

## THE NECESSITY OF THE SPIRIT'S WORK- part 1

by C. H. Spurgeon  
Text: "And I will put my spirit within you..." (Ezek. 36:27).

The miracles of Christ are remarkable for one fact, namely, that they are none of them unnecessary. The pretended miracles of Mahomet, and of the church of Rome, even if they had been miracles, would have been pieces of folly. Suppose that Saint Denis had walked with his head in his hand after it had been cut off, what practical purpose would have been subserved thereby? He would certainly have

been quite as well in his grave, for any practical good he would have conferred on men. The miracles of Christ were never unnecessary. They are not freaks of power; they are displays of power it is true, but they all of

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C.H. SPURGEON

## SIN ONLY REMITTED BY REDEMPTION

by Evangelist  
T. T. Martin

When one faces the question of his sins, and realizes that they deserve just punishment, one of the first impulses is to pray and beg of God to be let off, to be forgiven; and, alas! much of the religious instruction to the sinner is to the same effect. Jesus to Nicodemus gave no such instruction (John 3:14-16); Philip to the eunuch gave no such instruction (Acts 8:29-39); Paul and Silas to the jailer gave no such instruction (Acts 16:30,31); Peter to the household of Cornelius gave no such instruction (Acts 10:42,43); the gospel of John, the one book specially given to lead a sinner to

be saved (John 20:30,31), gives no such instruction.

But the objection is at once brought up that in the Lord's prayer we are taught to pray, "Forgive us our sins." That prayer begins "Our father," and God is not the Father of sinners ("For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" Galatians 3:26); and the prayer was given by the Saviour to disciples (Luke 11:1,2), and not to sinners.

But the objection is further raised that the Bible says, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13). God can and does forgive the believer on confession, because the believer is a child of God. With the sinner it is a question of law and justice, or right. Hence, the Lord Jesus said, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18). "...every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward"

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## WHY BAPTISTS CANNOT UNIONIZE WITH OTHERS

by Buell H. Kazee

The name "Baptist" is used here to represent a religious people who in history have been identified with certain beliefs and who were impelled by these beliefs to remain separate from other religious groups or denominations. If they could have accepted the teachings of other denominations, there was never any good reason for their separate identification. Furthermore, if at this time there is nothing unique about their faith and practice, they should, in all honesty, admit that they have been wrong and end their part of the confusion by uniting with some other body whose faith they can endorse.

For instance, if Baptists have been right about how lost men are saved, then all who disagree with them are wrong on this vital point. If Baptists are right on this doctrine, then all who have ever been saved have been exactly as Baptists teach. If Baptists have been right about the church in its local, visible concept and about baptism and the Lord's supper -- that is, how, why, to whom and

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## JUDE: "THE ACTS OF THE APOSTATES"

by John M. Alber, Pastor  
Introduction. Before we get into the book of Jude itself, there are a number of things that one should take note. First, the writer of this particular book. Second, the purpose for which this book was written. Lastly, to whom did Jude write?

The writer, "Jude." There are three different people in the New Testament Scriptures with that particular name. It is a familiar name and has become a household word. First, there is Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed our Lord Jesus Christ into the hands of the religious leaders and Roman army. Second, there was another Judas among the twelve apostles and when his name is mentioned, he is always set apart as "Judas, not Iscariot." Third, our author of the next to the last book of the Bible, Jude. There are three things that I would like to draw your attention

## THE EFFECTUAL CALL The Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation

by C.D. Cole

"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." II Peter 1:10.

This text introduces two doctrines that are vitally related to human salvation, namely, "Calling" and "Election." He who masters the Bible on these two doctrines will have made great advance into the realm of divine truth. They are among the most neglected truths of the Bible, in spite of the fact that Peter exhorts us to make our calling and election sure. The verb "call" has a twofold meaning. It may express the act of naming, as in Matt. 1:21. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people

from their sins". It also means to invite to to summon, as in Mark 2:17 "When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, That they are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Now, when the word "call" is used to express an invitation or command, a further distinction must be made. In salvation there is a general and a special call; an outward and an inward call; a call that is resisted, and a call that is effectual. The general or outward call is in the nature of an invitation or command; the special or inward call overcomes resistance to, and causes acceptance of, the

invitation or command. The one is objective, the other is subjective.

Men come into a saved state by a divine call. We are saints by calling. Rom. 1:7 "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." I Peter 2:9 "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

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## THE WORK AND THE WORD

by Don Pennington

We want to look at the overall story that Nehemiah tells us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Nehemiah chapter 8. We have titled the message "Work And Word." The work of God and the Word of God must go hand in hand. There are those today, and they are plentiful, who say the end justifies the means; and it matters little what means you use as long as the end comes out the way you wanted it. That is just not true. The Word of God teaches us that there is a right and there is a wrong, but it also

## The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

## WHY THE RAPTURE WILL BE BEFORE THE TRIBULATION

When our Lord ascended into heaven, there were two who met Him from the other world to travel back with Him. Our Lord, knowing that back on this earth were those who gazed intently and sorrowfully after Him, said to these two: "Go down there and tell them that 'this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.'"

Let us turn to that Scripture in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 which describes that day we are looking

for - the greatest day in the future for the children of God.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord

shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort

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DON PENNINGTON

teaches us that there is a right way and a wrong way of doing the right thing. If we do the right thing in a wrong way He is not pleased with it. Even though the outcome might be right our method of getting there was all wrong.

In this chapter we have a very refreshing change in the program of Nehemiah, and it's in the form of an urgent appeal of the people. Now that's strange. Usually it is the urgent appeal of the prophet but here it's an urgent appeal of the people that the Word of the

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JOHN ALBER

to about this person. Jude does not pull any rank or privileges because he happened to be the half-brother of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, he never mentions that particular fact. Rather, Jude places himself in the capacity of one who has become the bond

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## WHY

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one another with these words."

The second coming of Jesus Christ cannot be fully covered in a thirty-minute discourse nor in thirty such sermons, for this subject covers somewhat the whole field of eschatology from the rapture to the eternal state.

The second coming of Jesus Christ is the subject of much theological controversy. So I must choose only a portion of this great subject to deal with at this time. We will assume and not endeavor to prove some of these things. I assume that we believe, and I know that the Bible teaches that there will be a millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ upon this earth. The man who does not believe in the millennium - who denies the literal reign of Jesus Christ over this earth - must pervert, dodge and find some method of getting around a tremendous portion of the Word of God. The hermeneutical principles which the anti-millennialists apply to the Scriptures to do away with the millennium are the same principles which the Modernist uses to do away with the virgin birth, the resurrection of Jesus Christ and other great doctrines of the Word of God. There will be a golden day upon this earth when our blessed Lord will reign - when there will be peace and righteousness and prosperity and when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Let us

pray: "Thy kingdom come." Oh, happy glorious day when we shall live and reign upon the earth with Jesus Christ for a thousand years.

Preceding this millennium, there will be a tribulation period. There will be a time of hell on earth - a time when God will deal in wrath with this old wicked world. A time when the world will learn that the God of the Bible is alive, that He is sovereign, that He is Almighty, that He is holy, and that He hates and will punish sin.

Also preceding the millennial reign of Jesus Christ, there will be a rapture, when the children of God will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. I am sure that the Bible teaches that all the saved of all previous time will be



Joe Wilson

caught up in this rapture. I do not believe in a split or partial rapture.

The question with which I wish to deal in this message is this: The question of the time relationship of the rapture to the tribulation. We agree that there will be a millennium. We agree that before the millennium, there will be a tribulation and a rapture. What is the time relationship of the rapture to the tribulation period?

There are those who say that the rapture will come after the tribulation, that the saved will go right on through the reign of the anti-Christ and the awful time of great tribulation and then, following that tribulation will be the rapture. These are known as Post-tribulationists.

There are those who are known as the Mid-tribulationists. They say that the saved who are living at that time will go into the tribulation period (the 70th week of Daniel), and then in the middle of this period, the rapture will occur. Following this rapture, they say, will be the last three and one-half years of the tribulation. Then there are those - and I am glad to be in their number - who believe that the next event on the prophetic calendar of God is the rapture of His people. I believe that there is no prophesied event between you and me and that glad day when Jesus will come and we will be caught up to meet Him in the air. I believe that the rapture will be before the tribulation - before a seal is opened, and before God begins to deal in wrath and in judgment with this world. I desire to present to you some reasons why I believe that the rapture will be before the tribulation.

I. I believe the rapture will be before the tribulation because I believe that the second coming of Christ will be in two steps or phases. The Mid-tribulationist will agree with this statement. But here is where the Post-tribulationist makes merry. Here is his major artillery. He ridicules the idea of a two-fold coming of our Lord and accuses those of us who are pre-tribulationists, of teaching a second and third com-

ing of our Lord. I insist that a careful study of those Scriptures that relate to the coming of the Lord will reveal to us that the coming of Christ will be in two steps or phases, or if you prefer, you may say that there will be a rapture and then later the second coming of Christ. Either terminology amounts to the same thing.

Had you lived previous to the first coming of our Lord in Old Testament days, you would have been hard-pressed to find a verse that clearly stated that there would be a first and second coming of Jesus Christ. But had you carefully studied the events related to the coming of the Lord, you would have been able to understand that there must be a coming to suffer, and then a coming to reign in glory. It is the same in the matter of the two phases of our Lord's second coming. If you will carefully study the events that are revealed to take place at the coming of the Lord, you must come to the conclusion that this coming will be in two steps or phases.

The Bible tells us that our Lord will come in the air and that He will come to the earth. There must be two steps in that respect. He will come for His people; He will come with His people. He will come as a thief silently and secretly; He will come as the lightning seen by all. He will come as the morning star. In the dark of the night, the morning star breaks forth to those who watch for it. Our Lord will come in the first phase at the rapture as the morning star, and then after the darkness of the tribulation period. He will come as the rising sun to rule and reign over the earth. At the first phase of His coming, the saved will meet Him in the air and, presumably return with Him to the Father's house. At the second phase of His coming the saved remain on earth and enter the Kingdom in their natural bodies.

At the first phase or step, the saved are taken out from among the wicked; at the second phase, the wicked are taken from among the saved and told to depart into everlasting punishment. The first phase of His coming is imminent and signless; the second phase is preceded by definite signs. So, I believe that the rapture will be before the tribulation because the second coming will be in two phases.

II. The rapture will be before the tribulation because of the inspired outline of the book of Revelation. Now, you will never understand the book of Revelation until you learn Revelation 1:19, and outline the book by that verse. The Apostle is told to "Write the things which thou hast seen..." --chapter one, the vision of the glorified Christ. Then he is to write "the things that are" --chapters two and three--the messages to the churches. Then he is to write the "things that shall be hereafter" --chapters 4-18. "Hereafter" is from the Greek phrase meaning "after these things."

After chapters two and three telling about the things that are now going on--about the church age, we learn that 4:1 reveals to us that the rest of the book will tell us about things that shall be--not just hereafter; but "after these things"--the things that are now going on. After the age when God is dealing with and working through His true

churches--after the churches of the Lord have ceased on earth with the rapture of the saved, the things from chapter 4:1 to the end of the book will begin to take place.

The tribulation is described in Revelation 6-19, and the Holy Spirit in the inspired outline of

the book in 1:19 has clearly revealed to us that not one seal will be opened, not one trumpet will be blown, not one vial will be poured out until after these things that are now going on: until after the church age has ceased with the rapture of the saints of God. (Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

## FROM THE EDITOR

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8).

Two issues back I dealt with the fact that one does not have to believe in the five doctrines of grace in order to be saved. Last issue I dealt with the fact that one does not have to be a Baptist in order to be saved. I believe the doctrines of grace. I believe that everyone who is saved should be a Baptist. I rejoice in these truths. I preach them strongly and frequently. However, it has become a source of great grief to me that some men (thank God, they are few in number) are teaching that the afore mentioned things are essential to salvation. I stand most adamantly against any such heresy - and it is terrible heresy.

I said in the last issue that a man who preached that one must be a Baptist, or become one before he dies, or he is not saved - that, that man is not a true Baptist. I said that if a church accepted and stood for such teaching, that church was not a true church. I invited comments on this position from our readers. I have been thinking this matter over carefully. I feel that this statement might get me in trouble with some of our readers. I considered leaving it out of that editorial. I considered changing my stand on this, and retracting and apologizing for that statement. I know a few of our readers might be offended by such a statement.

However, thinking about this matter led to this question, "Which doctrines are essential to being a true church and which are not?" Well, that is a very involved and difficult question. I am sure that, since the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, there are certainly doctrines that are necessary to a church being a true church. I am also sure that a true church can cease to be such by receiving and teaching some false doctrines; but which ones is the question. I am willing to state some doctrines that I believe are such, and have done so in the past.

How about this doctrine that one must be, or become before death, a Baptist or he is not saved? Is this a false doctrine that will cause a church to not be a church? Brothers, please tell me what doctrine is more important that the gospel of Jesus Christ. I Corinthians, informs us that the saving gospel of Jesus Christ is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (15:1-3). Verse 3 tells us that one is saved by this gospel. To add anything to this gospel, or to take anything away from it is to pervert it and to preach another gospel which is under the curse of God.

The Campbellites add baptism to this gospel and are under the curse of God. Full Arminians, add works to this gospel and are under the curse. I do not say that none of these are saved, but neither would I recognize them as true churches. Now, to my great sorrow, I learn that some so-called Baptists are adding "be or become a Baptist" to this gospel. Again, I do not say that these are not saved, but neither do I recognize them as true Baptists or as true churches. If perverting the gospel will not disqualify one from being a true Baptist or a true church, I wonder if anything will.

