeneration and is carried on till death, when they are made perfect in holiness. Justification is an act which is perfect at once, while sanctification is a progressive work completed at death. It is with respect to their justification that believers are said to be complete in Christ. They are as complete and perfect the moment they are justified as they shall ever be. Sometimes they are apt to conclude that they are not justified when they are sensible of the sinfulness of their nature. This arises from their not keeping in view the distinction between justification and

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sanctification.

Being justified, they are now accepted as righteous, as if they had never sinned. Whether was it easier for God to receive them than to receive Adam before he sinned? If there was any difference, we would be inclined to say it was easier for Him to receive them, because of what it cost His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased, as His Servant, on account of glorifying Him by finishing the work which He had given Him to do; and also on account of the robe of righteousness in which they now appear before Him--a righteousness in this sense that excels the righteousness in which man was created. It is of this state of justification the Apostle Paul speaks as the grace in which they now stand and have free access to God. In their state of nature they were fallen and under condemnation, but now they are standing, and they shall never fall into condemnation again. The apostle challenges all enemies "to lay anything to their charge," because it was God that justified them, or to condemn them because it was Christ that died for them.

5. The fifth link is their glorification. "whom he justified, them he also glorified." One may say that there is a link wanting here, namely, their sanctification. But this link is mentioned, inasmuch as it is said that "They are to be conformed to the image of God's Son." If that is not sanctification, we do not know what sanctification is. There is another link indirectly spoken of--their sonship, inasmuch as Christ speaks of them as brethren. "That he might be the firstborn among many brethren." There are thus seven links in the golden chain, a complete number, as the number seven signifies in several parts of Scripture. Their glorification is the last link in the chain. All whom God foreknew, called,

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that filleth all in all: And He is before all things and by Him all things consist. That in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.

He is the crowning victory in every conquest and every engagement of battle. He hath swallowed up death in victory. He will overcome the beast and all his cohorts, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings. The highest place that heaven affords is His by undisputed right. He is our sovereign potentate, glorious in His apparel traveling in the greatness of His strength. He that speaks in righteousness mighty to save (Isaiah 63:1). Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The editor will be speaking in special services at the Temple Baptist Church of Appalachia, Va. September 2-4. Services will be at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 3rd. There will be a homecoming service on Sunday at 11:00 a.m. Following this, there will be dinner on the grounds for all present. For further information, call Reggie Moore at (703) 565-4604.

regenerated, justified, and sanctified, shall ultimately be glorified without fail. All whom God proposed to save shall be brought to heaven at last. Some of these are effectually called in childhood; others in their teens; others when they attain to manhood; and others, though comparatively fewer, in old age. Some are called at the eleventh hour, as the thief on the cross who was called a few minutes before his death.

The redeemed are changed from a state of nature to a state of grace. Their state of grace is a happy state, but their state of glory shall be much happier. Free from sin, free from tribulation, they are made perfectly happy in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.

In conclusion, the Lord's people are often wondering that God elected them unto salvation. They are frequently putting themselves in the balance and saying, what if He had not elected us, and left us to perish as we deserved? So they give the glory of their salvation to Him, and not in the least degree to themselves. They will say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name be the glory!" There are many who deny the doctrine of election, but this arises from their carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and rebels against His sovereignty in salvation. All their arguments against election have been answered and confuted by the Apostle Paul, in the ninth chapter of Romans, where he says, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour?" (Rom. 9:20,21). Others who believe in the doctrine of election make bad use of it, and say, if we are elected we shall be saved; if we are not elected we shall be lost, and we need not make any effort to be saved. But these forget that the means of salvation were appointed as well as the persons to be saved were elected. Election is one of the secret things that belongs to God. What we have to go with is His revealed will. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children-for ever" (Deut. 29:29). Christ speaking of the Father's revealed will says, "This is the will of him that sent me, that everyone who seeth the Son and believeth in him may have everlasting life" (John 6:40).

Although we do not know who are elected before they are effectually called, our duty is not hid from us but plainly revealed in the Scripture. If you have found that you have been elected because you have been effectually called, serve the Lord under a sense of your obligation to Him. In worldly matters people use means to get the necessities of life and the other mercies we need in the world. The farmer does not say, "I shall not plough or sow seed. If God purposed that I should have a large crop, I shall have it; and if He purpose otherwise, I shall fold my hands and do nothing." Tradesmen, labourers, and all use means to attain the end they have in view. We ought to be much more concerned

about the things that belong to our everlasting peace. The Word preached is the means which God appointed. The Psalmist meditated on the Word of God day and night. The Elder Robert Finlayson, who was minister at Helmsdale, was traveling with a friend, and as he was not saying anything, the friend thought he was a very strange and absent-minded man. At last he asked Mr. Finlayson, "Where are we now?" to which he replied, "Wherever you are, I am between Genesis and Revelation." Be you like Mr. Finlayson, searching the Scriptures and meditating upon them. Christ says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," and to meet the case of a poor sinner who is afraid that he is not one of those given by the Father to Christ, He adds--"And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). These words have been the means of keeping many anxious sinners from falling into despair. Then come you to Him, cast yourself upon Him as a poor lost sinner and He will not cast you out. He is faithful to fulfill His Word. Amen.

MOAB

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where it makes no difference anyway. So they moved to the land of Moab. The Bible says they continued there ten years.

