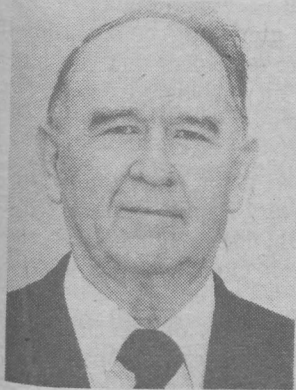


WHY DO THE WICKED LIVE?

"Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?" (Job 21:7).

Job's proposed friends misunderstood his trial of faith. They accused him therefore of secret sins that occasioned his misery. They argued that he was a secret sinner and that God was dealing out His judgment upon him, and was cutting him off in darkness, that such was the portion of the wicked and that God spared the righteous upon earth and prospered him in providence, while He quickly cut off the wicked. Job answered to their contentions



T.B. FREEMAN

that God not always cuts off the wicked immediately, but many of them prosper in this life: They become old, and are mighty in

TOO LITTLE TOO MUCH JUST RIGHT

by Fred Beard

Hebrews 11:1-10, text: verse 7. In this chapter of faith we read of the man, Noah. And the word of God tells us that it was by faith that Noah prepared an ark. Oh the wonderful works of faith; how blessed one is to have faith. Much has been written, and much has been said about faith; and most of what has been written and been said is but man's way of heaping praise and honor upon himself. Come with me as we



FRED BEARD

look at the faith of Noah; let us see that his faith was not too little, not too much, but just right. We read about the faith of Noah in Genesis, the first book of our Bible. His story begins in chapter six and ends with the close of chapter nine and verse twenty-nine where we read: "And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died." Not only

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WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE CHURCH ALL ON THE OUTSIDE"

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

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know

that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Be-



JOHN R. GILPIN, SR.

hold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out:... and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 3:7-13).

Concerning Ephesus, the first of these seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation, it had left its first love.

Smyrna was living rightly and preaching rightly, and was therefore being opposed by the devil on the outside.

Pergamos was the worldly church. It was composed of a

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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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SEVEN CHURCHES OR SEVEN AGES OF REVELATION?

by Danny Davis

There is probably more controversy among good, sound, Bible believing brethren on the book of Revelation than any other book of the Bible. Many of you probably hold a different view on this particular topic than I do. However, I will attempt in this article to clarify and give as much sound reasoning for my position as God will give. I do ask you, the readers, to look prayerfully, with an open mind, only desiring the truth.

I have heard quite a few sermons, where the preacher attempted to prove the seven

churches of Revelation are seven different ages or dispensations of the church. Many of these sermons were excellent jobs of oration and very pleasing to listen to. However, I believe this thesis is based on a false concept and not the Word of God. In the rest of this article, I will attempt to prove this error of seven church ages.

Reason number one: Revelation 1:4, "JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia." I want you to notice that these churches ARE in Asia. The word "are" in the English language is a present tense verb. In other words, these seven

churches were in existence at the time of John's writing. If the church age theory is true, why doesn't this verse read "to the seven churches which are and shall be"? Brethren I believe, unless there is a definite error in the translation, the rules of English which we learned in elementary school still apply. I am thoroughly convinced that every word of the Bible, in the original, is inspired by God, including the different tenses of each and every word; aren't you? I cannot believe God would deliberately misrepresent something that is future, and use words to

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Willis

IS AMERICA BETTER THAN POPULOUS NO?

"Art thou better than populous No...?" (Nah.3:8).

Sinners sometimes think that God will not punish them as He has punished others. Nations sometimes think that they are secure from God's punishment. Nahum is entirely given to God's judgment upon Nineveh. Chapter one tells us that the judgment is decreed, chapter two describes the judgment, chapter three shows that the judgment is deserved.

About a hundred and fifty years before Nahum, Jonah had gone and preached to Nineveh, warning of judgment from God. Nineveh

had repented and God, in mercy and grace, had spared them. That generation had passed away. The new generation lived in great sin and rebellion against God. Nahum declared that God would judge Nineveh. One should consider these two books together. Jonah tells us that God is long-suffering, gracious, and merciful; and that He will forgive repentant sinners. Nahum tells us that where sin is continued in, God will punish it. The two truths need to ever be taught in conjunction the one with the other.

I suggest that you read Nahum 3:8-13. Let me expound this briefly. No is another name for No Amon or Thebes, the capital of upper Egypt. No was a wicked city. It was a large city. It had good defenses and many strong allies. It seemed that no power could defeat her. Verse 10 says, "Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces...all her great men were bound in chains." Nineveh was the

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POWER OF THE BLOOD

(USPS 042-340)

By Waldo Whiddon

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). There is absolutely no greater message than that of blood-bought pardon! No theme should occupy the Christian's mind more than the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are thousands of subjects to



WALDO WHIDDON

study, teach, and preach; but there is only one that truly thrills the hearts of God's people everywhere: the person and work of

(Continued on Page 8, Col. 1)

STUDIES IN ACTS

It is no less than remarkable that Peter is addressing the Sanhedrin -- the great council of the entire nation of Israel. It was before these very men that the Lord Jesus had been judged. They had treated Him as badly as they knew how. Peter, at that time, had denied he knew the Lord Jesus. Now, however, under the power of God the Spirit, he looks them straight in the eye and charges them with the crucifixion of their Messiah.

The arrangement for this meeting began when the lame man was healed. The events that surrounded the crucifixion, the resurrection, the arrival of the Holy Spirit, the healing of the lame man, the witnessing to



WILLARD WILLIS

those at the temple and now the witnessing to the Sanhedrin were all pre-planned. The lame man, in fact, was born with his condition, with the plan that he would be healed at the set time, so as to set in motion the events which followed. God, in fact, leaves nothing to chance but has a plan which cannot be altered. He, in fact, will do all His pleasure.

"If we this day be examined of the good deed done (Continued on Page 6, Col. 3)

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AMERICA

(Continued from Page 1)

capital of the Assyrian empire. The armies of Assyria had defeated No.

Nineveh was a large city. Nineveh was a very wicked city. She was a proud city. She was so well defended that she was sure no power could defeat her. She had ruled the known world for hundreds of years. Her armies were known for their cruelty and power. Nineveh did not believe that any power on earth could bring her down. God asked her, "Art thou better than populous No?" Was Nineveh better morally than No? No! Was Nineveh more powerful than populous No? Well, yes. Was Nineveh any more secure from judgment by God than No? No, for God is able to defeat the most proud, the most powerful, and the most secure. God says to Nineveh, "Thou also shalt be drunken: thou shalt be hid, thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy. All thy strong holds shall be like fig trees: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater...the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars" (Nah.3:11-13).

And so it came to pass. Populous No had been destroyed by Nineveh. Nineveh was destroyed by the Babylonians - so thoroughly destroyed that for cen-

turies it was not known where the city had been. God will punish sin. He will punish individuals. He will punish cities and nations. No nation is so secure and powerful that it can continue to disobey God, live in great wickedness, and still escape punishment.

Is America better than populous No? America is a large country. America is a powerful country. America has never been defeated in a war. America has many defenses. Can America be brought down? Can any nation defeat this great nation? Can God punish America? Will God punish America? Is America morally better than populous No? Is America morally better than many of the countries that God has brought down in judgment? Is America morally better than the world of Noah's day? Is she better than Sodom and Gomorrah? Let us look at this matter somewhat. Let us look at the moral and spiritual character of America in several matters.



Joe Wilson

My thesis is that America is not morally better than populous No; that America is a very, very wicked nation. Abortion may be our number one sin and crime. Thousands of innocent babies are murdered daily in America. We have murder clinics across this land; they are advertised in public print. A woman can walk into one of these, pay the price, and participate in a vile, black, wicked, vicious, violent murder. She may walk out as if no wrong had been done, not be subject to arrest for her crime, and be treated by others as a decent person. Oh, how awful is this! How many of this kind of murderers walk our streets? Doubtless, many of them are church members. Some maybe sing in church choirs. Neighbors treat such murderers as they treat others. Yet these creatures are guilty of as foul a crime as one can imagine.

Thousands of doctors walk our streets, treated as fine upstanding citizens. They occupy places of honor and respect in society. Yet, they are vile and wicked murderers of the worst sort. The Bible says, "Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen" (Deut.27:25). We immediately recognize this as describing a "hit man," a person that is hired by others to murder another person. We all agree that such a person is a criminal of the worst sort - or do we? We used to, but now with so many of the medical profession committing this crime, we seem to have changed our attitude about "hit men." However, that is exactly what a doctor who performs an abortion is. He is a murderer for hire. His "gun" is for hire to any who will pay his price.

I have long said that the Roman Catholic church is the most murderous organization in all the history of the world. She surely

has slain her millions and millions. But I wonder if the medical profession is going to force me to change this statement. I wonder if the medical profession is going to become (if it has not already) the most murderous group ever known in world history. Doctors give themselves to the healing profession. They take an oath relative to protecting human life. Then many of them become hypocrites, liars, and murderers by practicing abortion. It may well be that in many cities, the worst criminal in town is the doctor who has performed the most abortions. A man shoots up a business for which he used to work. He kills several people. We say this is awful. We would say, if he were not dead, he should be tried, convicted, and punished as a criminal. Yet, we honor, and respect the murdering doctor whose crime is far worse and who has killed a vastly larger number of people.

How many did Bundy kill? Well, now he has been killed. Good, he should have been killed long before he was. But how about the abortionist doctor who has foully, viciously and violently murdered hundreds to every one Bundy killed? How about him? Let me say it plainly. Every doctor who aborts a baby is a murderer. The nurses who help him are murderers. The woman who hired him is a murderess, and all who participated in such are murderers. All who are in favor of permitting abortion are murderers at heart. The women who band together to demand the right of abortion are murderers at heart. Not one of them should be treated as a decent human being.

And our government - our government - allows and approves of this. What a travesty of the responsibilities of the government. And I have not yet seen a great deal done about this awful crime by those in authority. I wonder if, after all the rhetoric, we will really see any change in this terrible crime by those in authority at present. I hope so, but I do wonder No man - or woman (women should not run for public office anyway) - who favors abortion is qualified for the vote of any decent American with any moral standards whatsoever. And some of these murderers at heart have been elected to high offices in our country, and some of them have even occupied places on the supreme court. Looks like a man who was in favor of murder would disqualify himself for this office, doesn't it?

Sex sin is most likely the number two crime in America. I wonder if America is better than populous No in this area - or any other country for that matter? Our nation has gone to the very depths as to sex sin. Pre-marital sex is a sin, no matter what secular humanists spread in our schools. Shack up sex is just cheap prostitution. A woman plays the part of a whore without demanding a price therefor. A man plays the part of a whore-monger in joining in such an arrangement. I see little difference between the woman who will move in and live with a man to whom she is not married and one who will just go to a motel with him for the night. The same goes for the man, for sex sin is as sinful on the part of a man as it is that of a woman.

Sex outside of marriage is a terrible sin, no matter what movies and T.V. say about it. God has given us the sex desire.

He has given us one, and only one, way of properly satisfying that desire. That is sex between a man and a woman, properly married to one another. That is the only sex that is not sinful. Perverted sex is not an alternate life style; it is a sin against man and God. One of the most terrible things I have ever seen on T.V. was a man carrying a sign in a

San Francisco sex perverts parade, reading, "Thank God, I'm Gay." Oh, in the burning flames of eternal hell (unless God grants salvation to him) that man will learn the awful wickedness of that day when he carried that sign. God does not make sex perverts. They are not naturally that way. They sin against nature when

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

FROM THE EDITOR

"...and be ye thankful" (Col.3:15). We have just observed Thanksgiving Day. (I write this relative to the date of this issue, though I write ahead of time) I hope you had a good one. I am sure that you had much to be thankful for. I hope that you will have even more in the days ahead. Being thankful is a duty, commanded by God; it is not an option. We are thankful, or we are disobedient. We surely have so very many things for which we should be thankful. I desire to obey this Scripture at this time (I hope to do it all the time). I desire to mention a few of the many things for which I am thankful.

I am thankful for salvation. That is the most important matter of time and eternity. I am thankful that the main thing is settled, settled forever, and settled in my favor. I am saved. I will go to heaven when I die. I will spend eternity there. Oh, that is enough matter of praise to last forever. Dear friend, if you are in a grumbling, complaining mood (or if you ever get in one); I urge you to remember that you have this greatest of all blessings to praise God for - if you are saved. No sorrows, troubles, problems, etc. of life can ever change this glorious fact. I am saved, and I praise the Lord for this.

I am thankful for the ministry God has given me. I praise the Lord for the privilege of being pastor of Calvary Baptist Church. Oh, that I might appreciate this more and more. Oh, that I might endeavor to be a better and better pastor of this fine church. God has surely honored me by giving me this ministry.

I am thankful for the ministry of being editor of The Baptist Examiner. Surely, this is an honored position. God uses this paper in every state and in many foreign countries. I constantly receive letters telling of the blessing this paper is to someone. It is a good and wide ministry. Through this paper, I (and those who write for us) have a ministry that reaches thousands of people. I do hope that the Lord will use me more and more in this ministry. I pray that He will enable me to make this paper more of a blessing to the readers and to bring more glory to God.

I am thankful for the radio and tape ministry we have through our church. I receive many calls and letters telling that our tapes are a blessing. Praise God for this. One person has tapes at meal time. One listens when she goes to bed and has a time of quiet, then reads the Bible awhile before sleeping. I pray that God will increase our tape ministry. I pray that it will be more and more of a blessing to more and more people. I receive letters and calls about our radio ministry. Many are blessed thereby. Many tell me they listen regularly. Yes, I truly praise God for the ministry He has given me. I pray that I will be more faithful therein. Oh, that I might totally commit myself to doing the very best God will enable me to do in the ministry He has graciously given me.