Again, what doctrine is more important than the gospel? These Bapto-Campbellites (I forget who coined this very descriptive term) surely mutilate the glorious and saving gospel of the Word of God by adding to it what the Lord does not. I am willing to take the position that men who teach this are not true Baptists, and churches who adopt, believe, and preach such doctrines are not true churches. Church, if your pastor teaches this, get rid of him. He is a heretic on a most important subject. Get rid of him before his heresy influences and infects you. Church, if you adopt this teaching of such a preacher, allow it to be preached in your pulpit, take it as your position; you will cease to be a church.

There are other false doctrines that will keep a church from being a true church or cause a true church to cease to be one. Surely, since salvation is the most import thing in time and eternity, and since the gospel is essential to salvation, surely perverting the gospel will cause a church to not ever be, or cease to be a true church. Surely, to teach that one must be, or become, a Baptist or he is not saved, is to pervert the gospel.

I welcome comments as to this matter. I fear that I may offend some by this. However, I consider the matter so important as to justify offending a few (thank God, only a few) in order to strongly set this forth. I would really like to hear from my brethren as to their opinion concerning what I have written here.

While I am at it, let me add that I feel the same way about the position that one must believe the doctrines of grace or he is not saved. I addressed this issue two issues back, but did not then make this statement concerning such. I make it now. Those who teach this have so perverted the gospel that I do not recognize them as true churches. Thank God that I do not, as of now, know any of our (professed) kind who do this.

Brethren, the gospel is so very important. Let us preach it boldly and frequently. Let us give the gospel to all we can. Let us not add to or take from this glorious and saving gospel. The gospel is: Who Jesus is and what Jesus did. The gospel is, Believe on this Jesus and trust what He did for your eternal salvation, and you will be eternally saved. Brethren, let us preach all of the five doctrines of grace strongly and boldly. Let us preach the Lord's church, and saved people's responsibility thereto. But let us not so mingle these truths with the saving gospel of Christ as to pervert that gospel. Let us rightly divide the Word of truth. God bless you.



## WHY

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I am fully satisfied that the open door of 4:1 is a pre-figure of the rapture of the children of God. You see, the seven years of Tribulation are between two open doors in Revelation. In 4:1, a door is opened that the saved of all previous ages might go through and hide themselves until the indignation be past--until the wrath of God has been poured out in tribulation. In 19:11, the door is opened again, and the Lord comes forth with, I believe, His bride as His army, riding with Him as a sort of cheering squad, cheering Him on as He defeats the armies of Anti-Christ at the battle of Armageddon. I insist that no man can have a proper understanding of the book of Revelation without seeing that the rapture is before the tribulation.

III. The rapture will be before the tribulation because this is the only view that leaves room for God's prophesied dealing with Israel. God is not through with Israel. They are His chosen earthly people. He has much yet to do with them. Those who hold to the mid or post-tribulation view must do so at the expense of God's dealing with Israel. This is the church age. Before the earthly ministry of Christ, there were no churches. He who finds a church in the Old Testament must first put it there. After the rapture there will be no true churches. In this age God is dealing with the world through His churches. When the rapture takes place, (and it's not the rapture of the church, it's the rapture of the saints), then God will begin again to deal with Israel. The tribulation is pre-eminently the day of Jacob's trouble. You look in Revelation and read chapters 6-19 which describe the tribulation, and you will find that there is no longer a true church on the earth. You will find that God is dealing with and through Israel. You will find two witnesses. You will find 144,000 Jews. You will find a woman clothed with the sun and the moon and stars under her feet. This woman is the nation Israel who brought forth the man-child that is one day to rule the nations with a rod of iron. God is through with the church age. He is dealing with Israel, and bringing them through that last awful fiery furnace of the Great Tribulation, before bringing them into the glory of His millennial reign. Now the post-trib does not leave room in his prophetic schedule for God's prophesied dealings with Israel.

IV. The rapture will be before the tribulation because there is not one reference in the Bible to a true church in the tribulation. I challenge you to find me one verse. Read the verses in the Bible that deal with the tribulation and find me one of the Lord's true churches. Read Revelation again. The churches are in chapter one. They are in chapters two and three. But, praise God, they are gone while the wrath of God is poured out and we see them no more until we see faithful members of true churches married to the Lord at the marriage of the Lamb. Why is it that those who are so anxious to have the Lord's churches in part or all of the tribulation cannot find one verse in all the Word of God that shows a true church in the tribulation?

The pre-tribulation rapture

provides for the beginning of the Great Tribulation in Revelation six rather than chapter eleven. The Mid-trib says that the rapture will take place at the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11, and that the seventh trumpet will be the beginning of the Great Tribulation. He says that previous to the seventh trumpet, we have not been in the Great Tribulation. But, previous to that, the seals have been opened, one-half of the world's population has been killed, the sea partly turned to blood, a third of the green things on the earth burned up, the sun and moon darkened for a third of the day and night, hellish locusts have come on the earth and caused men to seek for death and could not find it, two hundred million hellish horsemen have ridden across the earth--all of this before the seventh trumpet. Surely the world is in the Great Tribulation long before Revelation 11 and surely, the seventh trumpet marks a point near the end of the Great Tribulation and not its beginning. The seventh trumpet contains or consists of the seven vials of wrath which wind up the Great Tribulation. I personally believe that the Great Tribulation will begin with the rider on the red horse under the second seal.

V. The rapture will be before the tribulation because this view leaves time for the providing of saved people with their natural bodies with which to begin the millennium. Hear me out! The Post-trib says that the rapture will take place after the tribulation. All the saved will be glorified, caught up to meet the Lord--up and right back, and then the millennial reign. Now, listen carefully: the Bible is very clear that we must have saved people in their natural bodies with which to start the kingdom. When our Lord comes in His glory to start the kingdom, He gathers all nations before Him in judgment. The unsaved are turned into everlasting punishments and the saved who have been kept alive by the power of God through the tribulation, will enter into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. This must be true because, in the kingdom, there are those who marry and have children, build homes and raise gardens. Some of their descendants will join Satan in the rebellion that follows the millennium. Now, where can the Post-tribulationist find saved people in their natural bodies with which to start the kingdom, when he teaches that all the saved are glorified and raptured just prior to the beginning of the kingdom?

VI. The rapture will be before the tribulation because this is the only view that allows time for some events that must take place previous to the coming of our Lord at Armageddon and yet after the rapture. Following the rapture, the saved must appear before the judgment seat of Christ that they might receive reward for the things they have done for the Lord, or suffer loss of reward. The Post-trib has no place in his prophetic program for the judgment seat of Christ for believers. We must have time following the rapture and preceding the battle of Armageddon for that glorious wedding in heaven. That time when those who have been loyal, faithful members of true churches of Christ, (sound missionary Baptist churches, if you please) will walk down the aisle of glory to be married to the Lord Jesus

Christ. We must have time for that wedding before that crowd gets on their white horses and comes with their Bridegroom to the battle of Armageddon. The Post-trib leaves us without time for the judgment seat of Christ and the marriage of the Lamb.

VII. The rapture will be before the tribulation because the restrainer of II Thessalonians 2:7-8 is the Holy Spirit in His ministry in the Lord's true churches. Satan is endeavoring to bring upon the scene of human history, his false Christ--his superman, but there is one that is restraining this until the appointed time. This restrainer must be a Divine Person. Now some tell us that the proper rendering of verse seven is "until out of the midst he be." And that the "he" is the anti-Christ. Be that as it may, there is still a Divine Person hindering who will continue to hinder until, the appointed time of anti-Christ's coming. Use all the Greek you desire, and you cannot get Post-trib out of this passage. The restrainer is the Holy Spirit in His ministry in true churches, and when true churches cease with the rapture of all believers, then and not until then, will the tribulation begin.

VIII. The rapture will be before the tribulation because of the possible, and even probable meaning of II Thessalonians 2:3. That day--that day of the Lord--that day of God's wrath upon the earth, shall not come except there come a falling away first. Now, the words "falling away" is a Greek word that in and of itself means "departure." It may mean a departure from the faith, but when it does it has the qualifying words so defining it. It also may mean a physical departure from one place to another. The definite article "the" is used in the Greek. This definite article is used to specify and identify. So I give you the probable, and I believe the true meaning of this verse--that day will not come unless the departure of the saved from earth to heaven in the rapture (the departure I told you about in the first letter I wrote you) come first. This is worthy of your careful study. It is a meaning fully warranted, if not demanded by the Greek.

IX. Then, beloved friends, I say to you, that the rapture will be before the tribulation, because the Bible teaches--and, O, my soul, if Scripture teaches anything about the coming of the Lord--it teaches the imminency of His coming. It is utterly impossible for the Mid or Post-tribulationist to say that the Lord may come now. That He could come at any time--that we should be looking for Him from now until He does come. I am looking for Him. I am longing for Him. Praise God, He may come at any time. I insist that, if the Bible teaches anything about the coming of the Lord, it teaches that He may come at anytime. I. M. Haldeman (some things he did not know much about) but, oh, how he could preach the second coming. Never have I heard or read sermons on the second coming like those of Haldeman. He said that the second coming of Christ is so imminent that, if a man should read the Bible through for the first time, he would close the Book and look up, expecting that the Lord might come just then. Our Blessed Lord many times in the Bible has told us that He was coming again. As He drew near the end

of the Bible, and was about ready to close the Book, and never again would there be an inspired Word from God, He said, wait a minute John, I want you to tell them one more time before you close the Book, that "Behold, I come quickly." And John--old, persecuted and despised of man, having seen the glories of the other world--said, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." No, the Post and Mid-trib cannot agree with John in this prayer. They cannot have that burning desire of John for the coming of the Lord, for they say that He cannot come for 3-1/2 years or for 7 years. They say that we cannot be waiting for Jesus, but we are waiting for death or for the tribulation or for the anti-Christ. They must say that we have got to go into the tribulation, where most of the saints of that day will die as martyrs, that we must go through half or all of that awful time, and then if we live through that, we will go in the rapture. How on earth can we comfort one another with words like that--with a theology like that?

Now, beloved friends, you might say that there are a few things in the Bible that contradict imminency. I say that first, those things were contingent upon the well established doctrine of imminency, and second, that they have long since passed and are of no force today. Our Lord tells us to be watching, longing, loving, and ready for His appearing. The Biblical commanded attitude toward the coming of the Lord, which tells us to "be ready" proves imminency. Don't you dare say that our Lord delays His coming until the middle or the end of the tribulation. Don't you say that. You watch and look and be ready, and be longing for that day--that glad day--that glorious day when we will go to meet our Lord in the air. That is the Biblical commanded attitude for the believer.

The Biblical attitude of early believers shows the imminency of His coming. They were waiting for the Son (I Cor. 1:7). They were not waiting for the tribulation nor the anti-Christ. I Corinthians 15:51 speaks of "we which are alive" shall be changed in a moment at His coming. Maybe I will be in that group which will be alive at His coming. In every day since I Corinthians 15:51 was written, God's children could read it and know that they might be alive at His coming. Philippians 3:20 tells us that we are citizens of heaven, not of this earth only, and that we are looking for the Lord Jesus Who will change our vile bodies like unto His own glorious body. I Thessalonians 4:13-18 tells us of that glad and happy day--that day of all days--and speaks of "we which are alive and remain." Oh, beloved, the second coming of Christ is imminent. We may not be here next year, we may be having a better Bible Conference yonder in glory.

Now, listen, the Mid-tribulationist can set a date for the Lord's coming. He can say that when the anti-Christ is revealed through making the covenant with Israel, that it will be three and one-half years until the rapture. The Post-trib can set a date. He can say when Antichrist is revealed through his covenant with Israel that it will be seven years until the rapture. But the Bible absolutely forbids the set-

ting of a date in this respect and says, "ye know not the day or the hour."

The Bible sets forth the rapture as the Blessed Hope. It is the hope that makes us happy. Midst the toil, strife, and trouble of this life where there is so little to bring joy to our hearts, the hope of the soon coming of our Lord brings great joy. The Bible presents the rapture as the comforting hope. When the tears flow, when sorrows come, when we lay a saved one in the grave and go back home without that one--this is the hope that comforts our hearts in that dark hour. Our Lord may come at any time and our loved one be raised and we be changed and caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. Yonder in Big Stone Gap, Virginia is a graveyard, and in it there is a grave and a gravestone. On that stone is the picture and name of my eldest son. How many times have I stood by that grave and read I Thessalonians 4:13-18, and comforted my aching heart with those precious words. The Bible presents this as the purifying hope. This hope will help you to live right. You believe and practice the imminent coming of the Lord and you will live clean and pure. There are places you will not go and things you will not do. You will purify yourself even as He is pure.

Now, for the doctrine of the rapture to have its three-fold effect of blessing, comforting and purifying, we must believe that it may occur at any time. An event that cannot happen for three and one-half years or for seven years or for 1,000 years cannot have immediate effect upon my heart and life. The rapture will take place before the seals, the trumpets, or the vials of wrath. It will take place before the tribulation. May God bless you.

## UNIONIZE

(Continued from Page 1)

by whom these ordinances should be administered -- then all who disagree with them are wrong. But if Baptists are wrong about these things, they should give up their contentions and join those who believe otherwise. The maintaining of a separate denomination is not only confusing, but sinful, if there are no convictions which demand that separation.

Baptists are constantly being urged, by people outside their denomination and by some inside, to join with other denominations in organic union or at least in programs of work. These programs of work usually center in evangelism. Baptists are asked to join with others in "saving souls."

But it is on this point that Baptists have historically been in conflict with others. They have been in conflict of views with others, not only on the saving experience itself but also upon the doctrinal message of that experience. In I Cor. 1:10, Gal. 1:6-9, perhaps in Acts 19:1-7 and likely in other places, the Bible seems very insistent on agreement in how we preach the message of salvation. Surely on this important doctrine, the Lord did not ordain the confusion so obvious in modern denomina-

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# The Baptist Examiner Forum I

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

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

Did the Holy Spirit indwell Old Testament saints?

