

THE MAGIC IS GONE

by Ray Waugh, Sr.

Our day, however, seems to be a whole other world! In the thinking of most, sexual activity is never illicit! Instead, both among the religious and among the irreligious, the emphases seem to be something relating to "relationships" and "lifestyles." One of those who has been referenced as a psychiatrist sometime

word "Guilty!" Dr. Menninger then goes on to explain the reaction of the people. He says, "They would stare at him, hesitate, look away, look at each other, and then at him again, then hurriedly continue on their ways."

One of those who would suffer this experience inquired, "But how did he know?" Dr. Menninger who obviously was wonderfully schooled in the Word of God even as he had been in medicine and psychiatry wisely went on to say that: "The solemn accuser on the Chicago street corner has had many predecessors. In the eighth to sixth centuries B.C. peripatetic exhorters held forth in thriving Palestinian villages attracting large and attentive crowds. To their listeners these earnest young men likewise cried 'guilty' and proclaimed ominously that for all the general prosperity, sin was prevalent thereabouts which, unacknowledged and unrepented, would bring dire consequences. These men were ignored, ridiculed as alarmists, jailed as trespassers, or driven from the country. In the course of time, their predictions were fulfilled and their countries were annihilated."

Is it possible that messages of the prophets of God in every generation have been similarly ignored, and with similar if not identical results? Throughout my young life while regularly in at-

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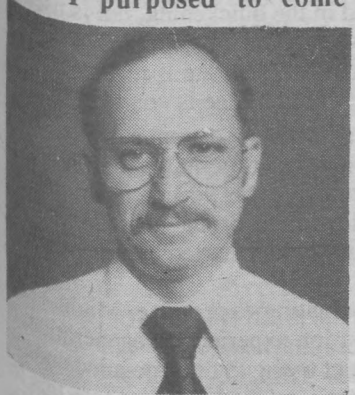


by Ray Waugh

ago "penned" a work that bears the title "Whatever Became of Sin? In this chapter titled, "A Brief and Biased Review of Moral History," we find these words, "On a sunny day in September, 1972, a stern-faced, plainly dressed man could be seen standing still on a street corner in the busy Chicago Loop. As pedestrians hurried by on their way to lunch or business, he would solemnly lift his right arm, and pointing to the person nearest him, intone loudly the single

DOES ONE HAVE TO BELIEVE THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE OR ELSE HE IS NOT SAVED?

Romans 1:13-17 "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come



John Pruitt

unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise: So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein

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The Baptist Examiner

Baptist Is Our Middle Name

Paid Circulation in All States and in Many Foreign Countries

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

VOL. 64, NO. 5

ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, FEBRUARY 29, 1992

WHOLE NUMBER 2627

GOD'S COVENANT OF REDEMPTION

Acts 3:25

John M. Alber, Pastor
"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the



John M. Alber

covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy

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STUDIES IN DANIEL

by John R. Gilpin

The passage of Scripture from the second chapter of the book of Daniel, shows Nebuchadnezzar as the king of Babylon.

I presume that most all of you are cognizant of the fact that God chose the Jewish people as His own race. They occupy a peculiar position in the mind of God -- so much so that God referred to them in the Old Testament as the "apple of His eye." Yet, beloved, because of their sin, the Jews forfeited their privilege and their position, and accordingly, they were carried captive into Babylon, because of the sins of which they were guilty. The Word of God very definitely tells us in the books of Kings and Chronicles of the sins that the Jews stood guilty of, and how that God caused them to go into captivity in Babylon with Nebuchadnezzar as the then king of Babylon. This book of Daniel tells of

their experiences. Nebuchadnezzar was king over the whole world. He was the first worldwide emperor. I can imagine that Nebuchadnezzar naturally wondered, "What's going to happen when



John R. Gilpin

I'm gone?" As he lay upon his bed one day, the thought came to him concerning his majesty, his might, the extent of his domain, and he wondered, "What's going

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THE UNBELIEF OF THOMAS

by Alexander Carson

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

It is remarkable that one of the disciples should have been absent from the assembly on such an interesting occasion as the appearing of Christ in its midst after His resurrection. (John 20). What was the cause of his absence it would be worse than useless to conjecture. But the intention of providence in it is obvious. It was to display the natural unbelief, as to the things of God, that is in the heart of

man; as to teach us the kind of evidence that God accounts sufficient for His saving truth. Why was one of the disciples absent? Why was this disciple Thomas? The narrative itself affords an answer to both questions. God's providence intended to give us a specimen of unbelief even in His own people. Thomas was particularly incredulous, therefore he was the person fitted to act the part designed for him on this occasion. If Thomas was afterwards convinced, there is no room left for captiousness to allege that the fact of Christ's resurrection was

received by the disciples on slight grounds, without sufficient evidence and caution.