I am thankful for Katie. She is a great blessing to me, personally and in my ministry. I know preachers who are not blessed with a helpmeet such as mine. Some preacher's wives are not a help to their preachers, but rather a hindrance to them, oh, how sad. Katie is a good cook (too good). She is a good house-keeper. She is one of the finest of hostesses - and a preacher's wife needs to be this, or she will be a hurt to her husband's ministry. Katie is a help to me in many ways, but her spiritual help is the best of all.

I am thankful for children and grandchildren. They are a fine group. I truly wish I could see them more often. I sent the children to school - I wish they had learned how to write, but I am thankful for them anyway. Some are saved, praise God. Some are not saved. Oh, I pray that God will save my children and grandchildren. I pray earnestly for this.

I thank God for my friends - and they are legion. Since coming here, I have lost some friends. I grieve over that more than I can tell. I often say that I would go a long way to get a friend, and a longer way to keep one. However, sometimes it costs more to keep a friend than it is worth. Sometimes, one loses friends and never knows why. Sometimes, in spite of all one can do, he will lose some friends. Sometimes, one might lose a friend through wrong and foolish actions that he regrets but cannot change. I have lost some friends - but not a one that I do not grieve over and truly wish he or she was still as much a friend as ever. One joy of heaven that I truly look forward to will be making up with old friends - and knowing that it is forever.

But, since coming here, I have gained many, very many, new friends. I have friends now that I did not know existed when I first came here. I could not even think of naming them all. I praise God for each one of them. Some of these new friends are now as close as any friends I have. I have some friends who are better friends now than they were when I came here. I regret the loss of any friends. I praise God for new friends. I know that God has balanced this "friend list" in my favor since I came here. I am thankful for each one of them.

I could go on and on. I have so much to be thankful for. I do feel that I am a thankful person, though I surely know that I need to grow in this grace also. I thank God that many have told me over these last seven years that I have been a blessing to them. I hope that God will use me more and more to be a blessing to others. Even as I am thankful for others, I desire to be such a person that others will be thankful for me. May the Lord help me to be such more and more. One of the greatest joys of my life is to be a blessing to someone else.

The song says "Count Your Blessings." I tell our people that they can't do it. But it will surely help us to make the effort. When we have counted all that we can think of at the time, there are many times that many more left. Truly God is good to His people. Let us all seek to cultivate the virtue of thankfulness, "Be ye thankful."

AMERICA

(Continued from Page 2)

they perform their perverted sex. Maybe one of the worst things about sex sin in America is the present day attitude about it. This attitude is manifested in so many ways. Sex education in school apart from the Biblical and moral teachings about it is worse than total ignorance. The prevailing attitude about sinful sex is that it is all right. Each one is to do his and her own thing. No one is to criticize what another does in this respect. The attitude of the law and courts is that it is none of their business, and they could not do anything about it anyway. Job 31:11 says of sex sin, "For this is an heinous crime: yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges" So, no matter what men say; it is the teaching of the Bible that sex sin is a crime and should be punished by the law of the land.

Open Sundays is a great sin that adds to the total of God's coming judgment on America. I have often said that open Sundays and T.V. have done more to hurt the work of the Lord than anything else in our lifetime. I do not at all mind calling Sunday "The Christian Sabbath." I surely believe that the Fourth Commandment applies to Sunday. Men say, "Sunday is the only day we have." Wrong. Sunday is the only day you do not have. Sunday is the Lord's Day. It belongs to Him and should be used in His service and to His glory. For man to use it for himself is to steal from God - and what a horrible price America is paying for this. Sunday should be a day of rest from the activities of the other six days. It should not be a day of work. It should not be a day for worldly pleasure. It should not be a day for shopping. It should not be a day for professional sports of any kind. The moral and spiritual life of America has been all but destroyed by open Sundays. I tell

you that churches should preach again on the Ten Commandments with a special emphasis on the Fourth - as our forefathers did. Open Sunday and moral degradation and spiritual deterioration have gone hand in hand in our country.

Our schools must take a large part of the guilt that lies heavily on our country. I have a book in my library, "The Blue Back Speller." It used to be a text book in schools in this country. It has more morality, decency, patriotism, and religion than many churches do today. The Supreme Court would go wild if it was taught again in our schools. But what is wrong with teaching these things in our schools? Tell me that. School teachers are not required to have moral standards in our day. There was a day when a man or woman of ill repute would not be allowed to teach our children. Oh, that it was still that way. A drunk, a loose woman, a man or a woman who lives with another of the opposite sex without marriage, a blasphemer, a curser; these should not be allowed to teach our children. And a sex pervert should not be allowed to even come within a hundred yards of a child, much less teach one. Teachers should have high morals; otherwise, they should not be allowed to teach.

Religion and morality are taboo subjects in most of today's schools. Why should this be so? I am not for teaching denominational differences in our schools, but why can't we teach many of the truths of the Bible in our schools? I see nothing wrong with this. I see no great harm that could be done thereby. I really think great good could come therefrom. Why can't we teach the Biblical standard of conduct in our schools? Is there anything wrong with this standard? Would not any decent human being admit that the Biblical standard of conduct is a good one, and that

each individual, as well as total society, would benefit by such being taught and practiced.

Why can many of our schools teach the lie of Evolution, but cannot teach the truth of Creation? Why is this? Secular humanism has invaded our schools. Let me rephrase that; Secular Humanism has, to a very large extent, captured our schools. I do not know a greater harm or danger in America than this monster of iniquity in our schools.

Let us look at politics and government. Government was ordained of God. It is the duty of government to govern for the good of the people and the glory of God. No man who does not understand this, and who is not totally committed to this, is qualified to even run for any political office. He cannot govern properly. He will be to the hurt of those he governs. No one should ever vote for a candidate who does not commit himself to acting always for the good of the governed and the glory of God.

Violence and crime in our streets are surely hastening us on to a judgment from God. In many of our cities it is not safe to walk the streets after dark - often even in broad day-light. Thieves, rapists, and murderers stalk our streets intent on terrible crimes. Many of them ought to be in jail, or in their graves, for crimes already committed and of which they have been convicted. Our courts are failing in their duty to protect society from these criminals. It is terrible when men commit these crimes. But it is doubly terrible when men who should be dead or in jail commit them. How many courts have contributed towards terrible crimes by allowing convicted criminals to walk the streets?

Drugs, including strong drink, add greatly to our guilt before God. America pretends to be fighting drugs, even while they license liquor stores. Tough laws and severe punishment of drug users and even more so of drug dealers would soon put a near stop to our drug problems. We can't slap the wrist of drug dealers and coddle drug users and expect to put any dent in our drug problem. I have known drug users to be rewarded with free education while nondrug users had to do without such. What do we mean by such doings?

Sin and immorality of every kind is on the increase in America at a terribly accelerating rate. Sin has long been with us. But it has not been here at the rate of acceleration that it now is. Some in early teens are more immersed in and adept at sin than our forefathers ever were. Our grandparents, as children, had never even heard of the sins that our youth of today are totally immersed in. And it does not appear that things are going to get any better.

Our country is getting further and further from God. Little leagues who used to not have games on Wednesdays, and would not even think of doing so on Sundays are now greatly harming church attendance by these practices. T.V. and open Sundays are greatly hindering church attendance. Our churches are not having the influence on life that they once did, and the moral degradation of life is one of the many results.

Well, God has punished cities and nations for sin in times gone by. Populous No was taken. Nineveh was destroyed. Babylon

fell before her enemies. God sent the great world-wide flood in Noah's day and destroyed all human life except those eight in the ark. And do you really believe that the the Antidiluvians were any worse than America today? God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and do you believe Sodom was any worse than San Francisco, or a hundred other cities in our country? God has judged and destroyed cities and nations in the past.

Will not God punish America? Does not America deserve God's punishment? What nation deserves it any more than America? Why would God punish Sodom, populous No, Nineveh; and not punish America? Someone has said that if God does not punish America, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah. Maybe this is not the best way of putting it, but it surely contains some truth. God must and will punish America in defence of His own character of absolute holiness.

Personally, I think that God is already in the process of punishing America. What means all the problems that beset us if God is not punishing us? I think that the greatly accelerating increase of sin, wickedness, and crime is a part of God's punishment on our country. Our country has gone after unbridled lust, sin, violence, wickedness of every kind; and God has taken the bridle off (or loosened the reins) and allowed us to go further and deeper than would have been imagined a few years ago. If our eyes are opened at all, we can look about us and see many evidences that God is even now in the process of judging America for her sins.

But, unless there comes to our country a time of repentance and a time of revival (and I don't think there will), things will get much worse. It could be that the day will soon come when there will not be a United States of America. You say, "Oh, that could never be." That is what Nineveh and Babylon thought and said. There is no nation so powerful but what God can quickly and easily bring them down and destroy them. This could happen. However, I think (I don't know) that it will not be long until we enter the time of the Great Tribulation. Not we who are saved, for we will be raptured before that begins; but our country and the whole world. I believe that our country will line up with the Antichrist during that time. I believe our soldiers will go to Armageddon on the side of Antichrist, and fall there. I believe that will be God's judgment on America - and it could be seven years from today. I don't know this, for our country may be destroyed before that, but I sort of think this is how it will be. At any rate, God is judging America and will further judge her.

God must and will punish sin. He is of such infinite holiness, and His holy wrath burns so intensely against sin, that He must punish it. God does not even save His elect people without the punishment of their sins. He does not let their sins go unpunished, but punishes them in the person of the substitute He has provided, even His own Son. Those who do not turn from sin to the Lord Jesus Christ, God will punish in the burning flames of eternal hell. Yes, God must, does, and will punish sin. There is only one escape from this punishment. "Verily, verily, I say unto

you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24)). God bless you all!

WHAT'S WRONG

(Continued from Page 1)

mixed membership whereby the world and the church were sadly mixed together.

Thyatira was "manned" by a woman. It had a woman for its head who was teaching and seducing.

Sardis, the church we studied last was a dead church. It had a name that it was alive, but actually it was dead. Therefore, it had too big a name.

Thus we can see that in all these churches, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis, there was something wrong, and in each of our churches today these wrongs exist. Some of our churches are like Ephesus - they have grown cold. Others are like Pergamos - worldly. Many are like Thyatira - run by the women. Still others are like Sardis - just dead. Very few are like Smyrna. Yet, there are a few. Therefore, that which was wrong with the churches of the first century, is that which has been wrong with the churches of each succeeding century; and it is still that which is wrong with the churches of the twentieth century.

I. Now we are going to study the church at Philadelphia, and as usual, we will note first the manner of revelation which Jesus gave of Himself to this church.

First, Jesus revealed Himself to this church as the One that is holy. Of course this is merely one of the attributes of the Lord Jesus. Of this we are assured in the Scriptures: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5).

This verse declares that there is "no darkness" in God, and of course, we know that Christ is God; therefore, He is holy. This was surely a comforting revelation to the church at Philadelphia. There was a synagogue of Satan in the town of Philadelphia, and this church was being opposed by this synagogue of Satan. While it was true that they were being opposed by the devil, they were also comforted with the truth that the Holy God was also looking at them.

This should be a help to any of us. When the false churches of today offer opposition to the truth, and even persecute those of us who preach the truth, it is not only helpful, but comforting to know that the Christ we are serving is quite in contrast to these false churches - they are synagogues of Satan, while He is holy.

There is a second revelation which Jesus gave of Himself to this church, in that He told them that He was true. The difference between holiness and truth is that holiness exists on the inside while truth is the outward (Continued on Page 4, Col. 3)

OPPOSING ABORTION

Almighty God is the Creator, the Giver and Sustainer of life. The killing of babies before they can be born, in what is today called "abortion," is a monstrous sin.

There are two tables of the Law. The first is man's relationship to God as summarized in the first four of the Ten Commandments. The second is man's relationship to man as summarized in the last six. Among the six we find, "thou shalt not kill," and "thou shalt not commit adultery." Violation of the latter has led to the mass violation of the former in multiplied thousands of abortions.

Almighty God has determined the relationship that man should have to Himself and also the relationship man should have to man. In both of the tables of the Law, abortion constitutes a great transgression. In the entire realm in which God has related man to Himself and man to man, He is to be obeyed and honoured.

As to the second table, murder and adultery constitute a realm where even the light of nature and the common grace, of which all men are partakers, calls for opposition to abortion. And, in these areas of human relations, men may oppose abortion without recognizing that the supreme reason for such opposition comes from the first table. God creates

life and has provided for its beginning, the wonder and marvel of His power, from the moment of conception until delivery in birth.

The reason, therefore, for opposing abortion is God. It is obeying and honoring the first table of the Law. That is primary. It is the responsibility of all who believe in God and love the Lord Jesus Christ to uphold His name and His holy Law. It was in the realm of God and His works, that He provided for the entrance of His Son into the world to be the Saviour, by means of the Virgin Birth. This conception by the Holy Spirit gave that life from its beginning, sustained the life that leaped in the womb of Mary at the salutation of Elizabeth, and brought it forth in Bethlehem.

All abortion must be opposed in the name of God and by His authority. Life is His and does not belong to man. He gives and He takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord. This council calls upon all to join in opposing abortion at all times and in every place, that God may be recognized and honored in the preservation of human life.

--Unanimously adopted by the Council of Bible Believing Churches, meeting in its annual session in Johnstown, PA. April 5-7, 1989.

The Baptist Examiner Forum I

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

Explain Psalms 47:1. Is it proper to give a handclapping for one who sings a special song, a testimony, or something said by the preacher? Could this be considered a handclap offering unto the Lord?