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The answer to this question is, yes. We do need, however, to observe and consider some facts concerning the indwelling of O.T. saints in comparison to the indwelling of saints in the N.T. for there are some important differences. That the Holy Spirit indwelt some O.T. individuals, is adequately noted in many places. Some examples are: Othniel (Judges 3:10), Gideon (Judges 6:34), Samson (Judges 13:25), Saul (1 Samuel 10:9-10), David, and Daniel. These and other individuals were indwelt by the Holy Spirit and were distinctly recognized as having the Spirit of God in them. The Holy Spirit revealed, enabled, empowered, and otherwise worked God the Father's ultimate plan and purpose in and through those sovereignly chosen by God.

The Holy Spirit does the same to many of the human race today, but with some important differences. First, all believers in this age (church age) are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God at the moment of regeneration. (I Corinthians 1:21-22) Each believer remains indwelt from then to the end of his or her earthly life. (Romans 8:9) While God sovereignly chose some O.T. saints to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, this does not appear to be universal among all O.T. saints as is indwelling today. Only a few in the O.T. were indwelt and these were not only known for the Spirit's presence, but they were usually leaders, prophets, or given some specific work to accomplish. Secondly, and perhaps the most distinct difference between O.T. and N.T. indwelling, is the fact that in the O.T. this condition was only temporary and the Spirit could be taken away. That can never happen to God's children today, but it could and did in the O.T. times. God sovereignly gave and He sovereignly took again the Holy Spirit from some. Samson's sinful delusions brought him to the place of God the Spirit's departing from him (Judges 16:20). Explicitly we are told that the Spirit left Saul in 1 Samuel 16:14, "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him." I believe that David was perhaps aware of this after his sin with Bathsheba when he prayed, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11 indwelling of the Spirit was for a specific purpose

and of varying duration in the O.T., unlike the fulness of the Spirit that Jesus spoke about in John 7:38, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John then clearly states that this continuing state had not come at that time as yet. "(But this stake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" (John 7:39) Therefore, I believe that while we can say the Holy Spirit indwelt some O.T. individuals there are some vast differences in the indwelling found in the O.T. and that found in the N.T. May we each seek to be filled, more yielded, to the Holy Spirit of God in us and less occupied with the spirit of this world.

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Genesis 41:38: "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" I believe this verse teaches that the Holy Spirit did indeed indwell Joseph. Let me make this comment and then move on. I believe if the Holy Spirit indwelt one Old Testament believer, He indwelt them all. Now let us look at this question more closely.

I will be the first to admit that there are some strong arguments on the side of the Holy Spirit not indwelling Old Testament believers. I think the evidence however is stronger to support the fact that the Holy Spirit did indwell Old Testament believers. I would not be fair if I did not mention John 7:39: "(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" My explanation to this verse and others that refer to the Comforter coming is that these promise apply to the church and not to the individual believers. I know the verse says "they that believe..." but you must remember that in those days all believers became immediately baptized church members. We also know that the Holy Spirit did indeed come upon the church after the death of Christ and after He had ascended to glory. We see this happen on Pentecost. So long as Jesus was with the church, they had no need of the Holy Spirit as comforter or teacher as Jesus filled those rolls. After Christ's death, the Holy Spirit came to the church in the

capacity that Jesus had served earlier.

Let me mention here the belief of those who do not believe the Holy Spirit indwelt Old Testament believers. They do not leave the Holy Spirit out of the believer's life completely; they believe that the Holy Spirit came upon people in a mighty way and then would leave them. Samson serves as a good example of this. I do not believe this to be true. I believe there were times when the Spirit came upon men in a mighty way, but I also believe the Holy Spirit always indwelt these O.T. saints. I also know that those who disagree with this like to use Psalms 51:11. I do not think this refers to the indwelling of the Spirit but to a special relationship with Him.

Let me give a few verses to study that I believe prove the Holy Spirit did indeed indwell Old Testament believers. Genesis 41:38; Exodus 31:3; Numbers 11:17; 27:18; Nehemiah 9:30; Isa. 63; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; Ezekiel 36:26,27; I. Peter 1:11. Let me conclude by giving you the major reason that I believe O.T. saints were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. That reason is the assurance of salvation. This is known by the Spirit bearing witness with our Spirit. I believe beyond any shadow of a doubt that David and Job and others had assurance of their salvation. I believe this assurance came from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. May God bless you all.

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"AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezael -- And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Ex. 31:3). "I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee." (Num. 11:17). "And the LORD said unto Moses. Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him" (Num. 27:18).

These passages of Scripture, as well as other passages which could be quoted, show that the Holy Spirit worked with and was in the saints of the Old Testament. But did He indwell or abide continually in them? Looking at the record of Samson as given in Judges we find it said that the Spirit came upon him at different times as the need arose, indicating that He did not indwell him. "And the Spirit of the

LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan..." (13:25). In 14:6 and 15:14 it is said, "the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him." After Delilah had his hair cut off it is said, "And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him" (16:20).

In the account given of Gideon, "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, the LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:12). But when Israel was ready to go into battle, it is said, "But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet;" (Jud. 6:34).

It seems to me, that while the Spirit led and was in control of the lives of the saints of the Old Testament, yet He did not indwell them as He does the saints today. I believe this to be brought out in what Christ said to His disciples just before He went to the cross when He said, "And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16). This would indicate that the abiding of the Spirit with the saints for ever began only after the death of Christ.

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Allow me to begin by offering without doubt, that the Holy Spirit did in fact, dwell and abide in the Old Testament saints as He does in us today. Though you will not find many Scriptures in the Old Testament that specifically say this, there are many that imply this truth. Along with Psalms 51:11, may I cite Isaiah 63:7:14. For lack of space we shall not quote the whole passage. However, notice the tenth and eleventh verses as you read. "But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit:..." (v. 10). "Where is he that puts his Holy Spirit within him?" (v. 11). This whole passage talks about his indwelling, His leadership, his comforting, conviction, and even the fact that they grieved him. All of these are characteristics of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Now comparing this with Isaiah 59:19-21 you will find the same characteristics implied. In Genesis 41:38, God revealed to the King of Egypt that the Spirit of God dwelt in Joseph.

Of course the Holy Spirit manifested Himself differently under the Old Covenant than He does under the New Covenant. But this also holds true with the Father and the Son. God the Father does not manifest Himself in the same mighty work today as He did then. The Son, (Word) does not speak to us as He did the prophets, nor does the Holy Spirit work now in the same manner as He did then. On the other hand some things continue as they were, regardless of the New Covenant. One of these unchangeable things is the Holy Spirit's work in salvation. If we are to say that the Old Testament saints were saved by the

sovereign grace of God through faith in the work of the Son, then we must include the essential work of the Holy Spirit. I do not find any of the New Testament writers making any distinctions between the salvation of Old Testament saints and New Testament saints. As a matter of fact, the faith of Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and host of other Old Testament saints is mentioned in the New Testament to harmonize their faith with our faith. Did not the Spirit bear witness with their spirit as He does with us that they were the sons of God? (Rom. 8:16). Were not they made free from the law of sin and death by the selfsame Spirit of life as we are? (Rom. 8:2). "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Paul continues in verse nine to tell us that if a man does not have the Spirit of Christ in him, that person is not His child. If the Holy Spirit was merely an external force under the Old Testament then either they had a different kind of salvation or they were not really saved at all. Both of these, of course, are absurd. Salvation was then and is now the same. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." If the Holy Spirit was merely an external force under the Old Testament then how could the fruit of the Spirit be manifest in them? How could they produce the fruits of righteousness? I believe that David's plea to God in Psalms 51:11 was out of great fear of what he thought God might do because he had vexed the Spirit by his awful sin. Perhaps (and I think so) we could stray from God and quench the Spirit to such an extent that we might feel that he has left us. Then in great fear as the Holy Spirit lovingly chastens us we may cry out, "Cast me not away from thy presence: And take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Thank you for your question.

## UNIONIZE

(Continued from Page 3)

For example, if one group preaches that we are saved by "repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," which we commonly call "salvation by grace;" if another group preaches that we are saved wholly or in part by water baptism; if still another group preaches that we are saved by faith in Christ, but that we may be lost if we do not live a faithful, obedient life with much good works; if still another group adds to faith or substitutes for faith ceremonial obedience, church membership or any other act of merit on the part of the sinner; how can we all preach together in good conscience to save

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

Elder Sam Wilson will be in revival services with the New Testament Baptist Church near Bristol, Tenn. June 12-17. Services will be at 7:00 nightly and at regular times on Sunday. Elder Dan Phillips is the church pastor. Two great preachers will be working together. Attend this meeting if you can. Pray for it. For further information contact Dan at (615) 764-3771 or (615) 323-3281 (church).



# The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

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

Are there any signs of the times for the rapture?

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"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3). Although the word rapture is not recorded in the Bible, it has become the synonym for the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. It is recorded in the dictionary and means a carrying away or being carried away in body or spirit. This is exactly what will happen when Christ returns; His people will be carried away. To enable us to know when this event will take place, He has provided us with signs. The signs that have been provided point, not to an exact calculated time, but a space of time when the signs that have been given converge together and make any time after that convergence acceptable for Him to return. Some of those signs follow.

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you" (Mt. 24:4). He speaks here about a time of deception upon the earth relative to His second coming. He says that many will come and use the name of Christ to deceive. Men will cover themselves in a cloak of religion with their ultimate goal being the deception of those to whom they speak. One of the principal ways that these men will be able to deceive is as to the time that Christ will return. They will try to predict the exact time of His return, and in so doing will deceive many. They will proclaim Christ with their mouths, but their hearts will be far from Him.

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet" (Mt. 24:6). Nations will rise up against nations, kingdoms will be against kingdoms, and men will be against men. Is not this a mirror image of the days in which we live? Everyday the newspapers abound with threats and the violence all over the world. Men continually say that they want to have peace, yet there is no peace. He says that there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. Famines relate to hunger, and a large portion of the world is in hunger. The threat of famine grows everyday. The pestilences relate to illness. How many different incurable illnesses do we hear about everyday? How many are there for which there are no

cures? Men are afraid to admit that these things are sent from God. And then there are the earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, etc. Earthquakes have been recorded lately in places that have never known to have earthquakes.

Then, there are the times that are like unto the times of Noah. "But as the days of Noe were so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Mt. 24:37). They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Man lives today for pleasure, and nothing else interests him. This is what happened to the people of Noah's day; their concerns were not with what was going to happen; their only concern was for right now; live for the day and don't worry about tomorrow.

Finally, there will be a falling away. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;" (II Thes. 2:3). The word falling is from the Greek word APOSTASIA and means a revolt or a defection from the truth. The falling away will be by the people of God, because the lost have nothing from which to fall. Look around and count the number of sound people that once filled our churches. They are no longer there, but have been tossed to and fro by every whim of doctrine. They have fallen from the truth and are in revolt and defection.

Signs, yes, there are signs that we may know that the rapture is coming. Will we heed those signs? "We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long" (Ps 74:9). The signs tell us that the time is now. Now is the time for the people of God to reply even as John replied: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20).

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Yes, Paul warns us of these last days in II Timothy 3:1, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." As I look back through history, I don't know any period of time that could be more reckless and dangerous than the time in which we live other the period before the great flood, or Sodom and Gomorrah. Our air and water is filled with poison gases and filth. It is just a matter of time until it will get us, and make us sick and lead perhaps to a slow death.

Vs. 2 says, "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." Beloved, this pretty well covers our time, or these last days. Men are so in love with themselves, they have no regard for life. Unborn babies are permitted to be killed, and protected by law. People killing each other without any feeling of remorse, and given a light sentence. People are more covetous now than any other time. Our government is robbing the people of everything it can get, then they vote to give themselves a raise while many of the people hardly have anything to eat or wear. Many dope-heads and drunks are living on welfare, too sorry, and too lazy to work. There are more robberies than there have been in the past. I hear now that ladies are putting on masks and robbing banks and businesses. Hey! did you ever hear so much boasting from our leaders in Government. Now preachers are boasting about their large Sunday Schools brought in by their buses. Today you see much pride; those who will brag on themselves and what they have of this world's goods, how much they have accomplished by doing thus and so. Paul said, I am what I am by the grace of God. Beloved, if we have been blessed in this life, we should give God the glory.

Men today, led by Satan himself, have blasphemed God more in these last days than probably any other time. They have taken the Bible out of School. Teachers or children are not permitted to pray in Schools. In fact, we are to keep God and prayer out of Government all together. It is all right to use God's name in vain on radio and television. Even the news media sometimes blasphememes God. By taking Bible and prayer out of school and teaching Humanism in it's place, our children are disobedient to parents. They are unholy, unthankful for everything believing the world owes them a living. I hope that I have helped.

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I believe one of the most significant signs has come just recently in the changes that have taken place in the policies of the communist party in Russia. Their peaceful cooperation with people wanting independence is a sign of the times of the 2nd coming of Christ. When the Lord returns again the faithful will be taken up in great ecstasy; those that have died in faith shall be raised in glorified bodies. Then comes great tribulation upon the

earth. This tribulation will be ushered in by the horseman of the Apocalypse; the first riding upon a white horse (Rev.8:1,2). The rider is not Christ, but Satan's man imitating Christ. The interesting thing about the rider on the white horse is that he goes forth conquering without making war; because peace is taken away and war comes with the second horse going forth, not the first (see vv.3,4). The rider on the first horse has a bow, but no arrows are mentioned. He is putting up a front. He conquers through diplomacy. When the treaties and alliances he makes on lies and under false pretenses fail, war breaks out. I believe the action and the new policies of the Communist party in Russia are only a front, and a foreview of the kind of activities and policies that will usher in the tribulation period.

Remember the words of the Apostle Paul. "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

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We are admonished in the Scripture to watch and pray concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:42). What does it mean for us to watch here in this place? I would think that it means we are to watch how we live before our fellow man and before the all-seeing eyes of the Lord. We are to live lives that are pleasing unto the Lord so that we may be rewarded when we come into the presence of our Saviour on that day when we shall be judged for the deeds done in the body.