Now, the country of Moab is the land of the Moabites. Where did the Moabites come from and who are they? Well, the Moabites sprang from the son of Lot. When we read Genesis 19: 30-38; we find a real shocking story recorded by the Holy Spirit in God's Word concerning Lot. He became his own children's grandfather. One of them is the father and founder of the Moabites. Beloved, Lot had left Sodom, but Sodom had not left Lot. Lot's daughters had left Sodom, but Sodom had never left them. We see a terrible, disgraceful story told about Lot and his daughters. The first-born named her son Moab. The same is the father of the Moabites. This, then, is the ungodly tribe that Elimelech took his family to. Now as we go back to the book of Ruth let us examine the name "Bethlehem," meaning, "The house of bread," and the definition of "Judea," praise.

We see this family leaving the house of bread and praise, which are the free gifts of God and going off into a country of the godless Moabites. As we have said, they continued there about ten years.

Let us look at the definition of the name "Elimelech." His name is, "My God is King." God was his king as long as he was living in the house of bread and praise. What happened? The same as we do when we backslide, he turned his back on the house of the blessings of the Lord. Beloved, when he went into the land of the Moabites, God was no longer his King. Why could he so easily do this? Let us turn back to the very last chapter and verse in the book of Judges, "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25). There was no king in Israel; every man did as he pleased in his own eyes. That is one of our great problems today. We are prone to do our own thing.

Revelation 3:14-19 tells us about the church in Laodicea that

was not well pleasing in the eyes of the Lord. It seems it was a professing church, but not a possessing church. God said He would spew it out of His mouth. It certainly was not pleasing in His sight. The name "Laodicea," simply means, "The rights of the people." The rights of the people! We saw that they had no king. It is the same with us today. We do as we please for the most part. This church did the same. Beloved, we are backslidden! Elimelech was blessed as long as he lived in the house of bread and he was blessed as long as he stayed at home. One day he became restless and said to Naomi, "Let us pull up stakes and move into the land of Moab. There we will have all the things that we do not have here." Restless? oh, yes. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence, but usually it is bitter grass to the taste.

So, they did that which was right in their own eyes. Elimelech said, "we can never have these things living here within the house of bread and praise." We often move without considering the cost.

Naomi means "Pleasant, or Sunshine." Naomi was pleasant until she turned her back upon God. But we shall see a little later on when she returned after ten years had passed, her bitterness had overwhelmed her. She said in verse twenty that He had dealt bitterly with her. She had paid dearly for backsliding. God's hand had fallen bitterly upon her, and she said, "Call me Mara for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me."

Now let us take a look at her two sons. Mahlon means "Sickly," or "Unhealthy." The second one, Chilion, means "Piney," or "Puny." Elimelech, who means my God is king, has turned his back upon God, and left the house of bread, took with him Naomi whose name means pleasant, or sunshine, and she too had turned her back, and they were to have two sons, one, Mahlon, who was to be sickly, puny, unhealthy, and Chilion, who was to be piney or puny. These were to go into an ungodly land, and take unto themselves ungodly wives. They were to become sickly and puny. What a sad situation; what a story here in the very first chapter of Ruth, in the first verses. What a terrible turn of events that befell this family that chose to turn their backs upon God and move to the land of Moab.

They continued there, and verse three says that Elimelech, Naomi's husband died. There had to be tears and heartbreak in that home. The daddy was gone never to return. Just because the family had turned its back upon God does not mean that there was no love in that home. Brokenhearted, yes. Naomi was left with her two sons. What happened to them? They took them wives of the women of Moab. Naturally, that is what happened to them. Daddy had taken them into the world, and they were going to take worldly wives. We read in Deuteronomy seven, these laws. "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them. thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods, so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against

you, and destroy thee suddenly." (Deut. 7:3-4) Beloved, that is exactly what took place in the lives of the sons of Elimelech and Naomi. God destroyed them suddenly because they took unto themselves strange wives. Now one may say that was for those people back there under the law. We are under grace today, and that is not for us. I want you to compare two passages of Scripture with me at this time. First; Deuteronomy 7:6, says; "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God; the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Now turn to I Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Do you yet believe we have no place there? Oh, beloved, God chooses as He pleases. Make no mistake about it.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers..." (II Cor. 6:14). "And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband." (Ruth 1:5). Death once again knocks upon Naomi's door. Death once again brought tremendous heartaches. One grave already; now there were two more. Well, graveside sorrow is the theme of our article this time. Beloved Christian friend, let me ask you a question of importance. Are you living in Moab, or are you living in the house of bread and praise? Have you turned your back upon God?

Are you saying, as the Pharaoh of old, "...Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice..." (Exod. 5:2). Are you denying that you were bought with a price, and that you are not your own? If so, please come back home! Come back up out of Moab! Naomi did that. Look at verse six. Naomi had heard that bread was plentiful back at home. She began to long for that abundance she once knew before her sorrowful days came upon her. Come back to Bethlehem, God will forgive you. You can arise and repent. Beloved, I have been there. He will forgive!

Any of the Lord's churches will welcome you and help you with open arms if you return with godly sorrow and repentance. Get up and come back to the house of praise and bread. Go to the church that you left. It might help others there if you did. Naomi had learned that we shall reap what we sow. Read Ruth 1:13. Sheep hate mud! Naomi had had enough!

As we come to the close of our article for this time, let us remind you that from the blood line of Ruth came our Lord Jesus Christ. Read the entire book of Ruth seeing the reference to David, then study the Chronicles concerning Boaz, Rahab the harlot, etc. Yes, the bloodline can be established with the kindred of David and others. Come back home before the bitterness shows almost past recognition among old friends, as it did Naomi. They hardly knew her when she returned home after ten years backslidden! Don't stay away until you become bitter as Naomi did. Return, repent, and get it right!