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Psalms 47:1; "O CLAP your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph." I believe there is a very important part of this question left out. That part concerns where this handclapping is done. If this is done at a religious singing apart from the house of God, I say do as you please. If this is to be done in God's house, then I am very strongly opposed to it. I am very much against applauding the acts of men in the house of God. Surely it is not the reason we come to God's house. Surely that is not the reason singers sing and preachers preach, or is it? I am afraid that in the places where this takes place the singing and preaching is often for the glory of men rather than the glory of God.

I do not think it is proper to use this verse to try and teach a handclap offering in our day and time, and in our churches. The nation of Israel is not in a building. They are not in a formal worship service. If you want to, on your own and out in the world, give a handclap offering unto God, then go for it. I wonder how many of the people who give these handclap offerings in their churches also give a financial offering and are as enthusiastic about it. I also wonder about the sincerity of the person who desired to have such an offering on behalf of their effort.

Let me mention some reasons I oppose this action in the church. First of all, we are not in church to applaud the actions of men. Neither are we in church to applaud the actions of God. We are there for the purpose of worshipping God. To me, handclapping takes much away from the church service. As a preacher, for someone to start clapping their hands over something I said would be a great distraction. It would distract others in the church. I see no way that this can be to the edification of the church and the glory of God. I can also see where this could bring trouble into the church. Let us suppose that we had two people who sang specials one night at church. One person sings and many people in the church applaud. The next person sings and

no one applauds. Let us suppose the pastor preaches and no one applauds, but a guest speaker comes in and receives a handclap offering. Surely you can see where this could bring trouble in the church. To me, handclapping has no place in our churches. It is not possible to do things decently and in order and allow this practice. Our church services will become similar to ball games. Surely this is not pleasing to God. I might also mention that this is only a recent practice, and that in itself is a mark against it. This was not a practice by earlier churches. You cannot find such an act in the apostolic churches. You do not find this practice in Baptist history. Therefore it should not be done. May God bless you all.

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"O CLAP your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth" (Psa. 47:1, 2).

Psalms 47 is a psalm of praise and worship of Christ that shall be performed in the millennium after He has gained the victory over all evil, when He becomes "King of all the earth." Verse 3 tells us that, He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet." Verse 4 says, "He shall choose our inheritance for us, ---" There is coming a time when Christ will have put down all evil and all rebellion against God. When that time comes there will be a victory celebration such that this old world has never seen. Then the saints, "which no man could number" will clap their hands and shout unto God, singing songs of victory. We are told in verse 6 & 7 we are to "Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding."

I see no connection between this clapping of hands at the victory of Christ over all evil and the setting up of His kingdom upon earth and the clapping of hands done in some of our churches today. It seems to me the clapping done today is applause for the individual doing the singing, testifying, or preaching, rather than praise unto God. For example, a preacher,

who has great ability to speak, may be cheered and praised by the clapping of hands for his ability to speak but not for the truth which he may preach. This is not praise to God but to the man.

I am afraid that some times some get carried away emotionally and clap their hands. A group may sing a song of a nature that will stir the emotions. The faster and louder they sing the more the emotions of the audience are stirred, causing them to wave or clap their hands. This is not worship or praise to God, but only the emotions of the flesh being expressed. There is a need for emotion in our church services, but it must be brought about by the Holy Spirit working in our hearts not by human activities.

WHAT'S WRONG

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expression of holiness. Therefore, Jesus reminded this persecuted church that He was true. Though they might die for His name and for His Word, yet He would remain true to them, and many lie concerning them; yet He would still be true.

This is a most helpful revelation. Any one who preaches the Bible and who gives forth the Word of the Lord, can expect his enemies and those who do not agree with him, to accuse him falsely. He can expect many lies to be told concerning his ministry. Though others may lie about him, the Lord Jesus remains true. How wonderful to know that those who lie about us will only last for a little while while the One with whom we have to deal eternally, shall remain true.

Then there is a third revelation which Jesus gave. He told this church at Philadelphia that He was sovereign, for He said that if He opened a door no man could shut it; and if He shut a door, no man could open it. He says that he "hath the key of David." I think this key of David simply means that it is Christ's prerogative to unlock the door of opportunity for a church, or to lock the door of opportunity against a church. If a church enjoys a missionary or an evangelistic opportunity, then that has come from Christ. All doors must be opened by Him, and they are likewise shut by Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ has given to our church several opportunities which He has not given to the average church. It was Christ who unlocked the door of missionary opportunity for us in Brazil. It was Christ

who unlocked the door of opportunity for us by way of our paper, The Baptist Examiner. In it all, He is a sovereign God. He closes doors and opens doors.

What a mighty revelation then is this which Jesus gave of Himself to this church at Philadelphia, surrounded as they were with false teaching, and being located close by a synagogue of Satan - He revealed Himself as holy, and true, and sovereign. Though there is a synagogue of Satan in Philadelphia, Christ is true. Though there is a synagogue of Satan in Philadelphia, Christ is sovereign.

II. After His revelation of Himself, we logically look for His message of condemnation. However, in the case of the church at Philadelphia, there was no condemnation. This church was like the church at Smyrna; there was nothing for which the Master condemned them. How wonderful it must have been to be a member of the church at Philadelphia, and to know that the Lord Jesus Himself looked at the church and then offered no condemnation. Very few churches today have this experience. This is the experience of very few preachers. This is the experience of very few Christians, for the Lord Jesus can find in the lives of each of us, many things we fear for which we should be condemned. But not so at Philadelphia, for they were living rightly, they were preaching rightly, they were doing things that pleased the Lord, and accordingly, there was no message of condemnation from Him. How I pray that the church of which I am pastor, and the church of which you are a member, might be similar to the church at Philadelphia.

III. While there was nothing for which Jesus condemned this church He did commend them. There were several things He saw within them that was worthy of commendation.

He commended them first because they entered all open doors. If the Lord opened a door for the church at Philadelphia, they entered it. Truly, it is wonderful to find any Christian, or any church, or any pastor that is ready to do the will of the Lord, when only that will is revealed to him. So many of us are willing to enter the doors which please us, but are not willing to enter the doors which the Lord opens to us. Here was a church that was ready, and every time the Lord opened a door, they were ready to enter therein.

In the second place, He commended them because they worked in weakness. In verse eight we read, "...thou hast a little strength..." In man's judgment, it was a very weak church. Yet, its weakness did not keep it from working at the Lord's business. Therefore, in spite of their weakness, they worked, for Jesus Himself said, "I know thy works..."

So many times those who represent the cause of Christ grow discouraged. They come to the place that they feel "Well, what's the use?" Many times, many Christians are like Simon Peter who said to the rest of the disciples, "I go a fishing." Jesus was dead, and Simon Peter couldn't see any reason for going on. He was discouraged, and his discouragement became contagious, and all of the disciples went with him - of course, to catch nothing. They just felt that there was no

need in trying to go any farther, and quite often churches, and preachers, and individual Christians come to feel the same way, but not so with this church at Philadelphia. In spite of their weakness, they kept on working, and they remained at the task even though they were weak.

In the third place, Jesus commended them because they kept His Word. He said, "...thou hast kept my word..." (vs. 8). In doctrine this church was true to the Word of God. In practice it was true to the Word of God. This could not be said of every church in the days when John was writing. It could not be said of lots of Baptist churches today. Yet, Jesus commended this church because they kept His Word.

There are a lot of Baptists today who do not keep His Word. Whenever a Baptist enters into a union meeting, he does not keep the Word of God, but rather, by his pulpit affiliation, he denies God's Word; for God hath said, "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

The Baptist who has women preachers in his pulpit, or who allows the women of his church to usurp over the men in the worship or business services, is not keeping the Word of God, for God hath said: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak..." (I Cor. 14:34).

The Baptists who have any connection at all with the modernistic Federal Council of Churches, are not keeping the Word of God for the Bible declares that Jesus is God, and the Bible is the Word of God, whereas, the Federal Council of Churches deny both of these. say then, beloved, that what was said concerning this church at Philadelphia could not be said of many Baptist churches today. This church kept His Word. Do you? Does the church of which you are a member? Or the church of which you are pastor? Does it or do you keep God's Word?

A resolution was presented before the Northern Baptist Convention asking that all outgoing missionaries be required to sign a statement that they believe in the deity, the virgin birth, the blood atonement, the resurrection of Christ, and the inspiration of the Bible. Yet, this resolution was defeated by an overwhelming majority of two to one. They surely, Jesus would not commend the Northern Baptist Convention for He could not say that they were keeping His Word.

The Southern Baptist Convention went on record as endorsing the universal church theory, which means that all the saved in the world compose the church. Any man who knows anything at all about the Word of God, either in its original language or in the King James version, knows that this is the lie of the devil. The Southern Baptists could never have Jesus' commendation in respect, for they are not keeping His Word.

Then Jesus commended this church in the fourth place because they did not deny his name. He says, "...and hast not denied my name" (vs. 8). This church

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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

Should believers have a family altar? Would it be all right for women and saved children to lead in prayer? Would it be all right for any unsaved to lead in prayer? Give some suggestions.

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Yes and no, according to what you mean by family altar. In Christianity there is no place for material altars. The Hebrew word for altar means literally a place of slaughter or sacrifice. To be honest, our practice of family altar is misleading as is a so-called church altar.

It is great and good and God honoring for families to get together and read the Word of God and discuss the Scriptures and have a season of prayer. We are in need of this type of family fellowship. If all Christians would do this, it would change the world.

Would it be all right for women and saved children to lead in prayer? Sure, the women are not in church; therefore, they can pray. Paul said that women were to be silent in church, and that she is not to usurp authority over the man in church. Sure she can pray at home, and so can the saved children.

Would it be all right for any unsaved to lead in prayer? No! because the Bible tells us in no uncertain terms that God does not listen to the unsaved as they pray. John 9:31 says, "Now we know that--God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."

After all, who would he pray to? Saved folks are to pray, "our Father in heaven," lost folks can not do that. Jesus, (who should know) makes this clear while speaking to some lost folks in John 8:44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." I know this is a hard saying, but Jesus said it. Lost folks have no prayer unless the Holy Spirit leads them to say, "God be merciful to me the sinner." Then God hears and saves, which gives the saved sinner access to the throne of grace. The greatest thing and power source the Christian has is prayer, praise God.

persecuted. This synagogue of Satan was bringing persecution upon them, and therefore, what was wrong at Philadelphia was on the outside.

How wonderful it would be today if in every one of our churches the wrong would be as it were at Philadelphia. Many times the wrong is on the inside as at Pergamos, or Thyatira, or Ephesus. There are very few churches like Smyrna, and very few churches like Philadelphia, where the wrong is on the outside, and the churches are being persecuted by the devil and his agents.

V. Jesus offered a great promise in behalf of the overcomers at their church at Philadelphia. Listen to it: "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3: 9, 10).

Here is a promise, then, that in spite of the persecutions from their enemies, that Jesus would protect them. This did not mean that He would keep them from temptation, but rather, that He would save them out of temptation, and that furthermore, they

would be preserved. How wonderful it is to know this promise has been literally kept and literally fulfilled through the ages. In 1392, Gibbon, an infidel wrote his "Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire," and in this he stated that the only church of these seven that had been preserved was the church at Philadelphia. Listen to this quotation from history which was written not by a Christian, but by an infidel.

"In the loss of Ephesus, the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel, the extinction of the first candlestick of Revelation; the desolation is complete and the Temple of Diana or the church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveler. The circus and the three stately theaters of Laodicea are now peopled with wolves and foxes. Sardis is reduced to a miserable village. The god of Mohomet, without a rival or a son, is invoked in the Mosques of Thyatira and Pergamos, and the populousness of Smyrna is supported by the foreign trade of the Franks and Arminians. Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy or courage. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the Emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom above four score years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect - a column in the scene of ruins - a pleasing example that the paths of honor and safety may sometimes be the same."

Now remember that that was written by an infidel, and not a Christian, and it was written in 1392, and would indicate that the Lord Jesus had preserved this church at Philadelphia intact, and with an unbroken continuity through fourteen centuries just like He had promised.

It was through this church that our Baptist perpetuity comes to us today. This was as Jesus had said, for in the day that He established His church, He said: "...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

He had thus promised perpetuity. Also, in the book of Ephesians, Paul mentioned the same truth. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:21).

What a contrast of man-made churches, for concerning them, Jesus said: "...Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

While all man-made organizations and man-made churches will be destroyed, the church which Jesus built will remain forever, and this is the promise that He gave to this church at Philadelphia, and it is through them that we have our church heritage today.

Furthermore, He not only promised that this church would continue but that the persecutors of this church at Philadelphia would some day come to worship at the feet of this church. In other words, He promised that the persecutors will one day be prostrators before those whom they have persecuted. What a wonderful promise, and one that is worth

working for and waiting for. Here is a promise, then, that the man who opposed the truth will some day bow at the feet of those whom he has opposed. I am confidently expecting some day that those who have hated us for the things we stand for, and have opposed us because of our doctrinal position - I am confidently expecting that they who have been our persecutors shall become prostrators.

There is a third promise which He gave to the overcomers of this church - namely, that each was to become a pillar in the temple of God. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out..." (vs. 12). You know the most imposing and the most ornamental part of any edifice is its pillars. For instance, the temple of Diana at Ephesus. We are told that it took the wealth of the king to buy one of the pillars. Well, here is a promise to the overcomers that each shall be made an everlasting pillar in the heavenly temple, which is just a figurative expression of the highest honor that can come to the child of God. Any man who stands for the truth is always spoken of as a pillar. Listen to this Scripture: "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship..." (Gal. 2:9).

Of course, there are very few pillars today, but some day these overcomers at Philadelphia, and any who are overcomers today, will be everlasting pillars in the heavenly temple.