We are to also watch for the fulfillment of prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus both in the Old Testament and in the New. There are many prophecies concerning the end time. A close study of the Word of God will reveal to the student of God's Word that we are living in the last days.

Christ said, "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man" (Luke 17:26). Men are living as they were in the days of Noah. The world today is filled with pleasure seekers. There is marrying and giving in marriage. The world is filled with the same kind of wicked sinners that lived in Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities around them that were destroyed when God rained down fire and brimstone.

"And as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3). We notice that

the disciples ask three questions. One of the questions was, "....what shall be the sign of thy coming..."

Let us take notice of the word "sign." Jesus did not upbraid them for asking that question. They had good reasons for the question. There are numbers of Scriptures which speak of the second coming of Christ. I can believe that the disciples were interested in the destruction of the temple and as to how it would come about. I also believe, that they were interested in Christ return to this earth the second time. They believed that the world was coming to an end. Christ answered their questions. He knew that they were concerned about Him, He knew their love for Him. The answer Christ gave in verses 36-44, is surely referring to the second advent. I believe that verse 36 refers to the second coming of Christ. If all the preceding verses have reference to the destruction of the temple and the destroying of many of the Jews and the scattering of the remnant of them to all parts of the world, how is it that Christ did not know when this destruction would come? How is it that the angels did not know when this destruction on the temple and the Jews would come? I believe even the angels knew this, but I do not believe that they know when Christ is coming the second time.

Christ admonishes His disciples to watch, to be ready, to pray. May we be found doing those things that would please the Lord when He comes for His saints. Let us learn to look for Him. Let us learn to love His appearing more. Let us learn what Christ meant when He said, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37). Let us also learn what Christ said about Lot and his days in Sodom, and remember Lot's wife.

## UNIONIZE

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the lost? On such a vital matter, how can Baptists join with those who deny their faith and yet be true to their own convictions?

Furthermore, how can a Baptist be true to his faith and advise new converts to unite with any church other than that kind which preaches his own faith? The following account may serve to give us light on this matter.

Once a pastor in another denomination was urging all of "us pastors" in our town to "get together" in our evangelistic meetings, to attend and help each other.

I addressed this question to him: "Would you accept me, just as I am, as a member of your church?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"Would you accept all the members of our church on the same basis," I asked.

"Yes, siree!" he replied with emphasis.

"Well, what is wrong with us?" I asked.

"Why, nothing," he replied, "except that you people hold yourselves aloof and will not join with the rest of us in the work of the Lord."

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## STUDIES IN ACTS

"And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus" (Acts 9:8). God, according to Acts 22:11, used the shining light from heaven to blind Saul. The light obviously affected the optic nerve and caused the blindness. I'm told that such an effect from a bright light is not uncommon. Some, in fact, who have looked at the sun during an eclipse, have been totally blinded. The fact that Saul was led by the hand on into Damascus indicates that they were somewhere near the city limits when he was struck down. I understand, in fact, that a place is marked where it is said that Saul was struck down.

"And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat or drink" (Acts 9:9). This is quite a contrast to Acts 9:1 where we are informed that he was "...breathing out threatenings and slaughter..." He, in fact, had just seen Jesus of Nazareth and had spent three days meditating on the person he saw. That glorious person, no doubt, was before him during that period of darkness. He, in fact, continued in prayer to Him during that period (Acts 9:11). Saul, during those three days, did not eat one bite of food or drink one drop of water. He was in total meditation and prayer regarding where he had been in life, where he was, and how he would live in the future. His concentration, during those three days, was not broken by sight, eating, or drinking.

"And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord" (Acts 9:10). Ananias, according to verse 13, was well acquainted with Saul and his action against the Lord's church at Jerusalem. It is obvious that Ananias knew all about the Lord's church at Jerusalem and was probably there on the day of Pentecost. He, no doubt, was a member of that body since, according to Acts 2:41, about three thousand souls were added to the church on that day. We know from Acts 2:9-11 that people were there from all over that known world. Ananias, in fact, as was true of Peter down in Samaria, was used as a means for Saul to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). Ananias, it is said, was a "disciple," or follower, of Jesus Christ. He had believed on Him as the Messiah - his Saviour - and followed Him by being baptized into the Lord's church.

The Lord Jesus communicated His will to Ananias by way of a vision, and Ananias was quick to respond. He, in fact, said, "...Behold, I am here, Lord." His words show that Jesus Christ was his commander and that he would follow Him to the end of the earth.

"And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth" (Acts

9:11). The street called "Straight" extends for a distance of about three miles in Damascus from the eastern to the western gate. The street called "Straight" not only crosses the city proper but the suburbs too. There is a house near the eastern gate which is said to have belonged to Judas -- the house where Saul lodged. There is a small closet in the house where it is said that Saul resided during his three days of blindness. I understand that there is a fountain on Straight Street where it is said that the water was used to baptize Saul. Christians drink of the fountain in remembrance of the baptism of Saul. We, of course, know that he was immersed, since the word "baptize,"



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in the Greek, means to dip, plunge, or immerse. All Greek scholars, without exception, concur with this meaning.

"And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight" (Acts 9:12). The future work assigned to Saul was so great that God worked in his life so that there was no room left for doubt. Our Lord went so far as to give Saul a vision of Ananias and even advise him in advance regarding his name.

"Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name" (Acts 9:13, 14). It is not up to us to say who the Lord will add to our ranks. He may add the worst person in town or in the country. His blood, after all, cleanses from all sin, no matter how great those sins may be. The oceans cover hills and mountains, and the blood of Jesus Christ covers large as well as small sins. Ananias was very concerned about meeting up with Saul of Tarsus since he had been very evil and had authority. An evil man without authority is not nearly as bad as an evil man with authority.

"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Saul had been working for the Sanhedrin, but he was now working for God. He, in fact, was to harvest Gentiles, kings, and Jews, his main responsibility being to harvest Gentiles. Ananias, therefore, was to go to Saul without any hesitation. He was to meet him one on one rather than take some armed men with him. Saul, at this time, could most certainly have sung from his heart, "Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." "For I will show him how great things

he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). This statement was made to Ananias so as to still his fears about approaching Saul of Tarsus -- the vicious wolf. God, in effect, said to Ananias, "It is he who will suffer for me from here on. He made others suffer, but he will be the receiver of suffering from here on; don't be afraid to approach him and do as I have said."

"And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:17).

Ananias, according to Acts 9:13, had "...heard by many of this man, how much evil..." he had done to the Lord's saints in Jerusalem. He, therefore, humanly speaking, needed to be severely punished for his crimes. He, in fact, was an enemy of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. He was not a moderate enemy but a vicious enemy.

Ananias, in spite of all he knew about Saul of Tarsus, still obeyed his Lord. Saul had come to bind Ananias and all those like him and take them back to Jerusalem to be tried and sentenced. Ananias, even though he knew such to be true, proceeded on the basis of his Lord's command to go to the aid of Saul. It is possible that some begged Ananias not to go, but he had the utmost faith in the Word of his Lord. Ananias even called Saul "brother." They say one can't make a silk purse from a sow's ear, but God did so with Saul. The blood of Jesus Christ covered Saul's scarlet sins so that he was made as white and clean as the driven snow. All his sin in Jesus Christ had been nailed to the tree. God had no further charge against him. Ananias was compelled to say, in essence, "if God is for him, then I can't be against him."

Saul then was filled with the Holy Spirit. We will observe, as we trace his life through this book, what it meant for him to be filled with the Spirit. We, in fact, will observe as the Spirit influences his thoughts and actions.

"And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized" (Acts 9:18). This Scripture does not say that scales fell from his eyes, but that the result was as if scales had been removed from his eyes. It was a miracle that caused his blindness, and now another miracle restores his sight. Scales were not put over his eyes to cause blindness, and neither are they removed so as to restore his sight. It was only that the effect was as if scales had been removed.

He had been given three days to consider the past, present, and future. He who had begun this great work in him would finish that work. He would finish that work by filling him with God the Spirit. Saul's first act of obedience, after being filled with the Spirit, was to be baptized into the Lord's body -- the church. He, as a member of the Lord's body and filled with the Spirit, would remove mountains that had stood for centuries. He would become a

tank against an army of foot soldiers.

"And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus" (Acts 9:19). The spiritual man had already been strengthened since he had been filled with the Spirit. The physical man, by way of meat (food of all kinds), is now strengthened too. He is now equipped in body and spirit to go forth and slay the enemy with the sword of the Spirit. He, however, before moving into battle, needed to sit down with the disciples of Jesus Christ and receive instruction. God, after all, uses His disciples to instruct other disciples.

It is not said how long Paul was with the other disciples at Damascus, but it was long enough to turn his guns on the proper enemy and to educate him sufficiently for the work that lay immediately ahead of him. I'm sure that the disciples at Damascus were overjoyed because of the great opportunity which was given to them. An enemy agent, in fact, had joined their ranks -- an enemy agent who was very well versed on their enemy -- the Sanhedrin and its subjects. They, no doubt, thanked God over and over again for what He had done for them by way of Saul of Tarsus. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is one of the greatest proofs of the existence of Jesus Christ. No other power, in fact, could have made such a drastic change in a man. We know, in fact, that he did not change for wealth or fame. He joined the poor Christians.

"And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). Saul had been turned completely around. The energy he had been using against Jesus Christ, he now uses for Jesus Christ. It is said that he "straightway" preached Christ in the synagogues. Those Jews, of course, who came to hear him were greatly surprised. They thought that he was opposed to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, but they are amazed when they hear him declare Jesus to be the "Son of God."

"But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?" (Acts 9:21). Paul's past life gave him the opportunity to speak to many unbelieving Jews. They probably wanted to see Saul and hear for themselves, and they were amazed as to what they heard. The unbelievers, in a sense of speaking, scratched their heads in amazement as they heard this destroyer standing up for Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The action exercised by Saul didn't make any sense to them. All of the amazement, of course, gave Saul the opportunity to speak in behalf of Jesus, for a time, without being hindered. He, no doubt, made some great inroads before they could figure him out.

"But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ" (Acts 9:22). Saul, according to Acts 22:3, had been

brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. He, therefore, was a great scholar relative to the Old Testament. That knowledge was now used by God the Spirit to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God. His knowledge, in fact, in the hands of God the Spirit, "...confounded the Jews at Damascus..."

"And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him" (Acts 9:23). We are not informed as to how many days elapsed. We, however, are advised by Galatians 1:17, 18 that he went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. Paul reports that it was three years before he returned to Jerusalem. At that time he went to see the apostle Peter and, in fact, spent fifteen days with him. The only other apostle he saw while in Jerusalem was James, the Lord's "brother" (Galatians 1:19).

The wolf which had scattered the sheep had now become a sheep, and the other wolves were after him. The Jews, in fact, "...took counsel to kill him..." Movies of the Old West sometimes depict a mob taking counsel together to hang the prisoner. Here, in the text before us, it is the Jews who took counsel to slay Paul. He had been their best ally, but now God has turned him into a thorn in their flesh.

"But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him" (Acts 9:24). This effort by the Jews was actually an effort by Satan to dispose of Saul. Satan was well aware of Saul's assigned mission, and he was out to get him. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

The gates of Damascus were watched. The city was surrounded by a high wall so it appeared that by watching the gates, Saul would eventually be captured. It was not just a few men who were out to capture and slay Saul. It was a combined effort of the entire city. The governor of the city, in fact, had sent out a full alert for his capture. "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands" (II Corinthians 11:32-33).

"Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket" (Acts 9:25). There is a time to stand and fight, and there is a time to run. Saul had fought a good fight in Damascus. He had sown precious seed. It was now time to move on. He, therefore, was not running from a fight, but running to witness in other places. We also must know when we have said and done enough in a given area. We must always seek the guidance of God the Spirit in this area of our lives.

"And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26). Paul's

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## STUDIES IN II PETER 3:10-18

by C.T. Everman

(3:10) "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

In verses 8 and 9 the apostle Peter had explained why the Lord had not yet come, it was that all of those elected to be saved before His coming would "come to repentance." Christ said in John 6:37 "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The scoffers may make light and ridicule the fact of Christ's return, but Peter said, "...the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." The day of the Lord is a period of time that begins after the rapture of the saints. This period of time includes the seven years of tribulation, the thousand year reign of Christ, the release of Satan from the bottomless pit, his rebellion, and ends with the great white throne judgment of the wicked. The present heavens and earth, having passed away, will be replaced by the new heavens and the new earth.

"As a thief in the night" indicates that the Lord will come when men least expect Him, when men are asleep or unconcerned as to His coming. The apostle Paul uses the same expression in I Thessalonians 5:2. The "the great noise" in the phrase, "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise," means a noise "with a hissing and crackling sound." When atomic bombs are released they produce "a whirring sound" or "cracking sound," the word "melt" means "to disintegrate, to be dissolved." The thought is that the elements, the air, water, and earth will be broken down in their basic elements. This takes place when atomic energy is released. In verse 7 it is said that, "...the heavens and the earth -- are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment..." Where do we get atomic energy? Is it not from the elements of the earth? The heavens and the earth are "kept in store, reserved unto fire." From this it would seem that God will destroy the world with an atomic blast. Men may cause great damage to the earth by their atomic bombs but remember it is the Lord who will "push the button" that sends the heavens and the earth into destruction. When this takes place, all of man's works will be burned up. All of man's great achievements, all of which man is so proud, great cities, great buildings, his great inventions, all evidence of man's greatness will be gone. The heavens here is that which surrounds the earth, not the heaven where God dwells.

(Verses 11, 12), "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire

shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

In view of this knowledge that the heavens, the earth, and all that is in them is to be destroyed by fire, the question is asked of Christians, How should you live, "...what manner of person ought ye to be in holy conversation..." (conduct or way of life) While looking and hasting unto that day, should we not be living lives that are pleasing to the Lord and should we not be busy in His service? The word "Looking for" is to "expect, look for, waiting for" that day. While not knowing when that day will come, we need to be looking for and expecting it to come at any time. "And hasting unto the coming," or "hasting the coming," means to urge on, to await with eager desire. The true Christian has nothing to fear at the coming of that day, therefore he should be anxiously waiting for that time. Why has that day not come? Are the scoffers right in saying He is not coming? Has He changed His mind? Why is He so long in coming? Christ will come when the last of His sheep of this age have come to Him. He will not come until the last one of this age who had been given Him by the Father has come. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Christ said, "...this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14). In the model prayer it is said we are to pray, "thy kingdom come." What Peter is saying is that if the Christian is living a pure and holy life he/she will be eagerly waiting the Lord's return.

(3:13) "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

The present heavens and earth, as God made them were perfect and things of beauty, yet they were placed under the curse because of Adam's sin. For this reason they must be destroyed and replaced by the new heavens and a new earth, new in that they will be free from any curse. In the new heavens and the new earth there will be no sin, nothing that will defile or mar them, "wherein dwelleth righteousness."

(3:14) "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." "Wherefore" means in view of these events, or on this account. "Beloved" is the "divinely-loved one.s" the word for "love" is the word used in I John 3:16 where it is said, "God is love." It is the love that the Lord loves His own with (John 13:34, 17:23). Peter is addressing the loved ones of God. Peter reminds us to "be diligent," "do your best, make haste, take care, hurry on." It means make an intense effort. "Of Him" is to do your best with respect to Him, in view of His coming. This "peace" comes through a knowledge of God's plans and to rely completely upon Him. Even though the Christian may face

great trouble and problems, that one can have peace that passes understanding. To be without spot is in contrast to the false teachers who were called spots and blemishes (II Pet. 2:12). The saints of God are not to be like the false teachers but "conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). For one to be blameless that one must be in Christ. The one who is conformed to the Son will be considered blameless. This blamelessness comes through the work of regeneration. The apostle Paul said, "And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Col. 1:21, 22).

(3:15, 16) "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Peter again makes note of the longsuffering of the Lord. In verse 9 he had explained that He was longsuffering for the "usward," the elect of God (I Peter 1:2). Peter states that "our beloved brother Paul" said the same thing, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). Peter is not telling us something new, but it is the same truth which had been revealed to the apostle Paul. It is interesting to note that Peter refers to Paul as "our beloved brother Paul" showing his love and respect for Paul. At onetime there was a difference between them. Paul said that "...I withstood him (Peter) to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Gal. 2:11). It would seem from this passage in II Peter that Peter had accepted the rebuke and had repented of his wrong. How sad that Christians, especially Christian leaders, when rebuked for wrong doing, will not acknowledge their wrong and restore fellowship with their brethren.

"According to the wisdom given him" shows that Paul was regarded as an inspired writer, and that his warning was a part of the divine truth. Paul had written unto the same ones to whom Peter was now writing, "hath written unto you." He was saying, "I am telling you the same truth which our beloved Paul wrote about." "As also in all his epistles," not just the ones he had written unto them, but in all his epistles which he had written to all the churches, he had written concerning these things. The things to which Peter refers are the things which he himself had written about in the two epistles. The things he referred to were the great doctrines of salvation, the wickedness of man, God's divine purpose, the return of the Lord for His people, and God's judgment of the world

and that of wicked men.

It is these things of which both Paul and Peter have written, as well as other Scriptures that are hard to understand that those who are "unlearned and unstable" "wrest", twist, or bend the Scripture, thereby bringing upon themselves "their own destruction." The word "wrest" means "to torture on the rack, to turn as on a wheel of torture, to distort and pervert." Now those who are unlearned and unstable have a hard time understanding Paul's teaching. Even many of the great Bible scholars have bent or twisted some of Paul's writings to suit their own beliefs. Where do men get the theory of a universal invisible church except by "wresting" or bending the Scripture? Some have trouble "harmonizing" law and grace, faith and works, and many other doctrines of the Scripture. Many if not all heresies are really the perversion of some fundamental doctrine of the Scripture that false teachers have twisted, or bent, to mean something that it does not teach. While Peter, no doubt, had the false teachers in mind here, but the warning is good for all of us to heed and just take the Word of God as it is without trying to bend it to mean something else.

We might note that Paul's writings are classified as Scripture, that is, it is the inspired Word of God. I have heard men say, "It was just Paul who said that", as if it was just Paul's thoughts and not the Word of God. Note what happens to men who blindly "wrest" the Scripture, It is "unto their own destruction." Peter was not talking about Christians who have a hard time understanding some Scripture; no one understands all of it. He is referring to false teachers who have "twisted" the Scripture to prove their false doctrine. The word "destruction" is used several times by the apostle Peter in these letters. It is sometimes translated "damnable", "pernicious", and "perdition." It means eternal death. These false teachers with their "damnable heresies" (II Pet. 2:1) have invaded many of what once were true churches of the Lord and have taken over. Peter is warning the true Christians that we must be on guard against those who come our way. Not only did Peter warn of these, but we find the apostles John and Paul as well as Jude warning of these. The fact that there is so much warning concerning these in the Scripture should make us aware that we are constantly in danger of being deceived by the false teachers. It is only as we come to an understanding of the Word of God that we can detect error from the truth. It is the "unstable and the unlearned" who can be led astray. In II Pet. 3:1-2 the "beloved" are told to "be mindful." In 3:8, the same "beloved" are told to, "be not ignorant. In 3:14 they are told to "be diligent," and in verse 17 they are told, "to beware." What the Holy Spirit, through Peter, is telling us is to be on guard, to watch, to know the truth, to be diligent as to the truth, not to be led astray by false doctrine.

(3:17) "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."

Here is a warning not to the new born child of God, but to

those who are mature Christians. Is there danger of their turning from the truth to error? Peter tells us "to beware." The apostle Paul makes a similar statement when he said, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). During my lifetime I have seen many who seemed to be well established in the truth, who have long since fallen from their own steadfastness. This certainly does not mean that they have lost their salvation, Christ made that secure when He suffered and paid for their sins on the cross. A child of God can never be lost, but that one can be led into error and become an unprofitable servant, or as Paul wrote, "--which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (I Tim. 1:19). This is what Peter is warning against, even though one may be established and well learned in the Word, there is constant danger of falling from their own "steadfastness." Peter knew something about falling from one's steadfastness. Did he not affirm one night that he would lay down his life for his Lord? (John 13:37). Yet, did he not before daylight the next morning deny His Lord three times? (John 18:27). One may be established in the truth, yet fall from it. How can one guard against this? By having his faith in the Word of God, by his knowledge of the Word, and his ability to live by the Word in his every day life. The greatest danger is to the young Christian. It is to those the false teachers strive with the most. New born Christians need to be taught the fundamental doctrines of the Scripture, otherwise, they become open prey for the false teachers. This is the duty of churches. The great commission given by Christ unto His church was to teach baptized believers, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:20). Too many times the churches have put in programs to entertain the new Christian rather than teach him the "all things." Many times it is said by someone, "This church or that church has nothing for the young people." If that church is teaching the Word of God she has every thing for the young Christian.

(3:18) "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Peter closes his second letter by a warning and urging on the Christians. In verse 17 he implies that now that his readers, having been warned, are without excuse for being deceived and led into error by the false teachers. He has told them that not only had he warned them but Paul and the other writers of the Scripture had repeatedly warned of these false teachers. Those to whom he as writing knew the truth, but it would seem that they were not living up to it. Is that not true of us today? He states that now they have been warned it is their responsibility to watch and guard themselves. We as Christians must never become complacent, because that is when we are most likely to fall into error. It is only

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old friends had run him off, and he was now finding that new friends were hard to come by. New friends, however, if they knew what the old friends knew, would have welcomed him with open arms. We are all to be cautious regarding those that we join up with. Two, in fact, cannot walk together if they are not in agreement. The disciples, then, were wise in waiting until they could call Saul a brother in Christ.

"But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus" (Acts 9:27).

Saul at this time was still a young man (Acts 7:58). Here, then, was Barnabas with his arm around this young man, in a sense of speaking, while presenting him to the apostles Peter and James (Galatians 1:18, 19).

The door had been closed back at Damascus, but a new door had opened in Jerusalem. The new door was opened wide because of Saul's qualifications. He, in fact, "had seen the Lord in the way." The Lord had even spoken to him; and, as a result, he had "...preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem" (Acts 9:28). The apostles at that particular moment could not have known the value of the young man who had just joined their ranks. They could not have known that he and Luke would write more than one half of the New Testament.

"And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him" (Acts 9:29). I'm sure that Saul's main message was that Jesus of Nazareth was truly the Messiah. He said, in essence, "look no further, for we have found Him." He, in fact, is the very one we nailed to the tree. He is the Lamb which all the Old Testament lambs prefigured. Look no further, but believe on Him as the Son of God -- the Son of God who died for your sins. Saul proclaimed God's message, not only to the Jews who resided in Jerusalem, but to the Grecians as well -- the Grecians being foreign Jews who spoke the Greek language, foreign Jews who had come up to Jerusalem. It was this crowd who felt it their duty to close Saul's mouth by killing him.

"Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus" (Acts 9:30). Saul, by way of persecution, had scattered others. Now he himself was being scattered. God the Spirit, of course, used the persecution against Saul as the means to send him to predetermined places. It is as stated in Psalms 76:10 where God states, "...the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

Tarsus was Saul's hometown, or his native city (Acts 9:11, 21:39, 22:3). It was to Tarsus that the disciples sent him. Tarsus, according to Acts 21:39, was a city of Cilicia; and we know from Galatians 1:21 that Paul, when in that region of the world, no doubt, continued to proclaim the gospel message. It is possible that his mother and dad still lived at Tarsus; and, if so, I'm sure he preached Jesus of Nazareth to them too.

"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts 9:31). God's plan for scattering had ended. It was time for them to settle down and take roots and be taught the "all things." Those who had been running would treasure their new found peace. They could now go to church without being threatened and even hurt or killed. The children, however, who grew up under this peaceful system were in danger of not appreciating the value of the new found freedom of worship -- words, in fact, can never replace experience.

It is said that the Lord's churches, during this period of tranquility, were edified or built up. This fact means that the preachers were preaching the Word, and the hearers were hearing and heeding the Word. There, in fact, is no building up aside from the preaching, hearing, and heeding of the Word of God.

The Lord's church is the "pillar and ground" of the truth. This pillar begins to crumble when error is preached. Many so-called church groups, in fact, are no more than the pillar and ground of error, rather than the pillar and ground of truth. They are not edified, but torn down like an old barn that lays in shambles by the wayside.

The passage before us also informs us that the Lord's churches walked "in the fear of the Lord." This fact does not mean that they walked in a frightened condition, as one might be when walking through a cemetery at night. It means that they knew the Lord would not put up with any foolishness. He would deal, for example, with any action such as was exercised by Ananias and Sapphira. They, however, had nothing to fear and only good to expect so long as they followed God's Word and confessed their sins.

It is said that they walked in the "comfort of the Holy Spirit" and that they "were multiplied." The word "walking" implies moving forward with a destination in mind. It is as the song states, in essence, "I'm walking in the upward way, new heights I'm gaining every day." We arrive at new heights as we learn more about God through His Word.

The early churches were walking in the upward way in the "comfort of the Holy Spirit," or in the exhortation of the Spirit, as He inspired the preachers to preach and the hearers to hear and heed, one of the results being that they were "multiplied." The word "multiply" implies doubling, tripling, etc. It was God the Spirit who was working in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

## PETER

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as we "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..." that we can remain stable and unmovable. Spiritual growth is much like physical growth, we must have the proper food for growth. Both. Peter in his first letter said, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Pet. 2:2). If one is to grow spiritually he must feed upon the Word. When one is born into the family of God he has all that is needed for growth (II Peter 1:3). All he needs is the proper food, the Word of God. If he is fed the "junk food" of the world he will never grow spiritually.

Peter concludes his letter as he began it, with the subject of growth of the Christian. The life of a Christian is either one of growth or it is a life of decline. It is sad to see a human being thirty or forty years old but still having a mind of a baby. But it is more tragic to see a Christian who has a spiritual age of thirty, forty, fifty years, yet still has not grown in grace and who has no more knowledge of His Lord and His Word than when he was first born from above. The growth of a Christian must be both in grace and in knowledge. The knowledge of the Lord is the key to being on guard against the false teachers. The Christian life begins with the knowledge of Christ. That life continues in the knowledge of Him as a guard against evil, and will one day come to a full knowledge of the One in whom he has trusted.

How fitting Peter's closing words to this letter, "To him be glory both now and for ever." He again emphasizes our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ and the eternal glory which belongs to Him. What could be more fitting than these words of the apostle Peter? Therefore I close this study by repeating Peter's words, "To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." To God be the glory. Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done."

## UNIONIZE

(Continued from Page 5)

"Then I asked, 'If there is nothing wrong with us as we are, why don't you and your people join with us and make one good congregation of us all?'"

"But you would insist on our being baptized again," he replied.

"Yes," I said, "You say you would accept us even though we hold to that belief." He was embarrassed, but I continued: "We claim to have been here long before you were. Your denomination is rather young in history. Our people claim to be identified with groups reaching back to the apostles, yet, you say you would accept us. Why, then, could you not join with us?"

He became a bit heated as he said, "But you are unfair; you are trying to shut us out."

"Not on your life," I replied. "The door of our church is open to all who will come by repentance and faith and who will accept a baptism which declares that faith."

Then he said, "But why can't we take the Lord's supper with you? We are Christians, too, you know."

I pleaded for patience while I explained. "You agree with me that one should be scripturally baptized before taking the Lord's supper, do you not?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied cautiously.

"Do you also agree," I continued, "that your church preaches that sinners are saved by faith in Christ plus an obedient life with good works, that is, he could not be saved without good works?"