You will notice that He also promises that "...he shall go no more out..." (vs. 12). This means that there will be no end to the honor. It isn't that it will be honor for a little while, but eternally. There will be no end to the honor.

And as a final promise to the overcomers, He says that each one who overcomes, will wear the new name of Jesus. "...and I will write upon him my new name" (vs. 12). I do not know what that new name will be, but I love His name now. Here is a prophecy: "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." (Isa. 9:6).

When He was born, we have another prophecy relating to His name: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

I do not know what the new name will be, but it surely will be an honor to wear the new name of Christ.

Yet, beloved, if we are to bear His new name, then we must have the marks of His ownership now. The only way that you can have the marks of His ownership is to receive Him as your personal Saviour. You need to repent of your sins, and believe the gospel that Christ died for your sins, and thus be saved. "...repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

TOO LITTLE

(Continued from Page 1)

was Noah blessed with faith, but praise be to God; he was blessed with a long life. Genesis 6:8, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Beloved, faith and grace are inseparable. We read in Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." So when we think of Noah and his great faith, let us understand what most of the world cannot or will not see. Noah's faith, just as your faith, was and always will be a gift of God. We have all heard it said that Noah was the exception in his day; for after all Genesis 6:9 says, "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Yes, praise be to God, Noah was perfect, he was just; after verse eight, when he found grace in the eyes of God.

But listen to how Noah was before verse eight, before God's grace, and before the faith that came with it. Genesis 6:5-7 "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." Beloved this was the condition of the world; all the world, and Noah was not an exception. What were you and I like before we were saved, before the grace of God opened our hearts and gave to us the faith to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He and He alone paid the price for our sins? We, too, were just as Noah, lost and without hope. Genesis 6:8 does not say that because of Noah's goodness, God found grace for Noah. No, not at all. Rather, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." The grace was toward Noah, it came from God. You see it was by God's grace that Noah was set aside, it was by faith, through the grace of God that Noah was saved. Not Noah's grace, not Noah's faith, because before God's grace, Noah had no faith.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord; grace that gave him faith to believe God, that God was going to do what God said He was going to do. And the faith was not too little, not too much, but just right.

Listen beloved, if that faith that God gave to Noah had been too little, Noah would have never finished the task put before him. Noah worked for over one hundred years building the ark. Now don't tell me that one hundred years of work, and one hundred years of being laughed at, and one hundred years of waiting for it to even look like it was going to

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TOO LITTLE

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rain, something that up to this time had never ever happened; this could not have been done with too little faith. And that faith had to be the right amount, and the right kind of faith. Did you know that you can have too much faith? Sure you can.

Too much faith is never the right kind of faith; it is never faith in or on the right object. Let me give you an example from the Word of God. In the gospel according to Saint Luke the twelfth chapter we read about a certain rich man, whom Christ Jesus called a fool. This rich man's land brought forth in such abundance that he had not room to store them. And he said "...I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." (Luke 12:18). This rich man had faith, he had too much faith. His faith was in his possessions, his wealth, and in himself. You know, that seems to me to be the problem with the most of us today, I add myself to the list because I know, myself better than you do. Very few can say truthfully that they would not like to have wealth. I think that to be wealthy, and not have to work twelve to fourteen hours a day, back breaking work just to be able to live, and meet the bills that keep coming and coming, would be the best thing that could ever happen to me. And yet I know that wealth is not for every one. So many have placed their faith in what they have, in their goods, and even in their gifts. Beloved, our faith should always be in the giver of those goods, those gifts. I remember when the Swaggart mess hit the news; and Mr. Swaggart said he had to return to the pulpit because the ministry would not survive a year without him. Do you remember that? That, my friends, is too much faith; too much faith in one's self, and no faith in God.

The faith that God gave to Noah was not too little, nor was it too much; but rather the faith of Noah was just right. It was this just right faith that kept Noah from adding to, or taking away from the plan of God in the building of the ark. Let us look now at this ark for a time.

God set down the blue prints for the building of the ark. God told Noah how big it was to be. He told him how many rooms were to be in it. He told him how many levels to build. And that which God told Noah to build was not too little, it was not too much, but it was just right. And when that ark was finished; God told Noah what to bring into the ark. What Noah brought in was all that there was room for, and all that there was room for was all that Noah brought in. You listen to me beloved, the ark was a foreshadow of God's master plan for the salvation of man. That ark was to be so big, no bigger, no smaller, just right. The kingdom of God is just so big, no bigger, no smaller, just right.

In Matthew the twenty-second chapter we read the parable of the marriage feast, and we find in verse eleven that there was one there without a wedding garment. That is the garment of righteousness, which is the blood of Christ our righteousness. In verse twelve, this one is asked, how come you to be here? But he had no answer for God. Let me tell you; without the blood of Christ having been applied for your sins, you have no right to be there, and like the one here in verse thirteen, you will be bound and cast into outer darkness. You see, no one is going to slip into the kingdom of God. Just as no one was able to stow away on the ark. Verse fourteen answers the question you are now forming in your mind. "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Oh yes, the call of God is universal and goes out to all the world. Noah built the ark for 100 years; and all the time that he was building, he preached that the end was coming; but no one came to join him. No one would listen. Why? None were chosen but Noah, to whom God's grace was given. Yes, the call is universal, but only the chosen will come.

Let us look once more to the ark, built just so, with so much room and no more. Then in seven days Noah gathered the creatures of God's creation. There was two of most and fourteen of some. Two of this and two of that. I can, in my mind's eye, see Noah gathering up the viper, the spider, the ant, the worm. I can also see in my mind's eye many of us today, if we were told to do as Noah. Now, I don't like snakes, I can live without them so I doubt that I would take a snake. I know that God has a purpose for the mosquitos. What it is, I know not, but I don't want them; there goes the mosquitos. A spider, a bug, the scorpion, flies, and lizards. But God's will must be done. You see, Noah really did not have a choice in the matter. God said two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark. And we read in Genesis 7:9 "There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah." Now I have to tell you I don't know if Noah went out and brought in the animals and the creeping things, etc. of if they came on their own. I don't really think it matters. One thing I know for sure. I can tell you that only that which God had chosen, came. If there was one that God had chosen that didn't come, or one that came and wasn't chosen, then I would have to believe that man has a choice in the matter of his salvation. But that's not the way it was. Genesis 7:16 says, "And they went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in." Noah did not close the door! Man cannot open the door, and man cannot close the door. God and God alone has the power to do so. The ark was a foreshadow of the kingdom of God. Not too little, not too much, just right.

In the kingdom of God there is room for every one of those chosen to that kingdom. While there is room for all that are chosen, there will be so much room that we will feel separated one from another. There in glory we will be one family, joined together

by the mutual love of Christ. We have been scattered about this world, but there we will have fellowship and know one another as we are known.

Now for my closing thoughts, I would like you to look at the ark as a foreshadow of the price paid on Calvary's tree for the chosen of God. As Christ Jesus laid down His life, a ransom for the chosen of God; the blood shed from Emmanuel's veins was not too little, not too much, just right. Not one drop of blood was shed for the non-elect. Not one of the reprobates, reprobated from before the foundation of the world, will ever bathe in the blood of the Lamb of God. They may try to creep in unawares, but all their works, all their religious zeal, and all the waters of the world will not wash away their sins. Only the blood of Jesus can wash away sin and clothe the sinner in the robes of righteousness. The non-elect shall not enter in. But just like with the ark, they won't want to, until it is too late.

Like the ark, the price paid on Calvary's tree was not too much, for none of it will be wasted, and it was not too little, because not one of the elect of God will be missed because of underpayment. The price paid was like the ark, just right. Christ paid it all, and fulfilled the plan of God.

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to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole" (Acts 4:9). The Sanhedrin had asked the apostles by what power, or by what name, they had acted. They, of course, were expecting to have put them on the spot. They were asking to see their license, even as a patrolman stops a driver and asks for a license.

The apostle Peter's response was for them to thoroughly examine the means by which the impotent man was made whole. Such an examination would show clearly that they had authority from heaven. They, after all, had performed an act which was beyond man's power to perform. It was therefore obvious to any right-thinking person that God was on their side. He was their power and authority. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 4:10). The Holy Spirit had caused the right question to be asked and now He gives Peter the ability to answer the question so that every word that fell from his lips was from heaven.

"But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" (Mark 13:11).

Peter had, at an earlier date, been terrified by a servant girl. Now, however, by the power of God the Spirit, he stands like a rock before the great council of the nation -- the Sanhedrin. The same Holy Spirit is with the Lord's churches today. Let us,

therefore, know that we can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens us.

Peter informs the Sanhedrin that the healing of the impotent man was authorized and caused by the very one they had crucified. He, in fact, was alive from the dead and was back in the business of healing, even as He did before they put Him to death. The healing of the lame man was proof that Jesus of Nazareth was very much alive. You will observe that Peter calls Jesus "Jesus of Nazareth." This statement left no doubt as to whom he had reference. They had said that no good thing could come out of Nazareth. Peter says, in essence, that they were dead wrong.

"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner" (Acts 4:11). This particular passage of Scripture is one which the Jews were aware of (Psalms 118:22). Each member of the Sanhedrin, in fact, should have been very familiar with this Scripture. A better passage of Scripture could not have been found for the occasion at hand. The Holy Spirit, therefore, in-

spired Peter to present it to his audience. Most did not accept it as relating to Jesus; but I am sure it caused each one to say, in essence, "He has a point. What, in fact, does that Scripture mean?"

The story has been told of a large lump -- supposedly stone -- which lay in North Carolina for centuries. Many, many people observed the lump for many years, but to them it was only an ugly lump. The lump was finally taken home by a poor man who decided to use it to hold his door open. Later, according to the study, a geologist saw it and recognized it as a lump of gold -- the largest ever found east of the Rockies. The Jews and many Gentiles today look upon the Lord Jesus in this same manner. Some see Him as only the son of Joseph and Mary. Some see Him only as a man from Nazareth. Some see Him only as a good man or a good example for us to follow. Others, on the other hand, who have been given spiritual eyes see Him as the Son of God. We see Him as the divine architect and builder of all things.

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THE WRATH OF GOD

by C.D. Cole

Job 36:18, "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

There is a natural tendency in man to refuse to be occupied with solemn and serious matters. He wants to drink to the full out of the wells of pleasure, and when solemn subjects like death and eternity and the judgment are urged upon him, he makes an effort to banish them as speedily as possible. Once upon a time a man wrote a very valuable treatise on the subject of death, and published it in book form. But it demanded no sale. People were not interested in death's skull and cross-bones. A doctor read the story and wrote a silly ghost story as an appendix, and the first edition was soon sold.

We get from this text, first, a terrible fact; second, a solemn warning; and third, an utter impossibility.

1. A terrible fact. The wrath of God is a fact. God's wrath is as much a Divine perfection as is His love or mercy. "Because there is wrath." The fact of God's wrath is clearly revealed in the Scriptures. John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; Eph. 5:6.

(1) The necessity of God's wrath. Wrath is the expression of God's holiness. If He did not punish evildoers He would be a party to evil doing. He would compromise with wickedness. He would condone sin. Take an argument from the less to the greater. In the human sphere he who has no wrath and anger against impurity and unchastity is a moral leper. He who has no wrath against the oppressor who crushed the weak and defenseless, is a fiend. We need more righteous indignation. God hates as well as loves. Psalms 5:5 and Psalms 7:11.

(2) The greatness of God's wrath. It is infinite like all His other perfections. Human wrath is oftentimes an awful thing. Scripture likens the wrath of a king to the roaring of a lion. Scripture also speaks of the devil having great wrath because he knoweth he hath but a short time. But what shall be said of

the wrath of God? To what shall we liken it? How indescribably awful must be the unrestrained and unmixed wrath of Him who hates sin with a perfect hatred. An utter impossibility.

Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. Every one of us richly merits God's wrath. We are all by nature the children of wrath. Our sins which have mounted up to heaven; our profitless lives, spent in selfish gratification with no regards for God's glory; our indifference and carelessness respecting our souls eternal welfare; our repeated refusals to respond to the invitations of God's grace, all cry aloud for judgment to descend upon us. Our only hope is for a ransom. This God has provided thru Christ, He came not to be ministered unto but to minister and give His life a ransom for many. It is a great ransom. But it avails nothing for those that ignore and reject it. If this ransom be despised then there is no possible escape for the sinner.

This text shatters the larger hope. It repudiates any possibility of a second chance in the next world. It closes the door of hope against all who die in their sins. Let the stroke of God remove the unbeliever from this world and then a great ransom cannot deliver him. Proverbs 29:1.

Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. Why? Because it is appointed unto man once to die and after that - not another chance, not a further probation, but the judgment.

Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. Why? Because at death the sinner goes immediately to a place of torment, out of which there is no deliverance.

Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. Why? Because there awaits the sinner nothing but "the resurrection to damnation."

Why? Because repentance will then be too late. "Thou shalt cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." Ezek. 8:18. Why? Because whosoever's name was not written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire - and a lake has no outlet.

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We see Him as Peter saw Him in the next passage of our text, when he said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The Jews were looking for another Messiah to come and save them, but Peter dashed their hopes upon the rocks when he said that there was no other. He advised them and us that it is either Jesus of Nazareth or nothing.

READING THE BIBLE

by D.C. Macaskill

Dear young friends, I want to speak to you about something that is very important. It is something which you probably do regularly each day. I am referring to the duty of reading the Bible. But what I want to speak about is not so much the duty as the way in which it is to be done. It is one thing to read our Bibles regularly. It is another thing to read our Bibles profitably. So I want to remind you of four principles in connection with reading the Bible.