"Yes, of course," he replied, "we believe that a man must live a good life and work for the Lord, or he will be lost. I believe in good works as necessary to salvation, and the Bible teaches it."

"I, too, believe in good works," I said, "but not as a means of salvation. We preach that sinners are saved by grace through faith alone, as Ephesians 2:8 tells us, 'not of works.' Do you agree that we differ vitally on how a man is saved?"

"Well, yes," he replied, "but that should not keep us from having fellowship at the Lord's table."

"But that is not Paul's teaching," I continued. "In the first Corinthian letter he deplores the divisions in that church. In 1:10 he says: 'I would that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you.' Did you ever hear that? Speak the same things! And in I Cor. 11:18-28, he teaches that we cannot eat the Lord's supper if there be divisions among us. Surely we cannot be in scriptural fellowship if we are divided on the question of how sinners are saved. If we are truly born again, we may have the fellowship of experience, by which we become brothers in the family of God, but a church is a preaching institution. Our church fellowship centers not only in our saving experience but also in the substance of our message about that experience. Church fellowship is a different thing from family fellowship. So, we could not properly join in the ordinances which symbolically declare our salvation if we differ in our preaching on how we are saved."

From this conversation, it would seem clear that scriptural churches must be judged by what they preach about salvation, the main subject on which denominations are divided. Furthermore, they are divided either on the experience of salvation or on the message which declares it.

A believer is justified before God by his faith in Jesus Christ; he is qualified for church membership by the proper confession and demonstration of his experience through baptism; but a church is qualified as scriptural both by its spiritual experience in Christ and the proper declaration of that experience. This declaration is given not only through the preaching of the gospel but also by the proper demonstration of the message through the administration of the ordinances. On this there must be unity.

Baptists have no right to endorse a heresy, either in the experience of saving faith or in the declaration of the faith that saves. There is no such thing as being in fellowship in the Spirit if we are not in fellowship in the Word which the Spirit breathed. Especially is this true on the vital subject of the salvation of

sinners.

So, my concluding words to my pastor friend were these: "You see, because your church teaches a different doctrine of salvation, your baptism declares that message to the world. Such a baptism would not fit in our church because it is identified with your message on salvation. Many of you may be saved, but if you are, you are saved as we preach it. If I helped you propagate your error, I would not only violate my conscience but also what I believe the Word of God teaches."

In the light of this logic, how can we unionize with others without compromising our message?

## JUDE

(Continued from Page 1)

slave of the Old Testament promised Messiah. Jude felt that it was better to be related to the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour than as a physical half brother. Beloved, he was most assuredly correct. To be born once into this world means to die twice: physically and spiritually. But to be born twice means to die only physically unless the Lord should come before that event in our personal life. Then, Jude goes on to identify himself with the pastor of the first church at Jerusalem. These two men, James and Jude, were not believers during the Lord's earthly ministry, but almost immediately after His resurrection, they both were found with the believers and assembled with that first church.

The Purpose. Jude wanted to write concerning "our common salvation," but God the Holy Spirit would not permit him to do so. He was overruled if you please, and that by God's plan and program. He was faithful to the direction and calling of the Holy Spirit. He did not understand why, but then it is not for us to question or call into counsel our God as to why He does what He does. His ways are not ours. God takes the weak things of this earth to confuse the wise. Nevertheless, the thing that is important here, Jude wanted to write concerning our salvation, but there was a greater need to write and defend the faith that had already been delivered unto the saints of God.

The Readers. These folks are not identified as such, but we do know that they were beset on every side by wicked false teachers. These men were described as immoral, covetous, proud and divisive. They had entered into the church by the back door and were literally causing great confusion and trouble. They needed to be revealed and expelled from among the midst of the church before their poison affected others. Beloved, there ought never to be room in our churches for false doctrines and evil practices among our leadership. God grant that our people look for spiritual minded men that are well grounded in the Word of God before they call a pastor to lead them.

Thus, this small but very powerful book was devoted to the problem at hand: great apostasy. Jude will bring the teachings of the entire Bible together about apostasy and then to a tremendous climax. Thus, someone has suggested; yea, called Jude as the

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## JUDE

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Jude of the New Testament. Furthermore, they have given the overall theme to this book as, "The Acts of the Apostates."

"Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unaware, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 1-4). Here we have the problem at hand: apostasy. Inasmuch as we have already considered the author briefly, let us move on in our study. Would you note with me what Jude has to say about the believers.

First, they are sanctified by God the Father. It is not until one picks up their Greek New Testament and finds out what the Holy Writ is really saying that they get the full impact of this statement. Jude is simply saying, "to those dear folk who have been set apart by the love of God unto salvation." You see, he recognized God's election in the matter. God's love is only demonstrated upon those dear folk in whom He knew from before the foundation of the world. Oh beloved, the Holy Spirit of God works within the heart of those whom the Father saw fit to save - no one else. This is clearly noted in the original Greek language.

Second, they are preserved in Jesus Christ. What a grand truth this is. To those dear folk who have experienced God's wonderful love are the permanent objects of God's wonderful saving grace. If God loves you, and I trust that He does, He will always love you. You can go to the bank on that central truth. Again God's love is proved to them who are chosen in Christ Jesus before the world was created. These, and these alone God has committed into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ for safe keeping. Our security rests in Him as does our very salvation.

Third, they are said to be called. To those who are loved and preserved in Christ Jesus have been called out of this world of sin and made dear children of God by a wonderful process called: the new birth. Will you listen to me, if God loved you from before the foundation of the world, He will bring you to Himself. The Holy Spirit will break your hardened heart and make you a new creature in Christ Jesus. Oh beloved, you can not do that yourself. God must do it. Furthermore, it has pleased Him to use the preaching of the Word of God to save precious souls. I do not understand it, but have seen with my own eyes the results of our feeble preaching. Therefore, preachers, don't ever give up! You have the

greatest and highest calling in this world: to preach God's blessed eternal Word. By it alone will you see souls saved. Any other means will result in your convert not knowing the One that saves. Introduce people to Christ and let the Holy Spirit drive home the conviction.

Three wonderful doctrines are noted right here: Election, "sanctified," Preservation, "preserved," and Effectual Calling, "called." Before you can know the free pardon of God's mercy and grace, you must know the One that does the saving. That is why the Bible speaks of our responsibility to preach the Word of God. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18).

As we move away from verse one and into verse two, would you follow along with me as we note three things about our salvation. First, it was the mercy of God that saved our wretched souls. Second, God has given unto those who are saved, peace. Third, love ought to be noted in our lives as we live for the Lord Jesus Christ. Mercy. If you please, the upward look. This is when the lost sinner looks to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith. That, beloved, is mercy demonstrated - shown to God's elect. That is looking at it from man's point of view. No doubt, man at this point does not understand all that has taken place to bring him salvation. All he knows is this: he was lost and on his way to hell, and God Almighty reached down and saved his wretched soul. He found mercy when he deserved God's wrath and judgment. Peace. The inward look, if you please. When the sinner trusts the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour, God gives to him perfect peace -- peace that only a child of God can know. Beloved, if you are saved, you will know it. We have a know-so salvation. There is no question or doubt as to our position, we are the children of God. God gives us a peace. A peace that our heart is right with Him. Love. The outward look. Now, I am going to step on toes for a moment. When the sinner recognizes his lost state and gets saved by the grace of God, he should also recognize his duty, and share with others his new-found faith in Christ Jesus. You can not save anyone; only God can do that. You are not asked to save anyone! But you are asked to be God's witness. Therefore, if you have had a proper upward and inward look, you will want to have an outward look as well.

Verses three and four give us the purpose of this epistle. Jude wanted to write concerning our common salvation, but God the Holy Spirit would not permit. The nature of this salvation; it is the deliverance of man from the guilt and power of sin. It is the complete redemption of our body, soul and spirit at the day of judgment. It begins in this present life and continues throughout eternity. The common salvation that Jude speaks. Jesus Christ our Lord is common to all who are called in the Holy Scriptures, saints. He, the Lord Jesus Christ is known personally to everyone of them. Now, understand this, there is but one common way to Heaven - there is but "one faith." God's way alone will get you there. Therefore, the

blessings of salvation are common to all who believe; yea, whether Jew or Gentile. It is a salvation that the early Christians had an experience in. How about you my dear friends? Someone is going to say, how dare you be so evangelistic in your preaching? My answer, how dare you not be?

The reason for this epistle is noted: "I was constrained to write unto you." God the Holy Spirit would not have Jude to write about any other subject; and to this, Jude was very faithful. Therefore, "contend for the faith" -- Why? Because it, the faith that was once delivered unto the saints, is at stake. I know, God's church has been promised longevity - perpetuity. But we have also been called to contend for the faith as it was delivered. That is as much true today as it was two-thousand years ago. We need to contend for the Bible. Why? Because it is God's Word and He holds it precious in His sight. We need to contend for the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to contend for our Lord's vicarious and substitutionary death for His own. We need to contend for salvation by grace. We need to contend for our Lord's soon visible return. We need to contend for our Lord's church. We need to contend for the faith that was delivered unto the saints and that, beloved, is the Word of God. What was the reason that this short epistle was written? In part, to challenge the church of God to contend for the faith. But that was not all, for Jude had the unpleasant task of dealing with apostasy. Apostasy had already begun to sneak into the church of God. It needed to be properly dealt with, and Jude was God's man of the hour.

What does the Word of God mean by this term, apostasy? One theologian wrote, "Apostasy is a departure from the faith, that is, from the apostles' doctrine." That is true indeed, but may I take it one step further? Apostasy is one who comes to the knowledge of truth; then rejects it, turning away unto other gods. The following six points may give us a better understanding of what apostasy is all about. (1). Deuteronomy 13:3 and Hebrews 3:12 describes for us what it is - "The turning away from God to serve false gods." (2). II Timothy 4:10 informs us that a worldly spirit and attitude tends to lead one in that general direction. (3). I John 2:19 tells us that an apostate person is one that has never belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ. (4). Hebrews 6:4-6 tells us that it is impossible to restore such a person unto the Lord. (5). Matthew 24:12 informs us that they shall abound in the latter days. (6). Hebrews 3:12 warns us concerning such evil persons - "Take heed, brethren."

How is one to identify these false teachers? The Word of God is very clear on this matter. Will you note with me the following considering false teachers. (1). They are ungodly men according to Jude 4. That simply means that they are literally destitute of reverential awe towards Almighty God. Compare II Timothy 3:5. (2). They twist God's wonderful grace into licentiousness according to Jude 4. Beloved, that is what the cults of our present day are doing and unfortunately many of the Protestants churches. (3). They deny the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ - Jude 4, 15; Titus 1:16. (4). They are given over to their own sensuous

dreams - Jude 8. (5). They defile theirs and others flesh - Jude 8. (6). They reject both divine and human authority - Jude 8. (7). They ridicule the very existence of angels - Jude 8. (8). They mock and curse at anything that they do not see or understand - Jude 10. (9). They do their own thing like the dumb and unreasonable animals - Jude 10. (10). They are grumblers and fault-finders - Jude 16. (11). They follow after their own selfish desires - Jude 16. (12). They are very proud and arrogant - Jude 16. (13). They flatter people, using flowery language for the sake of gaining an advantage - Jude 16. (14). They are very divisive - Jude 19. (15). They are very worldly-minded - Jude 19. (16). They are devoid of the Spirit of God - Jude 19.

In our introduction to the book of Jude, one can immediately see that the early Christians were in deep trouble because of these false teachers. Things have not changed in two thousand years! On every hand these false teachers (apostate men) are entering into the Lord's churches by the back door and bringing with them their evil and false doctrines. If ever there was a need to defend the faith, today is that hour. Fifty some years ago this paper was established as a sounding board for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints of God. It has not wavered in its beliefs or convictions. It has and still does stand tall in defense of the faith. This paper has done much to straighten out preachers and laymen alike over the years. May that continue to be the case as long as this paper stays in print. May God bless you as you study the book of Jude and apply the teachings of the Holy Scriptures to your personal life.

## EFFECTUAL

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II Thes. 2:13. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." We have a physical illustration of the effectual call in the call that raised Lazarus from the dead. The effectual call is a word that is attended with an omnipotent arm. Observe,

### I. THE NATURE OF THIS CALL

1. It is a miraculous call. (1) It is a call that gives life to the dead sinner. John 5:25. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and that they hear shall live." (2) It gives sight to the blind. II Cor. 4:3-6. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (3) It opens the heart as in the case of Lydia. Acts 16:14, "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

2. It is irresistible. It has behind it the power of God. To resist this call would be for the sinner to overcome the Creator. It would mean the breaking of Scripture. Rom. 8:30. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

### II. THE NECESSITY OF THIS CALL

1. Because the word only is not sufficient. I Thes. 1:5 "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." Does this imply a fault or imperfection in the gospel? Before we make reply, let us ask another question, why is it that man cannot be saved by the law? Is it because of imperfection in the law? By no means, but because of moral inability in the sinner. So it is with the word of the gospel; there is no fault in the gospel, but human depravity makes something more necessary for salvation than a mere objective invitation. The gospel of Christ is scorned and rejected by the natural man. I Cor. 1:23 "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." 2:14 "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The carnal or fleshly mind is as much an enemy to grace as to law, for it is enmity against God, and God is the author of both law and grace. Left to himself man will no sooner trust Christ than he will keep the law. Remember it is not a natural, but a moral and spiritual inability. Man could trust Christ if he wanted to. It is the inability of the will. Cross reference John 5:40 "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life with." John 6:44 "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:65 "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." I know this is a terrible reflection on human nature, but it is the truth; and there is nothing to be gained by dodging the truth for the sake of human pride. Too much of it has already been done, and this explains why there is so little real humility before God.