First, make sure that when you read your Bible you are not rushed or too tired to concentrate. You must plan your time, to ensure that you have at least a few minutes in the morning and evening. It may mean having to get up earlier in the morning. It is far better to have a short time of reading when your mind is not tired, than having a long time when you cannot concentrate because you are tired or in a hurry. Remember you are not honouring God or fulfilling your duty when you rush through your reading.

The second principle I wish to emphasize is, think about what you are reading. Try to get a picture in your mind of the scene you are reading about. For example, if you are reading about Solomon giving judgment from his throne remember his throne was golden with six steps going up to it and twelve lions on the steps! There was not the like made in any kingdom. (Read II Chronicles 9:15 to the end). Or, if you are reading about Paul and the conversion of Lydia, remember it was outside, and that they were sitting beside a river. (Acts 16:13). It is important that you accurately picture the scene. But also, and more importantly, you must understand what you are reading. God works through the mind so it is vital that we know exactly what the Bible is saying to us. If you cannot understand the verse, look up a dictionary, concordance, or sound commentary, or ask your parents, minister or elders what it teaches. It is better to read only two verses "with the understanding" and learn something, than to read a whole chapter and not understand anything. Paul went as far as to say that he would prefer to speak only "five words with my understanding... than to speak ten thousand words" and not be understood. (Look at I Corinthians 14:19).

The third principle I would like to speak about is, apply the Word to yourself. What is important in your reading is that you hear God speaking to you in His Word -- that you receive a message from Him. You should, when reading

Jesus had said the same thing in John 14:6 when He said, "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." The Lord Jesus, according to Luke 19:10, had come "...to seek and to save that which was lost." There was no one else in this business, and there never has been anyone else performing this function. Look at the following passage of Scripture: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21).

Peter, before saying, "Neither

is there salvation in any other," had pointed to the healing of the lame man as a work of Jesus of Nazareth. He had also pointed to His crucifixion and His resurrection. These statements, as one might say in a prize fight, were hard blows to the head. They were blows that should have knocked some sense into their heads. It should, in fact, have been obvious that there was salvation in none other except Him. Multitudes today have the idea that eternal salvation is partly by Jesus Christ and partly by their own efforts. Some have likened salvation from sin to riding a bicycle. They say that God gets one going on the bike, but it is up to us to keep pedaling. We, however, read in Titus 3:5 that it is "Not of works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

We know from Hebrews 9:22 that there is no remitting of sins without the shedding of blood. All through the Old Testament, it was the sacrifice, in type, which remitted sins. It was the shedding of the blood of an innocent animal. None of them were saved by works. There were no types to indicate salvation by works. It was always true that without shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. It would make more sense for a person to shed his own blood by the act of cutting himself with a knife than to do a work where no blood was involved, that is if they were doing such in an effort to be saved from sin. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Most unlearned men, when standing before their superiors, are withdrawn. They are prone to say as little as possible so as not to reveal their ignorance. It is also true that men, when they know that their speech could place them in a dangerous situation, are careful as to what they say. Peter and John were unlearned and they were in danger, but such did not affect them in the least. They, after all, had God the Holy Spirit as the one who gave them the words to speak and the courage to speak those words.

The Sanhedrin had called men before them on other occasions -- men who stood in fear before them. The Sanhedrin had expected Peter and John to do likewise. It is said that the Sanhedrin and their cohorts "perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men." We don't know what caused them to perceive such. It was either from a report they had received or by observation of their manner of speech. It could be, too, that they considered all men who had not graduated from the university to be ignorant and unlearned. We, for example, in the city in which I live, have a Baptist church which usually calls doctors to hold meetings for them. There is a series of meetings going on now (one each week) in which approximately seven doctors of divinity are to be the speakers. It would be difficult for anyone less than a doctor to break into their ranks. Those, no doubt, with only a high school education would be considered as unlearned

and ignorant.

We know, of course, that the natural man, no matter how well learned he may be, cannot understand the things of God without the aid of God the Spirit (I Corinthians 2:14). We also know from I Corinthians 1:26-29 that God hath chosen what the world considers foolish in order to confound the wise. God says He acts in this manner so that no flesh can glory in His presence. The text before us informs us that the Sanhedrin and their cohorts, as a result of the boldness of Peter and John, "marvelled." They, in other words, had never, in all their lifetime encountered men like Peter and John. These men, in fact, were public speakers -- public speakers who were convinced or completely sold on the Lord Jesus from Nazareth. Good salesmen are those who believe in their product. They are the most apt to convince us to buy their product. Peter and John were, in like manner, completely sold on the Lord Jesus; and they said so with boldness.

Our text continues to say that they "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." They took knowledge, or they knew by the evidence available, that they had been with Jesus. It is not said how they arrived at this conclusion or why they placed Peter and John alongside of Jesus. The great miracle, of course, should have been enough to convince them that they had been with Jesus. Jesus, after all, during His walk among them had performed numerous miracles. They also were convinced that they had been with Jesus because of the boldness in which they defended Him. This boldness showed forth a great love for Him and a great devotion to Him. Their boldness showed clearly that He had taught them well. God the Spirit, of course, was behind their entire setting, His purpose on earth being to exalt Jesus Christ the Lord.

We are to see, then, that Peter and John, as far as the Sanhedrin was concerned, may have been unlearned and ignorant; but to God and all those that love God, they were very wise. It is something like a sign I have seen on the rear bumper of cars which says, "I may be slow, but I'm ahead of you." It should be pointed out, however, that God, in some cases, has chosen learned men to be His disciples. The apostle Paul is an excellent example.

"And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it" (Acts 4:14). This passage of Scripture shows clearly that God, by healing the cripple, had shut their mouths. Peter and John were means or channels through which God had worked and was still working. God, in other words, was speaking to the Sanhedrin -- the great council of the nation. We should consider every scriptural sermon as a message from God, and not from the preacher. The fact that the former cripple was standing with the apostles before the Sanhedrin was a great message in itself. No word, in fact, needs to be spoken so as to show that they were authorized and empowered by the Almighty God of heaven and earth. There he stood tall and straight with happiness glowing from his eyes. Peter and John, if they did need courage, could have leaned on him. I am sure that he was not a

spineless person, in view of what God had done for him.

"But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves" (Acts 4:15). Nothing could be said against what had happened. The Sanhedrin, however, felt an urgent need to stop the spread of that which the apostles were preaching. "Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name" (Acts 4:16, 17). The Sanhedrin, had they closed the mouth of the apostles, would have closed the mouth of God the Spirit. They would have stopped the fountain of water that was springing up within them; or they would have stopped the flowing of the great river which God, by His Spirit, had begun. The apostles, after all, were instruments, or channels, through which God the Spirit was now working. He was now the Comforter whose work it was and is to exalt the Lord Jesus. For the apostles to "speak henceforth no more in His name" would have been equal to stopping the sun from shining or the grass from growing. Later on, they added beatings to their threats, but to no avail. Still later, many were killed; but this action only made the truth spread more and more. Fifty million, in fact, were killed during the Dark Ages; but we, their children, are still preaching Christ Jesus today.

"And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18). Little did the Sanhedrin know that their war was not with flesh and blood but with God. They were thinking much too small. They thought they were dealing with the present when, in reality, they were dealing with eternal matters.

Peter and John's reply to their threat was as follows: "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:19).

The boldness which Peter and John had displayed in the outset was still with them. Their purpose was far greater than even their own well-being. I am sure that the man who had been lame was proud of the manner in which Peter and John had handled this entire ordeal. He was on a winning team, and he knew it.

Peter and John confronted their judges with a solemn question by saying, "whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God?" This question is still before each of us today. Who is it that we are trying to please -- God the Creator or man the created? Any person who pleases man at the expense of pleasing God has taken leave of his senses. Those who were members of the Sanhedrin be-

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lieved that God had placed them in their office. They believed that they were judging in His place and stead. The question, then, which was submitted by Peter and John should have troubled them greatly. Peter and John said, "judge ye." This was an appeal to them as judges and as men. Peter and John, in essence, said, "now that you have examined the evidence" -- the evidence being the healing of the lame man -- "give us your decision as to how you will judge." "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). What was it that they had seen and heard? What was it that now so dominated their thinking? It was the fact that they had been with Jesus before and after His resurrection. They, as Paul said, knew in whom they had believed and were fully persuaded that He was able to keep that which they had committed unto Him against that day. There was no place else to go or no one else to go to since the Lord had the words of eternal life. God the Spirit, of course, was the force which motivated them.

"So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done" (Acts 4:21).

It is not said that they did not find fault with them. It was only that they found nothing they could use which their fellow citizens would accept. They would have put them out of commission then and there if they could have gotten by with it. They would love to have punished them but could find no way to carry out such an act. Their fellow citizens, after all, were giving God the glory for what had been done. They, in doing so, were wiser than their own judges -- the Sanhedrin. The people, at large, glorified God because there was no question, as far as they were concerned, that the man had actually been healed. They were convinced that they had not been tricked. "For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed" (Acts 4:22). There had been ample time for this man to have been healed, if there had been any other way than that of a miracle from God. All of man's know-how had been exhausted and yet he was no better. Men, as was true of the half-dead man in Luke 10:31, 32, passed him by on the other side; but Jesus, by way of Peter and John, went where he was and healed him.

THE POWER

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Jesus Christ for poor sinners. To one who vitally knows the living Lord and is humbled by the gospel of grace, Christ's blood is indeed powerful and precious.

First, let us look at the person of Christ. The blood is powerful because of the person of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is Himself

chosen of God, and precious. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious" (I Pet. 2:4). As He is precious and powerful in the Godhead, so is He powerful and precious to all believers. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." (I Pet. 2:5-8). Is Christ powerful and precious to you, dear reader? It is the powerful person of our Lord Jesus that makes His blood precious. His marvelous divinity, the precious God of the universe Himself! Christ, being both human and divine, had blood that was not tinted with sin, thus the power of the blood. It was sinless! "...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14). And in that tabernacle of flesh God Himself offered a perfect sacrifice, a powerful sacrifice for sin. He was powerful enough to give of Himself a sinless substitute. This is how powerful and precious that blood is, simply because of the One who shed it. Mystery of all mysteries is that the infinite God of the universe became incarnate in a body of flesh; beloved, one powerful divine person with two natures. He shed His blood for the lowest of repentant sinners, as He exercised His power in bloodshed. All worship, honor, praise, and adoration shall be His, world without end.

Secondly, the blood is precious because of its power. Sin has such a hold on us that we could never free ourselves from its penalty, power, and presence apart from the purging of Christ's powerful atoning blood. You see, the saints of God have been washed and loosed from the sin of condemnation by the blood of Christ. "...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." (Rev. 1:5). All the blood shed by all the world's martyrs could never do this. All the blood shed on ancient altars was never able to do this. Brethren, it lacked the power that is found only in the powerful blood of Jesus Christ. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12). Also it is the powerful blood of Him that can, "...purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14). Beloved, His blood and His alone can do the job. We also see in Heb. 13:12, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered

without the gate." Beloved, Christ's blood with its miraculous power, has actually set apart His people from their sin! This leads them to put away the old ceremonial religion of types and shadows found in Judaism, and to embrace a living Saviour, "without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). Yes, there is power, power, wonder working power, to be found only in the Mediator's blood, the precious Lamb of God.

Thirdly, it is powerful because of its privileges. It is precious because of its privileges. There are many wonderful blessings and benefits that come to us through the blood of the Son of God. Among these are remission, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). Redemption, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:7). Reconciliation, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself..." (Colos. 1:20). Propitiation, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Rom. 3:25). Priestly access to God's presence, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. 10:19). Perpetual cleansing, "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7). Notice it said all sin, not maybe a part of it! Also, we have the promised victory, "...for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. 5:9). "...These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:14). "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony..." (Rev. 12:11).

No wonder the song of the redeemed in glory is, "thou art worthy... for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." A worthy person is our blessed Lord! He shed His worthy blood...for unworthy sinners. Unworthy though we are, we are made worthy in our representative and substitute. For now we are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, "For ye all are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). And shall some day be like our redeemer Himself, that is glorified and without sin. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:2).

Does this gospel of a Saviour's blood warm your heart? Does this message of being "grace sought," "blood bought," and "Spirit taught," thrill your soul? Or, on the other hand, has this message become so commonplace to you that you no longer revel in it? Oh, that the Spirit of Christ would now show you anew, or for the first time, the glories of the cross, for words could never describe the joy and peace of beholding a crucified, but now exalted Lord of Lords.

We read in Zechariah 13:1, these words; "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." This fountain, beloved, is none other than the powerful blood of Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel! This fountain today is still as fresh as the day it first gushed forth. He is very much alive and ready for the blood bath of any who will believe in His finished work on Calvary. For those who will forsake their own filthy rags of unrighteousness, trusting Him for righteousness, they will find as we have found; full, complete strength and healing power in the precious blood shed by the only one who is able to exercise the precious power therein. Amen.

WHY

(Continued from Page 1)

power.

The question then Job sets forth, "Wherefore do the wicked live?" The answer to this question is found in God's Word in four instances.

CONSIDER THIS LETTER

To: All Sovereign Grace Landmark Missionary Baptists who are wise in doing Mission Work.

Proverbs 11:14, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

Dear Sister Churches and sound Baptist brethren,

We would like to solicit your prayerful advice on a missionary endeavor which we are contemplating.

Brother Don Peach is an ordained Elder and a member of The Lord's Baptist Church here in Tacoma. He is retired from the U.S. Army and married to a Korean woman who is saved and also a member of this church. We have begun to share Brother Peach's burden to see a bi-lingual ministry started for homes with mixed marriages like his. Being as close to Fort Lewis, McChord Air Force Base and Madigan Army Hospital as we are, we feel that the fields are white unto harvest for such a work.

Usually, when the Lord saves both parties in a Korean-American home, the spiritual life of one of them is stunted; because they either attend some Korean speaking group where the husband is not fed or they join an English speaking church where the wife suffers because of the language difficulties. We, with Brother Peach, would like to plant a church in this area where good sound Bible teaching can be received in both English and Korean.

Until now, we have not found a man who is both sound in the Faith and can speak Korean. Do any of you know such a man?

FIRST, the wicked live to reveal God's goodness in a providential way to all men. Let wicked men know that all the benefits, and profits they have in this life come from a merciful God. He sends the rain upon the unjust. He gives them power to get wealth. He takes the beggar from the dung hill and sets him among princes. The wicked are not under the rod of correction like the children of God. This they escape so they are full of glee, and gaiety. "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance" (Job. 21:11). "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave" (v. 13). The rich man fared sumptuously every day (Luke 16:19). David said, "Their eyes stand out with fatness." David said again, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree" (Psalm 37:35). We read in Malachi 3:15 that the proud are called happy, and the wicked are set up. Thus God gives the wicked people the air they breathe, the food they eat, the clothes they wear, the health they enjoy, the mind they use to get wealth. Therefore the goodness of God is the answer to their long life, and all the good things they have in this life, He giveth life and breath to all (Acts 17:25).

SECONDLY, the wicked live, to reveal their depravity. In return for all the goodness of God, they say unto Him, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that (Continued on Page 10, Col. 5)

Can you give us any insight on our vision, and how and if we should pursue it?

We just met a young man from Korea named Mr. Yang. He is a member of a Baptist church in Korea which is affiliated with the Korean Baptist Convention, an independent association of churches which was formed in 1890 from the work of a Canadian Baptist Missionary named Malcolm Fenwick.

Brother Yang has only been in this country for two months. He will be doing graduate work at PLU majoring in music. He speaks English slowly but surprisingly well. In talking with him, we find him to be very well grounded in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and basic Baptist doctrine. His home church does not receive alien immersion or practice open communion and believes in mother church authority for mission work. Brother Yang's father is the Pastor. He is A-mill but Brother Yang is Pre-mill.

We are very excited about the possibilities but are trying not to rush into anything without God being in it. Can any of you give us any suggestions? What would you do if you were us? We would appreciate any words of encouragement or even wise counsel which would discourage us from doing anything which would not be right in the sight of God.

Yours in the old landmarks
by sovereign grace
Pastor Larry J. Killion
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STUDIES IN THE LIFE

OF ELIJAH - 21

FOLLOWING ELIJAH'S RAPTURE

by Joseph M. Wilson

"And there came a writing to him (this is to Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat who is at this time king of Judah) from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, (that is his grandfather and they were two good kings) But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself: Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day" (II Chronicles 21:12-15).

In the last article we studied the rapture of Elijah. We see that the Lord took him to heaven, by way of a rapture, without going through the usual door of death. And what a blessing it was, as we studied and thought that you and I may have a like experience. There is going to be a rapture of all the living saints of God. It could be, as far as God has revealed, at the next moment of time. You and I might well share in this experience, and know in our experience, what Elijah knew when the chariot, horses and the whirlwind carried him away to glory.

One would have thought that that was the last of Elijah. Elijah was then with the Lord in glory, but the Lord was not through with him yet. Even though He took him to glory by a rapture, He had some more work for Elijah to do. He had three more jobs for Elijah. Two of those have already taken place, and one is in the future.

There are three outstanding events in the life of Elijah following his rapture to heaven. The first of these is found in our text. Now understand that close to this same time there was a Jehoram who was a grandson of Ahab, who was king in Israel in the northern kingdom, but we are dealing now with the Jehoram who followed Jehoshaphat as king of Judah. He reigned for eight years (II Chron. 21:5) and was married to Athaliah, the meanest grandmother in the Bible, as you remember, she was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. And though Jehoshaphat was a very good man, he had compromised and made an affinity with Ahab and through this his son Jehoram had married the wicked Athaliah.

Jehoram, as I said, reigned for eight years, and his reign was a very wicked one; he walked in the ways of the house of Ahab. Instead of following the example of his father Jehoshaphat, and grandfather Asa, he followed the example of his father-in-law, Ahab, and was stirred up to a life of sin and idolatry by his wicked wife, Athaliah. When he came to the throne, he slew all of his

brethren, lest they might rise in rebellion against his wicked reign.

After a period of time of this reign of Jehoram, we read that, "...there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet..." (II Chron. 21:12). But, Elijah was already in heaven; for Elijah had been raptured to heaven some time during the reign of Jehoshaphat, before Jehoram became king. Isn't that a strange thing? Here is a man who has been raptured to heaven, and a wicked king on earth receives a letter from him.

There are different views concerning this writing from Elijah. Some men suggest that Elijah is a mistake and it should have been Elisha, but we know better than to attribute mistakes to the inspired Word of God. There are some men who suggest that this is another and different Elijah, but we cannot believe that, for when Elijah the prophet had played such a prominent place in the program of God, and he was the prophet, we are satisfied when it says, "...there came a writing from Elijah the prophet..." (II Chron. 21:12), that it is talking about that Elijah whom we have been studying for some time. I read one commentary, and I confessed a little sympathy with him, who believed that Elijah just wrote this letter in heaven and sent it down to earth. I confess that I had never heard that view until I read it this week and it intrigued me. However, most people who truly honor the Word of God, and this last view does, believe that Elijah wrote this before he was raptured and gave it to Elisha or to one of the prophets, to be delivered to Jehoram at a proper or specified time. For the present, I lean toward that view.

Someone said, "How could Elijah write a letter to Jehoram condemning him for doing things that he had not yet done? Jehoram was not yet on the throne. How could Elijah know what Jehoram was going to do, what God was going to do to Jehoram, and how Jehoram was going to die, before Jehoram ever got on the throne?" Well, that is easy. The God of Elijah knew, Elijah did not know, but Elijah's God knew, and certainly it would be a simple thing for God to move upon Elijah to write this letter about condemning Jehoram for the sins he was going to commit, telling him the judgment that was going to come upon him, and then just hold that letter in reserve until the time to deliver it. I suggest that that is probably the facts about this letter.

Now, as to the contents of this letter, of course it was inspired of God, it was a condemnation of the sin of Jehoram—you have not followed your father, Jehoshaphat, you have not followed your grandfather, Asa, you have lived according to the ways of the king of Israel, you have led Judah after whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and you have killed your brethren who were better men than you are.

Elijah has not changed any, has he? Elijah writes about like he preached, doesn't he? Elijah, I'll say, was basically very consistent, he was just. It seemed like he was forever condemning sin and preaching the judgment of God against sin. Brother, here

was a prophet that did not compromise with sin or back down and try to get along with people. He was forever preaching against sin and warning about the judgment of God. That is what he does in this letter. You can compare that letter to some of the preaching he did and say, "Yes, that is Elijah." If he did write it in heaven and somehow get it down here to the earth, which I like, but doubt; it was the same thing that he preached while on earth.

It amuses me that maybe Jehoram thought, "Well, at last the house of Ahab is through with Elijah." Elijah had been a thorn to Ahab, and when Ahaziah came on the throne, Elijah was a thorn in his side. Now Elijah has gone to heaven and Jehoram is on the throne and he does not have to put up with Elijah anymore. One day the mailman rings at the door with a letter and there is Elijah again. "That pesty Elijah, he bothered my daddy, and he bothered my grandfather, and now he is after me." Oh, this man Elijah was a thorn in the side of sinners and wicked rebels against God. Well, that is what a preacher should be. A preacher should be an irritant to sinners and he should rub sinners the wrong way until they are brought to repent of their sins and get right with God, but as I read this I thought Jehoram would probably be thinking, "Well, at least I do not have to put up with Elijah." And then the fellow brings him a letter from Elijah. Not only this, but Elijah announces the coming judgment of God upon him, "Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day" (II Chron. 21:14,15).

The fact is, "...the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians: And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases..." (II Chron. 21:16-19). Yes, that's Elijah alright, when Elijah said something it always came to pass, and now what had been written in this letter came to pass, in the judgment upon Jehoram.

There is another event that concerns Elijah in Matthew 17. After he was raptured to glory, we see him on the earth again in the story of the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we read there that as Jesus was transfigured, "And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias..." [Elias is the Greek form of the Old Testament name Elijah] (Matt. 17:3). Elijah is back on earth. God was not through with him yet when

He raptured him to glory and now he is back on earth again at the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this transfiguration is one of the crisis experiences in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 16:21 the Lord, from that time, began to show His disciples that He must suffer, be killed and raised again the third day. He had not as openly preached that to His disciples until this time. How His disciples needed, in view of the fact that He had announced that He was going to Jerusalem and die, an encouraging view of His glory. So, shortly after this first clear, open announcement to His disciples of His coming death, He is transfigured before three of them (Peter, James and John), and they see His glory.

In Matthew 16:28 the Lord Jesus Christ says, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Then, after six days, the transfiguration. So, the transfiguration is a preview of the coming glorious kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. In that kingdom there will be a glorified Christ, glorified saints of God and men living after the flesh; this scene of glory is a preview of that coming kingdom of Jesus Christ. But what we have to deal with now is the strange situation of Moses and Elijah appearing and talking to Jesus Christ at this time. Why these two? Well, of course, I do not know that; it was God's sovereign will, but I think it may be because of Moses' relationship to the law of God and because Elijah was one of the great prophets of God. I think it pleased the Lord to allow Moses, who had been forbidden to enter the promised land, after many, many years to stand there with Elijah talking to our Lord. What is it they are discussing? "And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:30,31). So they were talking about the death of Christ Jesus.

Beloved friends, what is it that concerns the inhabitants of glory? Are they wrapped up with the economic situation of the world? If you and I could be transported yonder to the golden streets of glory and listen in on the conversation of the inhabitants of that blessed land, what would we hear? Would it be about the economy, politics, or sports? What are they talking about? They are talking about Jesus Christ and the work that He did. The thing that interests the inhabitants of glory the most is that work of Jesus Christ; the basis of their being in glory. How did Moses get to heaven? How did Elijah get to heaven? Because of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the thing that interests them the most as they talk with our Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Now, how did the disciples know that was Moses and Elijah? They refer to the fact in one of these accounts that they knew who these men were. Look at Matthew 17:4, Peter said, "...let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." How did Peter know who those two men were? So far as I know, the Lord did not

reveal it. They had never seen Moses or Elijah. The question is often asked, "Will we know our loved ones in heaven?" Of course we will. I cannot understand how anyone could ever doubt that when we walk down the golden streets of glory and meet those whom we loved and fellow-shipped with here in this life, that maybe we will not know them then. I do not know why anyone even asks that question. Of course when we get to glory we will know our loved ones who have preceded us there, but more than that, we will not only have recognition, but we will have cognition, by that I mean that we will know everyone there without having to go through the formality of an introduction.

Will we know Christ Jesus? We have never seen Him face to face. Of course we will. As Peter, James and John knew without having ever known Moses or Elijah previously, so will you and I, in glory. We will know as we are known, we will know everybody there in glory land.

Well, is God through with Elijah now? Elijah sent a letter, or it came after his rapture, to Jehoram; he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, and then went on back to glory—is that the end? No. God has one more job for Elijah to do upon this earth. We have Elijah's ministry during the tribulation period found in Revelation 11. Now, beloved friends, there is going to be a tribulation time, a terrible time such as has never been known upon the earth. There is going to be a time upon this earth when the antichrist is going to rule and this world will go through the most terrible moral, spiritual, physical and financial time that has ever been.

During that time there are going to be two witnesses for God. In Revelation 11:3 we read, "...I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days..." (1,260 days). That is three and one-half years, prophetically speaking. The tribulation period is going to last for seven years. Between the time of the rapture of the saints of God, when the Lord comes in the air and we say, "Good-bye old world," and go up to be with the Lord, until we come back with our Lord to the battle of Armageddon, and He sets up His kingdom on earth, there will be seven years of tribulation. That seven years is divided into two equal periods of three and one-half years each and I am thoroughly convinced, though many prophetic students disagree, that these two witnesses will witness for God in the first half of the tribulation period.

We will find here that Elijah is going to do the same thing that he did while he was on earth, and that his letter did after he went to heaven. He is going to be a thorn in the side of antichrist. The antichrist is striving to come to great power during the tribulation period, and does not reach the heights of his power until God again removes Elijah from the scene. But Elijah is going to stand there, on the streets of Jerusalem, and preach the same thing that he preached when he was here before. He is going to (Continued on Page 10, Col. 1)

ELIJAH

(Continued from Page 9)

preach about sin and work miracles of judgment. It says in Revelation 11:5, "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies..." Then verse six says, "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy..." Elijah did it before, and he will, under God, of course, do it again. Then they "...have power over waters to turn them to blood..." Who did that? Moses, and "to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

In the first half of the tribulation period, there are going to be two witnesses who will stand against the antichrist and the sins of that awful time. Now, who are those two witnesses? Well, they are Elijah and Moses or Enoch, I will not bend beyond that. It is not the church and the preachers, it is not any two standing for a great number of witnesses; no, it is two individuals who will witness for God at that time; those two are the witnesses. I am convinced that they will not be two men who are born on the earth naturally, and live a natural life during that time. I am convinced that it will be two men who have been on earth, gone to glory, and come back to the earth to witness for God at that time.