The hope of our success in  
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## EFFECTUAL

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saving souls is wrapped up in this call. I Thess. 1:5 "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." I Cor. 1:24 "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." I Cor. 2:4-5. "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." I Cor. 3:5-7. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

### III. THE ASSURANCE OF THIS CALL

How may one know whether he has received this call? There will be certain marks on those who have received it.

1. He will have spiritual discernment. The gospel will no longer be hid to him. Cross reference I Cor. 1:2 "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." I Cor. 1:14 "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius" with II Cor. 4:3-6. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2. He will have new desires. It is a holy calling and there will be longing for holiness. II Tim. 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Matt. 5:6 "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." The Spirit is especially called "The Holy Spirit," because it is His proper and peculiar work to sanctify and make us holy, just as Christ is called Jesus (Saviour), because it is His proper and peculiar work to redeem us. Where the effectual call has been experienced there will be desires after God. Psalms 27:4 "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the

Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." Psm. 42:1 "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

3. There will be growth in grace. Peter tells us that the way to make our calling and election sure is to build upon our God given faith the following virtues, namely, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. II Peter 1:5-10 "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

### IV. THE GUARANTEE OF THIS CALL

1. It guarantees that every future experience in this life will be for the believers good. Rom. 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

2. It guarantees future glorification. Rom. 8:30. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. The man who has been called will be glorified."

### V. THE WHY OF THIS CALL

It is pursuant to a divine purpose. Rom. 8:28; II Tim. 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." God calls effectually because He has purposed to do so. Everything He does is according to His eternal purpose. It is to bring the foreknown into a saved state. Election does not make a sinner holy, but is the marking out of those who are to be made holy. Eph. 1:4-5. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

### VI. THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THIS DOCTRINE

1. It honors the Holy Spirit by ascribing to Him a place in our salvation. The Holy Spirit gets

little honor from the average Christian. He thinks the Holy Spirit regenerates him in response to his faith. He thinks the Holy Spirit did something because he had already done his part. Might as well talk about doing our part to get Christ to redeem us, as to talk about doing our part to get the Holy Spirit to quicken us into life. Eph. 1:1-10. gives us the truth on this point, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

2. It humbles us by showing us that we are made to differ from the lost around us by a work of grace in us, and not by our own will and self-effort. John 1:12-13 "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." I Cor. 4:7 "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" I Cor. 15:10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me".

3. It robs us of any ground for boasting. I Cor. 1:31 "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Isaac Watts, Spurgeon's favorite hymn writer, has put the truth in verse:

"Why was I made to hear thy voice,  
And enter while there's room;  
When thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?"

"Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced me in;  
Else I had still refused to taste  
And perished in my sin."

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Lord might be observed and might be lifted up as it is written in the law of Moses. There seems to be a revival spirit amongst the people because it is the people that ask for the Word of God. In verse 1, "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel." The people requested the Word of the Lord. Now when the people of the United States of America would get to the point that they request the Word of the Lord, how much stronger a country we would have and how much more joy there would be in the word of God, and how much greater and richer would be the blessing from our Heavenly Father.

Now, notice, we have the word of edification here, following the work of salvation. The whole scheme that we see in this chapter is most impressive, and it is most suggestive unto us. We learn from it.

First of all, we want to take a look at the preacher. The preacher was Ezra. Ezra was a priest, but didn't have a temple to perform his office in because it had been destroyed. Ezra became a scribe and, beloved, he was a great one. In fact, in Ezra 7:6, Ezra was known as a ready scribe in the law of Moses. The people spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book. Notice, all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate, and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had commanded to Israel. Ezra, as we have already stated, was known as a ready scribe in the law of Moses. Being also a priest, he was well qualified as an expounder of the Scriptures. He could expound God's Scriptures. As a priest, he was the recipient of grace. As a scribe, he was very familiar with the truth. So then, we read in the New Testament that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ and in a measure beloved, it must come by every preacher of the gospel, and especially those who have the divine call. God didn't call every preacher that calls himself a preacher. That's where a lot of folks get hurt and get mixed up. There are many preachers in the world today that were not called of God. They were called by their grandmother, wife, or some other person. Some just took it upon themselves because they thought it was a great honor and, to be sure, it is if it comes from God. Now, we want to notice the place of the meeting. It was not an elaborate building like the world has today, but verse three tells us that it was before the street. "And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were

attentive unto the book of the law." He read the book in the open square in front of the street that was before the water gate. The people gathered here on the street before the water gate or the public place of drawing their water, and it was there that he read the book of the law unto the people. Can you imagine the response that a person would get today if he went out to the busiest street corner in any city and began reading the Book of the Lord? That is all he did, read the Book of the Lord. Today, I doubt there would be few that would even hesitate as they walked past. Our Lord asked the question one time: "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by?" Seems that the Word of the God today is not very popular amongst the people of the world. They just walk on by like nothing was going on. Verse 4 says, "And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood." The first pulpit mentioned was built in a public square for open-air preaching, for open-air work, reading of the law of the Lord. Now that tells us this; whether it be in a secret closet or in the market square, where Jesus is, is heaven also. Where Peter was on the lake was a much holier place than the God-forsaken temple in Jerusalem was at that time. Wherever God is, wherever Christ is, that's heaven on earth. Ezra stood in the street corner upon the pulpit of wood. This I'm sure, was not an elaborate pulpit as we see in the average church today but simply a stand for convenience that was there to lay the Book of the law upon as he read it. We have the preacher and we find that he was a God-called preacher, a divinely called preacher. We have the place of the meeting and we find that it was just an open-air street, people coming and going.

Now, we come to the hearers, and there is a change. The hearers froze in their tracks when they heard the law of the Lord read, and they absorbed it. Verse 3 says, "The people were attentive unto the book of the law." They listened, they were attentive, they soaked it up. There are people that you preach to who seem to soak up what you say like a sponge. They are very easy to preach to. It is a joy to preach or teach someone that wants to learn. It is a chore to try to teach someone who doesn't want to learn. The first thing we are told about the people is that they were numerous. Both men and women and all that could hear with understanding. Verse 2, "And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month."

Beloved, the congregation literally hungered for the Word of God. They wanted God's Word. They paid more attention to what was coming out of the Book than they did to Ezra. That is the prayer of every God-called preacher; that you will not see him but will look through him into the message and pay attention to what he is saying rather than what he looks like. They were an attentive crowd. As we read in verse 3 earlier, he read from morning until midday. That is at least four hours and maybe longer, according to what time he started that morning. I'm sure

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their mornings started much earlier than nine o'clock like a lot of ours do today. They not only stood there and listened to the reading of the Lord for half a day, but they were attentive unto it. The things the Lord has done for us, we should be attentive, we should be excited about these things. They were attentive from morning until midday. All the people were attentive to the Book. They were more interested in the Book than they were the preacher. They sought not the man, but the message. They wanted to hear what God's Word said.

Remember when Paul preached at Berea and it was said they searched the Scriptures daily. Beloved, they saw past Paul; they saw the Word of God. That's what we need. Now, we want you to notice, they were very reverent to the Word of God. This is something that we all fall short on, being reverent to the Word of God.

In verse 5 we read, "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up." They were so reverent to the word of God that when Ezra walked up, laid the Book on the pulpit, and opened it up, they all stood to their feet. They revered the Word of God. They all stood up. When they stood up it was as if they were saying we are willing to hear it and we are willing to obey it. To stand up before God is no new method of testifying of our readiness to believe in Him. That has been done before in the Scriptures. They were responsive. They stood up as he opened the book. What else happened? In verse 6, "And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground." Beloved, they were responsive in their reverence unto the Word of the Lord. All the people answered amen, amen, with the lifting of the hands, bowed their heads and worshipped God with their faces to the ground. They responded to the demands of the Word of God by bowing their heads and offering him the adoration of their hearts.

It is a solemn thing to hear the Word of the Lord and refuse to yield to its claims. The Word of God says, be ye doers of the Word. It is a very very solemn thing to hear it and refuse to obey it. The people were numerous, they were very attentive, they were reverent, and they were responsive.

Now we want to take a look at the preacher's manner. How did the preacher conduct himself? Pulpit ethics is a very important thing. Notice in verse 6 that Ezra begins the service by blessing the Lord, the great God. He was deeply conscious of the greatness of God, the greatness of the message, the great need of the people, the greatness of the occasion, and his own responsibility. It's an awesome responsibility to stand and preach the Word of God unto God's children. That's the reason I would never deviate from this book. Preach only what is written there. It's a great big job just

to do that.

Now notice, the preacher was a Book-sticker. He stuck to the Book and nothing else. One of the greatest things you could say about me when I die is, "He stuck to the Book. If a man sticks to the Book, it doesn't matter how eloquent he is, doesn't matter if there is no eloquence about him whatsoever, he may be slow in speech, he might even be slurred, but if he sticks to the book that is all you can ask of any man.

In verse 8 we read, "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Ezra was a great preacher. He read in the book the law of God, and he read it distinctly. They could understand what he said, and he gave the sense of it, and he caused them to understand the reading. Now it is saying a whole lot when you can leave church and say "I learned something". Most people today, I dare say, that if you stood at the doors of their church, and when they came out you asked, "what did you learn today?" They would have to think before they could even tell you what the preacher said, let alone what they learned. What did you learn about the Word of God? He read in the book of God distinctly, gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. He well knew that the people needed what was in the Book. They didn't need his thoughts, but they needed what was in the Book. They didn't need the headlines of the paper, they didn't need current events, they needed what was in the Book, and he gave them the thoughts of God as they were written in the Book. Our Lord tells us His thought are as much higher than our thoughts as the heaven is above the earth.

Verse 8 also tells us that he spoke distinctly. "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly." Beloved, there was no silliness about him, there was no silly attempt to try to get the point across in some silly fashion of some kind. He simply read the book and spoke distinctly, he spoke straight out, he spoke clear.

We are told that he explained the text. "and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." I've heard preachers read a verse of Scripture and then say, "Don't ask me what that means, I have no idea." If he had no idea, why did he read it? Why didn't he just stay away from it? Notice, he explained the text, he read distinctly, he gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. There was no formal, heartless reading of the Word, but the soul of man was greatly blessed by the reading of the Word of God. He enforced the truth of the Word of God, he caused them to understand. His business was to make them understand the mind of the Lord. It is not enough to hear it, but as responsible beings they must be able by the exercise of their own minds to grasp intelligently the thought of God concerning themselves. In Jeremiah 23:28 we find, "He that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully."

Now notice the effect that it produced upon the people. In verse 9 we are told, "And Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the

people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; Mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law." Beloved, it had such an effect on them that they saw their failings, and they saw that they came short of the glory of God. It convicted them in their hearts, and the tears of repentance rolled down their cheeks. They wept when they saw themselves in the Word of God. It will cause you to weep when you see the terrible condition that you're in according to God's Word. Even the saved weep when they see how far short they fall of the honor and glory that they owe their master. In verse 12 it tells us that they rejoiced. "And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them." They were happy that they understood. Verse 10 says, "Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Beloved it causes us to rejoice at the same time.

Now notice, beloved, they ministered unto other people. When people are attentive unto God's Word that you are giving them, they weep over their condition, rejoice in the things of the Lord, and they will minister unto other people. They were to eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared. They gladly did so. By the grace of God, we may eat the fat and drink the sweet, but surely the love of Christ should constrain us to remember those that are yet outside God's family for whom nothing is prepared. To those that are lost; then, beloved, we are to go unto them and give them the Word of God. We are to tell them about the wonderful Saviour that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to witness unto them what God has done for us. Many times a young person, that has very recently been saved, has come to me and said, How do I tell someone about Christ? How do I witness? My answer has always been the same, "Tell them what God did for you." That is the best witness in the world. There is lots of encouragement in this chapter. When we hear the Word of the Lord expounded, hear it declared, understand it; then we are to go away rejoicing and telling others of the wonderful Saviour we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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them have a practical end. The same thing may be said of the promises of God. We have not one promise in the Scripture which may be regarded as a mere freak of grace. As every miracle was necessary, absolutely necessary, so is every promise that is given in the Word of God. And hence from the text that is before us, may I draw, and I think very conclusively, the argument, that if God in His covenant made with His people has promised to put

His Spirit within them, it must be absolutely necessary also to our salvation that every one of us should receive the Spirit of God. This shall be the subject of this discourse. I shall not hope to make it very interesting, except to those who are anxiously longing to know the way of salvation.

We start, then, by laying down this proposition--that the work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to us, if we would be saved.

1. In endeavoring to prove this, I would first of all make the remark that this is very manifest if we remember what man is by nature. Some say that man may of himself attain unto salvation--that if he hear the Word, it is in his power to receive it, to believe it, and to have a saving change worked in him by it. To this we reply, you do not know what man is by nature, otherwise you would never have ventured upon such an assertion. Holy Scripture tells us that man by nature is dead in trespasses and sins. It does not say that he is sick, that he is faint, that he has grown callous, and hardened, and scared, but it says he is absolutely dead. Whatever that term "death" means in connection with the body, that it means in connection with man's soul, viewing it in its relation to spiritual things. When the body is dead it is powerless; it is unable to do anything for itself; and when the soul of man is dead, in a spiritual sense, it must be, if there is any meaning in the figure, utterly and entirely powerless, and unable to do anything of itself or for itself. When ye shall see dead men raising themselves from their graves, when ye shall see them unwinding their own sheets, opening their own coffin lids, and walking down our streets alive and animate, as the result of their own power, then perhaps ye may believe that souls that are dead in sin may turn to God, may recreate their own natures, and may make themselves heirs of heaven, though before they were heirs of wrath. But mark, not till then. The drift of the gospel is, that man is dead in sin, and that divine life is God's gift; and you must go contrary to the whole of that drift, before you can suppose a man brought to know and love Christ, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit finds men as destitute of spiritual life as Ezekiel's dry bones; he brings bone to bone, and fits the skeleton together, and then He comes from the four winds and breathes into the slain, and they live, and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army, and worship God. But apart from that, apart from the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God, men's souls must lie in the valley of dry bones, dead, and dead forever.