I am sure one of them is Elijah and I believe the other is Moses, because of the strange death and burial of Moses (see Deut. 34:5,6), and because of the dispute between Michael, the archangel, and the devil about the body of Moses (see Jude 9) - I believe, and I am just adding a little between the lines here, that after Moses' burial, the devil disputed with Michael the archangel for that body. I believe that body has been preserved somewhere and Moses will come back to earth in that body. You say, "Well, you are supposing a lot." That is true, but my supposition is based on: 1. Why was there an argument (dispute) between Michael the archangel and the devil about the body of Moses? 2. Because of the similarity between the ministry of Elijah and Moses, and the ministry of these two witnesses. 3. Because Elijah and Moses appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, I believe that Moses and Elijah will appear together again in the tribulation period.

I do not believe that one of the two witnesses will be Enoch, because he is not of Israel and I believe these two witnesses will be Israelites who will preach again for God in that future period of time. Now, we can debate about the matter of Moses or Enoch, but I am convinced and will not budge one hair's breadth that one of them is Elijah.

Malachi 4:5 says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD." I do not believe that this prophecy referred to and was fulfilled in John the Baptist. I believe John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah. There was a lot of similarity be-

tween John and Elijah. The same Holy Spirit that was powerful in the ministry of Elijah, was powerful in the ministry of John, but I verily believe that during the tribulation time, one more time, God is going to say to Elijah, "Go down to the earth, lay your life on the line one more time for the cause of God."

You remember, it just fit so well into the story of Elijah. He was yonder in Gilead, and the Lord said, "Go and tell Ahab it is not going to rain any more until you say so." And then he went to the brook Cherith, then to the widow's house in Zarephath and the Lord said, "Go, shew thyself to Ahab..." (I Kings 18:1). And he did, and you have that great scene on Mount Carmel. Then he was hidden from public view for awhile, and Ahab takes Naboth's vineyard, and God said, "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD..." (I Kings 21:18,19). Elijah goes and rebukes Ahab and announces judgment against him. Then Elijah disappears for awhile from public view, and then Ahaziah is sick and sends messengers to Baal the god of the Philistines and God says to Elijah, "Go and stop them and tell them what is going to happen" (see I Kings 21:17-26).

Then God takes Elijah to heaven, but He says, "Before you go (or after he got there, I am not sure which, I think before he went), write this letter to Jehoram."

Then God sends Elijah down to the Mount of Transfiguration, and now one more time, one more job for Elijah; God will send Elijah to the earth in the tribulation period to preach the same thing that he had been preaching all along. And I just enjoy that so much, as I see ole Elijah, who had been a thorn to Ahab, Ahaziah and Jehoram, and here he is back again.

Here is a wicked man, rebelling against God and leading the world in idolatry; Elijah comes on the scene and stands against him for a period of time, doing great miracles and having a great ministry. Look at Revelation 11:7, the antichrist tries to destroy Elijah, and I think, Moses, but he cannot touch them until God's time comes. Verse seven says, "...when they shall have finished their testimony." Elijah is not through with his testimony yet, he is yonder in heaven on the sidelines, waiting for that one last job that God has for him to do. Then when Elijah comes and he is through, the antichrist kills them. The antichrist has been trying to do it for three and one-half years and he could not touch them until God said, "I am through with you now, you have done the work that I gave you to do." And then the antichrist kills these two witnesses.

God's people are immortal until their work is done. All the powers of hell cannot take the life of God's servants until God is through with that servant. We may say, "Isn't it a shame, he died before his time?" "Isn't it a shame, he had not finished his life's work and he is gone?" No, no, no, they die at their appointed time. They die when their work is done and nothing can ever

change that.

But now, Elijah's work is finally done and the antichrist kills him. For three and one-half days the dead bodies of Elijah and Moses (?) lay there in the street while the television camera's of the world are turned upon them. The wicked world is rejoicing that finally they are through with Elijah and he is lying there dead in the street.

As the camera's of the world are trained upon them, and the wicked hellions of this earth are looking at the screen, all of a sudden, those two bodies arise from the dead, and they hear a voice saying, "...Come up hither..." (Rev. 11:12). They move up to glory as the television camera's follow them out of sight and go back to glory land from whence they came to do this job.

Elijah is going to have two raptures. You and I are going to have one, but Elijah has already had one; he will come back and preach awhile and die and then he is going to be raised from the dead and raptured up to glory. And the Lord then, as far as time was concerned, was through with the services of Elijah.

THE OLD CROSS AND THE NEW

by A.W. Tozer

All unannounced and mostly undetected there has come in modern times a new cross into popular evangelical circles. It is like the old cross, but different: the likenesses are superficial; the differences, fundamental.

From this new cross has sprung a new philosophy of the Christian life, and from that new philosophy has come a new evangelical technique -- a new type of meeting and new kind of preaching. This new evangelism employs the same language as the old, but its content is not the same and its emphasis not as before.

The old cross would have no truck with the world. For Adam's proud flesh it meant the end of the journey. It carried into effect the sentence imposed by the law of Sinai. The new cross is not opposed to the human race; rather, it is a friendly pal and, if understood aright, it is the source of oceans of good clean fun and innocent enjoyment. It lets Adam live without interference. His life motivation is unchanged; he still lives for his own pleasure, only now he takes delight in singing choruses and watching religious movies instead of singing bawdy songs and drinking hard liquor. The accent is still on enjoyment, though the fun is now on a higher plane morally if not intellectually.

The new cross encourages a new and entirely different evangelistic approach. The evangelist does not demand abnegation of the old life before a new life can be received. He preaches not contrasts but similarities. He seeks to key into public interest by showing that Christianity makes no unpleasant demands; rather, it offers the same thing the world does, only on a higher level. Whatever the sin-mad world happens to be clamoring after at the moment is cleverly shown to be the very thing the gospel offers, only the religious product is better.

The new cross does not slay the sinner, it redirects him. It gears him into a cleaner and jollier way of living and saves his

By the way, when all of this takes place, you and I will know about it, because we will be in glory in our glorified bodies with the Lord, having been raptured previously. We will go up about the same time Elijah comes down to take his place witnessing for the Lord. After three and one-half years we will watch them (Elijah and Moses, I believe), come back to glory after doing their work here upon the earth in the tribulation period.

Well, surely by now you will agree with me that Elijah is a most remarkable man, one of the outstanding characters of the Word of God.

We will talk a little in the next lesson to try to sum things up and get an impression of the characteristics of this great man of God. Remember that the Bible tells us Elijah was, "...a man subject to like passions as we are..." (James 5:17).

My, how God used Elijah. God could use us if it pleased Him to do so. Let us pray that the God of Elijah will use us. We do not expect to do the great things that Elijah did, but that He would use us to His glory. May God bless you!

WHY

(Continued from Page 8)

we should serve Him? And what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" (Job 21:14-15). Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" (Exod. 5:2). Wicked men take the air God gives them to breathe, and in turn breathe out cursings and blasphemous oaths against Him. They use the strength He endows them with to do violence, kill and destroy the righteous. They eat the food He gives them, and the ungrateful wretches grumble because He does not give them more. They eat to the full, like hogs under the acorn tree, never looking up to thank God from whence all good things come. They want His blessings but they want nothing to do with Him. They are like the dog that bites the hand of the master that feeds him. Though they could not live a moment without His provision and sustenance of life, yet they want to live independently of Him. They do not wish to bow their unworthy heads under

(Continued on Page 11, Col. 1)

self-respect. To the self-assertive it says, "Come and assert yourself for Christ." To the egotist it says, "Come and do your boasting in the Lord." To the thrillseeker it says, "Come and enjoy the thrill of Christian fellowship." The Christian message is slanted in the direction of the current vogue in order to make it acceptable to the public.

The philosophy back of this kind of thing may be sincere but its sincerity does not save it from being false. It is false because it is blind. It misses completely the whole meaning of the cross.

The old cross is a symbol of death. It stands for the abrupt, violent end of a human being. The man in Roman times who took up his cross and started down the road had already said good-bye to his friends. He was not coming back. He was going out to have it ended. The cross made no compromise, modified nothing, spared nothing; it slew all of the man, completely and for good. It did not try to keep on good terms with its victim. It struck cruel and hard, and when it had finished its work, the man was no more.

The race of Adam is under the death sentence. There is no commutation and no escape. God cannot approve any of the fruits of sin, however innocent they may appear or beautiful to the eyes of men. God salvages the individual by liquidating him and then raising again to newness of life.

That evangelism which draws friendly parallels between the ways of God and the ways of men is false to the Bible and cruel to the souls of its hearers. The faith of Christ does not parallel the world, it intersects it. In coming to Christ we do not bring our old life up onto a higher plane; we leave it at the cross. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die.

We who preach the gospel must not think of ourselves as public relations agents sent to establish good will between Christ and the world. We must not imagine ourselves commissioned to make Christ acceptable to big business, the press, the

world of sports or modern education. We are not diplomats but prophets, and our message is not a compromise but an ultimatum.

God offers life, but not an improved old life. The life He offers is life out of death. It stands always on the far side of the cross. Whoever would possess it must pass under the rod. He must repudiate himself and concur in God's just sentence against him.

What does this mean to the individual, the condemned man who would find life in Christ Jesus? How can this theology be translated into life? Simply, he must repent and believe. He must forsake his sins and then go on to forsake himself. Let him cover nothing, defend nothing, excuse nothing. Let him not seek to make terms with God, but let him bow his head before the stroke of God's stern displeasure and acknowledge himself worthy to die.

Having done this let him gaze with simple trust upon the risen Saviour, and from Him will come life and rebirth and cleansing and power. The cross that ended the earthly life of Jesus now puts an end to the sinner; and the power that raised Christ from the dead now raises him to a new life along with Christ.

To any who may object to this or count it merely a narrow and private view of truth, let me say God has set His hallmark of approval upon this message from Paul's day to the present. Whether stated in these exact words or not, this has been the content of all preaching that has brought life and power to the world through the centuries. The mystics, the reformers, the revivalists have put their emphasis here, and signs and wonders and mighty operations of the Holy Ghost gave witness to God's approval.

Dare we, the heirs of such a legacy of power, tamper with the truth? Dare we with our stubby pencils erase the lines of the blueprint or alter the pattern shown us in the Mount? May God forbid. Let us preach the old cross and we will know the old power.

--Copied

WHY

(Continued from Page 10)

His sovereign dominion, yet they desire to be their own gods.

They desire not the knowledge of His ways. They have turned everyone to their own ways. They look everyone to their own ways, everyone to his gain from his quarter, but they do not look to God who holds their breath in their nostrils. They hate the knowledge of His ways of salvation. They go about to establish their own righteousness and have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3). Therefore their false prophets cry peace, peace, unto them, when there is no peace. They have only a peace of the devil's making. They are rocked to sleep in their ignorance, slothfulness and stupidity. They, blind and unconscious of all except sensuality and leisure, say, "What is His knowledge to us?" So like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears and spreadeth her mouth, will not hear, they despise His truth.

The THIRD reason why God lets the wicked live, is to let them fill up their cup. God said to Abraham, "The iniquity of

the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16). Job said, "God layeth up His iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it." (Job. 21:19). God has set them in slippery places. Their foot shall slide in due season.

A farmer once wrote to an editor: "Dear sir: I have been trying an experiment. I have a field of corn which I plowed on Sunday. I planted it on Sunday. I cut it and hauled it to the barn on Sunday, and I find that I have more corn to the acre than has been gathered by any of my neighbors this October." The farmer sent his letter, sure that the editor could have no answer to the sneer implied in it. But imagine his feelings when in the next issue of the paper he read his own letter in print, and at the end of it this one sentence: "God does not make full settlement in October." -- Selected.

Our Lord Jesus tells us about the barren fig tree, how that the man planted the fig tree, and came seeking fruit, but found none. He said unto the dresser of the vineyard, "I have these three years sought fruit on this tree and found none, cut it down." The dresser pled for the Lord of the vineyard to let it alone another

year, till he cultivate it, etc., and if it bear fruit, well, and if not, cut it down.

"The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath" (Job 21:30). "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccles. 8:11). Paul, writing through divine inspiration, said of the wicked, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5). Thus the wicked in this life are doing little more than laying up a bank account of wrath.

The FOURTH reason why God lets wicked people live, is to give them space for repentance. In the book of Revelation we read that God gave the woman Jezebel which calleth herself a prophetess, space to repent of her fornication and she repented not (Rev. 2:21). God gave Nineveh forty days to repent in. God granted repentance to Nineveh, and spared the city. How grateful man should be that God gives space for repentance. How I thank Him that He not only granted me space for repentance, but granted me the grace of repentance to life eternal. I remember the days when my sins went over me like billows. I was afraid to close my eyes to sleep at night. My sin was ever before me. God, in His great mercy, spared my life from dangers both seen and invisible. He girded me though I knew Him not, and brought me to His darling Son.

Sinner friend, your space for repentance may be nearly up. God has spared you and you have been as a brand plucked from the burning, yet you are still in your sins. Will you not flee from the wrath to come? There is but one place of refuge, and that is in Christ. He came unto this world, lived a perfect life, died for the sins of all who would trust Him according to the Scriptures, was buried and rose from the dead according to the Scriptures. "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). Friend, there may be but a step between you and death.

Impenitence marks the doom of nations and individuals. I talked to a man years ago at one o'clock in the day about his lost soul. About four hours later with a load of liquor in his car he had a collision and suddenly passed into eternity. I talked with another man about the need of Christ as Saviour one Friday night. The following night he was ground to pieces under the train wheels. Time is winding up, friend, and you must stand before God. I pray God to grant you repentance and saving faith in Christ.

SEVEN

(Continued from Page 1)

say it is present. Nor can I see any reason to doubt this particular translation. The so-called Holiness Denominations disregard all the present tense verbs of Rom. 7:15-25 and I John 1:8-10, to prove their doctrine of sinless perfection. When they are done

with each of these verses, the present tense verbs are past tense to mean "before the second work of grace." This is, of course, rank heresy. Let us not try to prove a false belief by ignoring the inspiration of the Scriptures.

My second reason for rejecting the seven part church age theory, is the last part of Revelation 1:11, "...send it to the seven churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea." I want you to notice that each of these names are real places, just as Asia is a real place. I cannot find any reason to doubt that these churches mentioned in the book of Revelation are seven local, visible congregations in each particular city, such as the church of Ephesus. Why would the Lord give each of these assemblies a name and a historical, physical area if they are merely an age or a dispensation? The answer is, He would not unless there was significance in the meaning of the word or name He gave them. I cannot find any reasonable prophetic meaning to any of these names, but I can certainly find seven cities of old that bear these names.

My third argument is that the Bible calls them "churches" not "times." There is a vast difference between the meaning of the word "church" and a time period. A church is a body of baptized believers who assemble and unite together to carry out the great commission of our Lord. There cannot be any other definition of the word "ekklesia" translated "church" in these verses. A close study of the New Testament or a Greek Lexicon will always prove the word "ekklesia" to be an assembly or congregation, and nothing else. Why then, if the word "church" is used to mean one thing and only one thing everywhere else in the Scriptures, does it not mean the same thing here? I am convinced that the Bible is the most consistent Book ever written, and its Author never changes. (Heb. 13:8). Now don't you believe in the immutability of God? Even basic theology teaches us that the theory of a seven part church age is false.

My fourth reason is Revelation 2:10, "The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried and ye shall have tribulation." Notice the verb tense of this verse is future. This verse is saying in the future the church of Smyrna will come into certain tribulations. At the time of this writing it had not yet come to pass. The Bible is careful to place this event in the future. The seven church age believers place the Laodicean church as the last time period. Notice the verb tense concerning the activities of the Laodicean Church. (Rev. 3:17). The word "sayest" in Revelation 3:17 bears the meaning "you have said and are saying." Why would God in one place speak of the future with future tense verbs and then speak of the future and use past and present tense verbs? If this were indeed the case, these verses would be very misleading to say the least. Do you really believe that God would mislead His people?

My fifth reason why I cannot agree with this theory is Revelation 3:16, "I will spue thee

out of my mouth." According to the teachers of the seven church ages, Laodicea is the last age or era of the church and is representative of all churches. If this were in fact true, what would happen to the churches? They would cease to exist as churches. Satan, through their sins, would have defeated them. Matthew 16:18, "upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Do you see what this verse is saying? The church that Jesus built will always stand. The gates of hell, the temptations of Satan, and the sins of man will never completely prevail against the Lord's church. Throughout history, the churches of Jesus Christ have seen many dark and bloody days. Many church members were burned at the stake for being Christians, but the church has always continued from when Jesus built it, during His earthly ministry, even to this present day. Do you really believe when the Lord comes again, that there won't be any of His churches left? If you believe that, you can't believe Matthew 16:18. On the basis of other Scripture we have no reasons to accept the teaching of seven different church ages.

Lastly I reject this theory on the basis of the fact that it sets a time when the Lord can come. Matthew 24:42, "watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." The word that is translated "hour" is the Greek word "hora." "Hora" is translated in eleven other places by the word "time." This being the case, Matthew 24:42 could read, "no man knoweth the time when the Lord will come." I John 2:18, "it is the last time" (hora). John is saying, right now, at present, until Jesus comes is the last time. Not the Laodicean time, but now is the last time. Revelation 3:3, "if therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Now notice, according to this verse, the Lord could have come during the so-called Sardis time period. If the Lord came during the Sardis time period, what would have happened to the Philadelphia and Laodicean time periods? It is evident that the Lord can come at any time, and no man knows when He will come. Any date setting, of any kind, is always going to be wrong. He will come when He comes, and all will know then and not until then.

I therefore conclude that English and Greek language rules, basic theology and what we know of the rest of the New Testament plainly shows us that this is indeed a false theory. A theory that is built upon a man's concept and not the Word of God. It is very evident that the Lord sent these messages to the seven different churches that were in existence in John's day and time. This being the case, these messages have a first and primary lesson to the churches that are addressed. Just as the books of I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and I and II Thessalonians are addressed to existing churches, but are also given to us to learn and profit from. So are the messages to the seven churches of Revelation.

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PARENTS

The most serious neglect of parents is the general disregard of the souls of their children. Children are born with a sinful nature that leaves them guilty and punishable by God, yet since the time of Adam, they have received their pollution from their parents. For this reason, God requires parents to teach and to train them. How heartless are those parents who have not so much compassion for their children as to bring them up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The Hebrew words "ben"--a son, "bath"--a daughter, and "beth"--a house, all come from the same root word "bana"--to build, for a son and a daughter must be "built" as well as a house. How calloused are they who take more care for the building of a house than the building of their children! How cruel if the never-dying souls of children are left to be finally damned through the neglect of their parents!

Children are born in ignorance and if they are not to remain forever alienated from God, they must be taught the way to Christ. Therefore God commands, "Train them up." Give them the first "dip," "initiate" them in the way they should go at the very outset of their education. There is a way they would go, but parents are to train them in the way they should go. "Train them up" (Prov. 22:6). "...when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:7). Do it because: "The twig is bent, the tree inclined--And so their heart, and soul and mind."

Christian parents promise God they will rear their children in the fear of the Lord; but they easily promise, and easily break their promise, and through their indulgence educate their children instead for the world, the flesh and the devil. This betrayal of the souls of their children will lie heavy upon them in this world

and the next. Children are born unto God; parents are but stewards, and a day of reckoning has been promised.

Parents are inclined to love their children much, but only God can teach them to love wisely. Affection without discipline will result in love without respect which will evidence itself in back-talk and disobedience. Yet, discipline without affection will result in fear without love which will end in rebellion.

Unless children are disciplined, they will die in their sins. "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Prov. 23:13,14). Again, "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15).

The simple neglect of their children brings the parents to shame, and barring intervention by God, seals their damnation. If left to their own spirit, they will be miserable in time and in eternity. "Withhold it not" despite pleas and pity. Correct them lovingly, but firmly. Take time to instruct them in the way they should go. Then seal discipline with prayer.

"Correct thy son" is a command. To try more appealing ways is to set up your will in opposition to the will of God. Eli was cursed because he honored his sons above God and did not restrain them from their evil way (I Sam. 2:29,30; 3:11-14).

"Let us bring our children as near to heaven as we can," wrote Thomas Hooker. If you have any compassion for your children, show them how they are to conduct themselves. Lead them--because principle without example is hypocrisy. Labor that by the grace of God they may have an early knowledge of the Saviour. Then pray incessantly for them because your work will not be done until you or they are in the grave.

CAN YOU IMAGINE THIS?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego bowing down to the pope? "...be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3:18).

PLANTED IN THE LIKENESS

by Herb Evans

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26,27).

A good brother showed us a letter, which he had received from someone who was upset with him regarding his application of Galatians 3:27 to water baptism. The fellow's argument was that since strict Baptists teach that the book of Galatians and the book of the Corinthians were written to local churches, the passage could not read, "as many of you as have been baptized," for they were already water baptized members of the church. He argued further that Paul would not have said "as many," he would have said whatever included all of them! The poor brother did not notice that the preceding verse said "Ye are all the children of God," which would mean that all children of God (according to him) might not have been mystically, invisibly baptized into Christ due to the words, "as many of you (children of God) as have been baptized into Christ." A simple explanation would be that some of the believers were awaiting baptism and were receiving instruction to its meaning.

The Old Testament saints were baptized unto Moses (I Cor. 10:2), but unlike the baptism of Galatians 3:27, only a single aspect, identification with Moses, is in view here, for no one was ever said to be in Moses. There are, however, multiple aspects involved in the baptism into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-5), in that the word "into" has a composite meaning of "towards or in reference to" and "within" and involves a baptism which portrays both "identification" and "position" of a believer in Christ. Romans 6:3-5 expands this identification and position. There is, however, no demand in either passage for a mystical, universal Christ or baptism.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:" (Rom. 6:3-5).

Not even John R. Rice, who edited an interdenominational periodical and believed in a universal, mystical, invisible

church and a universal, mystical, invisible baptism of all believers, would surrender Romans 6 to mystical baptism. He believed correctly that Romans 6 refers to water baptism.

Again, the mystically baptized, who did not see, hear, feel, or sense the baptism (they were merely told that they were mystically baptized), have a problem. If the "us" refers to Christians or to the children of God, why would it say, "so many of us as were baptized," if all the children of God are truly mystically baptized into Christ upon conversion? Romans 6 teaches baptismal identification but goes on to teach identification with His death. How in the world could you get mystically baptized into death? Another problem is making the so-called "mystical baptism" synonymous and simultaneous with the new birth. The new birth is a birth! The baptism of Romans 6 is a death! How can the Holy Spirit element (with Jesus the baptizer--Matt. 3:11) be synonymous with death, when He is very much alive? How can the body of Christ (if it is the element in contradiction to Matt. 3:11) be synonymous with death, when it is very much alive?

If we allow the baptism of Romans 6 to be what it is, water baptism, and that baptism pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and our identification with Him (and these) and pictures the entrance into His representative body, we are consistent with the context. It is a figurative "planting," a figurative "burial," and a figurative "likeness." It is simply a figure or likeness. An invisible, mystical likeness would be a contradiction of terms. But someone says, "There is no water mentioned in Romans 6!" There is no Spirit mentioned there either!

APPRECIATED LETTERS

Dear Brother Wilson,

May the Lord greatly bless you this week in your revival services at Main Street Baptist Church in Burnside, Kentucky. All of your TBE issues are filled with very good articles, but we especially enjoyed the Feb. 4th issue. Articles on: Arminianism, The Home, Why We Baptize By Immersion, etc. were excellent. Thank God for your dedication and faith, and your strong belief in His Holy Word.

Jean Litchfield, Huntsville, Al.

Dear Brother Wilson,

Please renew my subscription for TBE. I enjoy your paper. Keep up the good work. May the Lord bless you and the work you are doing. Yours in Christ,

Toliver Vinson,
Bradenton, Fla.

IMPRESSIONS

All that I can say is that I thank God for Brother Joe, the church and the paper and pray that He will continue to bless and lead you in your efforts for His ministry. Our prayers are with you.

Chuck, Theresa and Monica
Godley,
Savannah, Ga.

I think this was a really great conference. There were a lot of great preachers, although David West was the best (I'm prejudiced).

Lisa Riley, Cincinnati, Ohio

May God bless the Calvary Baptist Church. Thank you for the invitation to preach. I have been richly blessed by the preaching, singing and fellowship. Pray for us in Gladwin and we will do the same.

Elder Sam Wilson,
Gladwin, Mi.

I feel that, as usual, all the services were just wonderful. I think the preachers did a fine job and the singing was just wonderful. Thank God for Brother Joe Wilson. I'm looking forward to coming back next year.

unsigned

One of the best conferences I've attended here, great preaching and fellowship and well planned. The food was very good. May the Lord bless and work great things for you all and everyone that attended. Pray for us much and we'll do likewise.

Pauline Shelton,
Landmark Baptist Church,
Germantown, N.C.

I greatly enjoyed the Bible conference. The expounding of the precious doctrines of grace; God's men brought great messages of truth. The singing was a blessing to me, especially the special singing. The piano solo by Ruth Pruitt was a blessing to my heart and soul. God bless you, Brother Wilson and Calvary Baptist Church with many more such Bible conferences.

Elder David West,
Charleston, S.C.



Let's go eat!



Don Pennington preaches the Word.



W.W. Wilkerson proclaims God's Word.



Medford Caudill brings a fine message.



Jesse and Elzo Cole sing for us.

BOOK REVIEWS

We have, "The Heart of Wesley's Journal." This book is what the title suggests. It is the putting together, in Wesley's own words, what is believed to be the heart of his journals. These were Wesley's accounts of his travels and work. I am much opposed to Wesleyan Theology. I am not a fan of John Wesley. I thought it very poor when Spurgeon said that if two more were to be added to the twelve apostles, Wesley should be one of them. However, John Wesley had a great influence on religious history. I would think it to be worthwhile to learn something of this. I would consider this book valuable from this stand point. The book is a paper back of over 500 pages. It sells for \$14.95. Order from our book store. Remember that the profit goes into the book ministry of our church.

We have "The Typology of Scripture" by Patrick Fairbairn. This book is two volumes in one. It has long been recognized as the classic in its field. The

greatness of the book is somewhat damaged by the author's wrong views on prophecy. However, the book remains a very worthwhile addition to the pastor's library. The principles of typical interpretation are fully set forth. Different types are thoroughly dealt with. The book is very sane and sensible in its exposition of types. This cannot be said of many of the books on types now available. Many men have allowed their imagination to lead them far astray in this legitimate and important field of Bible study. I would recommend the book, but would urge one to be careful in reading its prophetic portions. The book is a large paper back of over 900 pages. It sells for \$22.95. Order from our book store.

We have, "Winning Words For Daily Living" by Charles U. Wagner. This book has 200 short devotional readings. The themes are developed from Isaiah 40:31, with different sections applying to different portions of

that great verse. It does not contain the application of specific Scriptures that I would prefer. It has a foreword by Warren Wiersbe which will recommend the book to many. I have never been overly impressed with such books, but some people find them very helpful. The book is hardback and has over 400 pages. It sells for \$16.95. Order from our book store where the profit goes into the book ministry of our church.

Sometimes we call upon God in public prayer, and we sit down thinking that our confused prayer was of no service to the church. You know not in what scales God weighs prayer -- not by quantity, but by quality; not by outward dress, but by the inner soul and the intense sincerity of it. Nine times out of ten, those prayers are more prevalent with God which we think are the least acceptable; but when we glory in our prayer, God will have nothing to do with it.

--Charles Spurgeon