But Scripture does not only tell us that man is dead in sin; it tells us something worse than this, namely, that he is utterly and entirely averse to everything that is good and right. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). Turn you all Scripture through, and you find continually the will of man described as being contrary to the things of God. What said Christ in that text so often quoted by the Arminian to disprove the very doctrine which it clearly states? What did Christ say to those who

imagined that men would come without divine influence? He said first, "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" but He said something more strong, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." No man will come. Here lies the deadly mischief; not only that he is powerless to do good, but that he is powerful enough to do that which is wrong, and that his will is desperately set against everything that is right. Go, Arminian, and tell your hearers that they will come if they please, but know that your Redeemers looks you in the face, and tells you that you are uttering a lie. Men will not come. They never will come of themselves. You cannot induce them to come by all your invitations. They will not come unto Christ, that they may have life. Until the Spirit draw them, come they neither will, nor can.

Hence, then, from the fact that man's nature is hostile to the divine Spirit, that he hates grace, that he despises the way in which grace is brought to him, that it is contrary to his own proud nature to stoop to receive salvation by the deeds of another--hence it is necessary that the Spirit of God should operate to change the will, to correct the bias of the heart, to set man in a right track, and then give him strength to run in it. Oh! if ye read man and understand him, ye cannot help being sound on the point of the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work. It has been well remarked by a great writer, that he never knew a man who held any great theological error, who did not also hold a doctrine which diminished the depravity of man. The Arminian says man is fallen, it is true, but then he has power of will left, and that will is free; he can raise himself. He diminishes the desperate character of the fall of man. On the other hand, the Antinomian says, man cannot do anything, but that he is not at all responsible, and is not bound to do it, it is not his duty to believe, it is not his duty to repent. Thus, you see, he also diminishes the sinfulness of man; and has not right views of the fall. But once get the correct view, that man is utterly fallen, powerless, guilty, defiled, lost, condemned, and you must be sound on all points of the great gospel of Jesus Christ. Once believe man to be what the Scripture says he is--once believe his heart to be depraved, his affections perverted, his understanding darkened, his will perverse, and you must hold that if such a wretch as that be saved, it must be the work of the Spirit of God, and of the Spirit of God alone.

2. I have another proof ready to hand. Salvation must be the work of the Spirit in us, because the means used in salvation are of themselves inadequate for the accomplishment of the work. And what are the means of salvation? Why, first and foremost stands the preaching of the Word of God. More men are brought to Christ by preaching than by anything else; for it is God's chief and first instrument. This is the sword of the Spirit, quick and powerful, to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow. "...it (Continued on Page 12, Col. 1)



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**pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.** But what is there in preaching, by which souls are saved, that looks as if it would be the means of saving souls? I could point you to divers churches and chapels into which you might step, and say, "Here is a learned minister indeed, a man who would instruct and enlighten the intellect," you sit down, and you say, "Well, if God means to work a great work he will use a learned man like this." But do you know any learned men that are made the means of bringing souls to Christ, to any great degree? Go round your churches, if you please, and look at them, and then answer the question. Do you know any great men--men great in learning and wisdom--who have become spiritual fathers in our Israel? Is it not a fact that stares us in the face, that our fashionable preachers, our eloquent preachers, our learned preachers, are just the most useless men in creation for the winning of souls to Christ. And where are souls born to God? Why, in the house around which the jeer and the scoff and the sneer of the world have long gathered. Sinners are converted under the man whose eloquence is rough and homely, and who has nothing to commend him to his fellows, who has daily to fall on his knees and confess his own folly, and when the world speaks worst of him, feels that he deserves it all, since he is nothing but an earthen vessel, in which God is pleased to put His heavenly treasure. I will dare to say it, that in every age of the world the most despised ministry has been the most useful; and I could find you at this day poor Primitive Methodist preachers who can scarce speak correct English, who have been the fathers of more souls, and have brought to Christ more than any one bishop on the bench. Why, the Lord hath been pleased always to make it so, that He will clothe with power those who, if good were done, might be led to ascribe the excellence of the power to their learning, their eloquence, or their position. Like the apostle Paul, it is every minister's business to glory in his infirmities. The world says, "Pshaw! upon your oratory; it rough, and rude, and eccentric." Yes, 'tis even so, but we are content, for God blesses it. Then so much the better that it has infirmities in it; for now shall it be plainly seen that it is not of man or by man, but the work of God, and of God alone. It is said that once upon a time a man exceedingly curious desired to see the sword with which a mighty hero had fought some desperate battles, casting his eye along the blade, he said, "Well, I don't see much in this sword." "Nay," said the hero, "but you have not examined the arm that used it."

"I do not see anything in him." No, but you have not examined the eternal arm that reaps its harvest with this sword of the Spirit. If ye had looked at the

jawbone of the ass in Samson's hand, you would have said, "What! heaps on heaps with this?" No; bring out some polished blade; bring forth the Damascus steel! No; but God would have all the glory, and, therefore, not with the polished steel, but with the jawbone must Samson get the victory. So with ministers; God has usually blessed the weakest to do the most good. Well, now, does it not follow from this, that it must be the work of the Spirit? Because, if there be nothing in the instrument that can lead thereunto, is it not the work of the Spirit when the thing is accomplished? Let me just put it to you. Under the ministry dead souls are quickened, sinners are made to repent, the vilest of sinners are made holy, men who came determined not to believe are compelled to believe. Now, who does this? If you say the ministry does it, then I say farewell to your reason, because there is nothing in the successful ministry which would tend thereunto. It must be that the Spirit worketh in man through the ministry, or else such deeds would never be accomplished. You might as well expect to raise the dead by whispering in their ears, as hope to save souls by preaching to them, if it were not for the agency of the Spirit. Melancthon went out to preach, you know, without the Spirit of the Lord, and he thought he should convert all the people; but he found out at last that old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon, and he had to go back and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit or ever he saw a soul saved. I say, that the fact that the ministry is blessed, proves, since there is nothing in the ministry, that salvation must be the work of a higher power.

Other means, however, are made use of to bless men's souls. For instance, the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are both made a rich means of grace. But let me ask you, is there anything in baptism that can possibly bless anybody? Can immersion in water have the slightest tendency to be blessed to the soul? And then with regard to the eating of bread and the drinking of wine at the Lord's Supper, can it by any means be conceived by any rational man that there is anything in the mere piece of bread that we eat, or in the wine that we drink? And yet doubtless the grace of God does go with both ordinances for the confirming of the faith of those who receive them, and even for the conversion of those who look upon the ceremony. There must be something, then, beyond the outward ceremony; there must, in fact, be the Spirit of God, witnessing through the water, witnessing through the wine, witnessing through the bread, or otherwise none of these things could be means of grace to our souls. They could not edify; they could not help us to commune with Christ; they could not tend to the conviction of sinners, or to the establishment of saints. There must then, from these facts, be a higher, unseen, mysterious influence--the influence of the divine spirit of God.

3. Let me again remind you, in the third place, that the absolute necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart may be clearly seen from this fact, that all which has been done by God the Father, and all that has been done by God the Son must be

ineffectual to us, unless the Spirit shall reveal these things to our souls. We believe, in the first place, that God the Father elects His people; from before all worlds He chooses them to Himself; but let me ask you--what effect does the doctrine of election have upon any man, until the Spirit of God enters into him? How do I know whether God has chosen me from before the foundation of the world? How can I possibly know? Can I climb to heaven, and read the roll? Is it possible for me to force my way through the thick mists which hide eternity, and open the seven seals of the book, and read my name recorded there? Ah! no; election is a dead letter both in my consciousness and in any effect which it can produce upon me, until the Spirit of God calls me out of darkness into marvelous light. And then through my calling, I see my election, and knowing myself to be called of God, I know myself to have been chosen of God from before the foundation of the world. It is a precious thing--that doctrine of election--to a child of God. But what makes it precious? Nothing but the influence of the Spirit. Until the Spirit opens the eye to read, until the Spirit imparts the mystic secret, no heart can know its election. No angel ever revealed to any man that he was chosen of God; but the Spirit doth it. He, by His divine workings, bears an infallible witness with our spirits that we are born of God; and then we are enabled to "read our title clear to mansions in the skies."

Look, again, at the covenant of grace. We know that there was a covenant made with the Lord Jesus Christ, by His Father, from before all worlds, and that in this covenant the persons of all His people were given to Him, and were secured; but of what use or of what avail is the covenant to us, until the Holy Spirit brings the blessings of the covenant to us? The covenant is, as it were, a lofty tree laden with fruit; if the Spirit doth not shake that tree and make the fruit fall therefrom until it comes to the level of our standing, how can we receive it? Bring hither any sinner and tell him there is a covenant of grace, what is he advantaged thereby? "Ah," says he, "I may not be included in it; my name may not be recorded there; I may not be chosen in Christ;" but let the Spirit of God dwell in his heart, richly by faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, and that man sees the covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and he cries with David, "It is all my salvation and all my desire."

Take again, the redemption of Christ. We know that Christ did stand in the room, place, and stead of all His people, and that all those who shall appear in heaven, will appear there as an act of justice as well as of grace, seeing that Christ was punished in their room and stead, and that it would have been unjust if God punished them, seeing that He had punished Christ for them. We believe that Christ having paid all their debts, they have a right to their freedom in Christ--that Christ having covered them with His righteousness, they are entitled to eternal life as much as if they had themselves been perfectly holy. But of what avail is this to me, until the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them to me? What is Christ's blood to any of you, until you

have received the Spirit of grace? You have heard the minister preach about the blood of Christ a thousand times, but you passed by; it was nothing to you that Jesus should die. You know that He did atone for sins that were not His own; but you only regarded it as a tale, perhaps, even an idle tale. But when the Spirit of God led you to the cross, and opened your eyes, and enabled you to see Christ crucified, ah, then there was something in the blood indeed. When His hand dipped the hyssop in the blood, and when it applied that blood in your spirit, then there was a joy and peace in believing such as you had never known before. But ah, my hearer, Christ's dying is nothing to thee, unless thou hast a living Spirit within thee. Christ brings thee no advantage, saving, personal, and lasting, unless the Spirit of God hath baptized thee in the fountain filled with His blood, and washed thee from head to foot therein.

I only mention these few out of the many blessings of the covenant, just to prove that they are none of them of any use to us, unless the Holy Spirit gives them to us. There hang the blessings on the nail--on the nail Christ Jesus; but we are short of stature; we cannot reach them; the Spirit of God takes them down and gives them to us, and there they are; they are ours. It is like the manna in the skies, far out of mortal reach; but the Spirit of God opens the windows of heaven, brings down the bread, and puts it to our lips, and enables us to eat. Christ's blood and righteousness are like wine stored in the wine vat: but we cannot get thereat. The Holy Spirit dips our vessel into this precious wine, and then we drink, but without the Spirit we must die and perish just as much, though the Father elect and the Son redeem, as though the Father never had elected, and though the Son had never bought us with His blood. The Spirit is absolutely necessary. Without Him neither the works of the Father, nor of the Son, are of any avail to us.

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## SIN

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(Heb. 2:2); but there is no "just recompense of reward" at all, if God lets the sinner off from the just penalty of his sins because he prays and begs and cries to be let off, or because priests or preachers pray and beg for him to be let off. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4), because there is no "just recompense of reward" in such cases. Much less can the sins be taken away when there is no recompense of reward at all in the case, but simply the praying and begging of the sinner to be forgiven, to be let off, and the praying and begging of some priest or preacher that the sinner be forgiven, let off. God has given a plain warning, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Among what are called evangelical denominations it would be looked upon as worse than folly for a Jew, a Unitarian or a Universalist, who had asked God to forgive his sins, or had confessed the sins, to claim that therefore

he was forgiven and was sure to go to heaven. But it is just as fatal a delusion among others as among Jews, Unitarians, and Universalists. Every transgression must have a "just recompense of reward," however sorry the sinner may be, however much he may pray and beg to be forgiven, let off; however much the priest or preacher or friends may pray for him to be forgiven, to be let off. A man who has violated the state law falls on his knees before the judge, confesses his sin and begs the judge to forgive him, to let him off; and he calls men from the audience to come and help him beg. The judge replies, "If I should yield to these petitions I would be a perjurer; I would trample on law. Every transgression must receive a just recompense of reward." Would that all could realize that every prayer from sinner, priest, or preacher, for a sinner to be forgiven, let off, is a prayer to God to become a perjurer. If sinners could realize that, after all their kneeling every night and confessing their sins, and praying to be forgiven, to be let off, every sin ever committed is still there, and that "without shedding of blood is no remission," they would then realize their real need of a Saviour, a Redeemer.

One question for the reader: "If God forgives, lets a sinner off, simply because he is sorry and cries and prays and begs to be let off, or because the priest or preacher cries, prays and begs for him to be forgiven, to be let off, why did Jesus die?"

The word translated forgiveness in the Bible means simply to send away, without reference to how sin is sent away; but God's Word states plainly, that sins are forgiven, sent away, by Christ bearing them. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree..." (I Peter 2:24). "...Christ died for our sins..." (I Cor. 15:3).

The prayer of the publican in the old version, "...God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), has misled many. If that was really the prayer of the publican, how could the Saviour have said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified..."? The margin of the Revised Version (1884) gives what the Greek says, "Be thou propitiated." It is the same Greek word that in Hebrews 2:17 is translated, "...to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." President Strong of Rochester Theological Seminary gives the exact meaning of it when he renders it, "Be thou propitiated to me the sinner by the sacrifice whose smoke was then ascending in the presence of the publican while he prayed." And Jesus shows what the publican said when He added, "...this man went down to his house justified..."

God's Word states plainly how our sins are put away; not by, or because of, the praying and weeping and confession of the sinner, nor the praying and weeping and interceding of others for the sinner, for God to forgive him; "...but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26). "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).