The unbelief of Thomas was unreasonable and sinful in a degree beyond expression. Why did he not believe the united testimony of the other apostles? He should have received the testimony of any one of them. Unbelief justly exposed him to eternal condemnation. Has Thomas a license for unbelief, more than any other of the human race? Must he not be liable to condemnation on

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THE PRIMACY OF PRAYER

by Alfred Smith

4. Where is there scriptural example or precept to teach anyone to pray for the salvation of the wicked or for sinners to be born again?"

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

We are not invited to pray, we are commanded to pray. It is very scriptural to pray and is as



Alfred Smith

natural as breathing on the part of persons who are regenerated. If in terms of theological determinism, all things have been decreed to be or not to be (not to be confused with fatalism) by God's infinite omniscience, why bother to pray?

We simply must pray because it is the inner propensity of the new nature which God creates when He regenerates us. It is a super-natural by-product of the new birth. It is not, "Do I have to pray?" It is, "I want very much to pray because I have an innate desire to do so."

Through prayer we discover the will of God, we do not change

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

SOUL WINNING AND THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ...For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:20-21, 27).

Since soul winning and the doctrines of grace are taught in the Word of God, I must teach them both if I declare "all the counsel of God." Also, since

both are taught in the Word of God, there can be no conflict between them.

There is an imagined conflict between these Biblical truths. This conflict is agitated by the Arminians. They insist that the doctrines of grace cannot be true because, as they think, they are contrary to soul winning. Sadly, this conflict is sometimes agitated by some sovereign grace preachers because they think that the doctrines of grace are contrary to soul winning. This conflict is often aided and abetted by the fact that many Sovereign Gracers are not soul winners; therefore, the Arminians draw the false

conclusion that our doctrines oppose the winning of souls. A major purpose of this message is to show that there is absolutely no conflict between soul winning and the doctrines of grace; rather there is a close connection between them when both are properly understood.

What are the doctrines of grace? They can be easily remembered by taking the word "TULIP," and letting each letter stand for one of these precious, wonderful, and Biblical truths. The "T" stands for Total Depravity: that man is depraved in every part of his

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The Baptist Examiner
JOSEPH M. WILSON, EDITOR
Office Ph. 606-325-2012
Home Ph. 606-329-1758
Owned, authorized and published by Calvary Baptist Church, Ashland, Ky.

Editorial Department, located in ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, where all subscriptions and communications should be sent. Address: P.O. Box 60, Zip Code 41105-0060.

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PUBLISHED EVERY 2 WEEKS at 3339 - 13th St., Ashland, Ky., with paid circulation in every state and many foreign countries.

Subscription rates are \$6.00 per year. **PLANNING TO MOVE?** - Notify us three weeks in advance. The post office will only forward second class mail for 60 days at no charge to us. After this time the paper is returned to us at a 35 cent charge for each paper returned. Please save us this expense and the post office time.

Second Class Postage paid at Ashland, Kentucky.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Baptist Examiner, P.O. Box 60, Ashland, Kentucky 41105-0060.

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depraved in every part of his being and cannot and will not save or help save himself. He is dead in trespasses and sins. The "U" stands for Unconditional Election: that, out of totally depraved mankind, God eternally and unconditionally elected a multitude and predestinated them to be the recipients of eternal salvation. The "L" stands for Limited Atonement: that Jesus Christ died effectually and savingly for, and only for, the elect of God. All for whom He died will most assuredly be eternally saved. The "I" stands for Irresistible Grace: that the Holy Spirit will irresistibly and efficaciously call all those elected by the Father and redeemed by the Son to the experience of salvation. The Father "thought" it, the Son "bought" it, and the Spirit "wrought" it. The Spirit applies the purposed and purchased salvation to the elected individuals. The "P" stands, not for "preservation" but for "Perseverance": that all those saved by the effectual work of the Spirit will persevere in repentance, faith, and holiness and are eternally saved.

Please know that I adamantly believe these doctrines. I have never even wavered on them since I first believed them. The Holy Spirit, using the Word, has taught me these truths; and they are very precious to my soul. I would not give a one of them up, or even dilute a one of them for ten thousand worlds. They have been wrought into my soul by the blessed Holy Spirit, and I would not part with them for anything. I preach these truths. I

preach all of them. I spell them out. I explain them so that men will know that I am preaching them. I preach them frequently. I preach them strongly. They permeate my preaching. I love these truths most dearly. I think that the record of my preaching and writing for the past many years bears out what I have said here.

There is no real conflict between these truths and soul winning, but there is an imagined one. I want to show you that there is no real conflict here. I want to show you that these two



Joe Wilson

truths are not enemies; rather, they are the best of friends. Let me start out by making what many might consider a startling statement: soul winning is what the doctrines of grace are all about. Ponder that a while. Stay with me as we consider this statement. Just look at the matter in general. The doctrines of grace are all about the matter of lost sinners being eternally saved - is this not so? We start out with totally depraved mankind. We end up with a multitude that no man can number, clothed in white robes, rejoicing before the throne of God and in the presence of God. How does this wonder come about. It comes about by reason of the doctrines of grace. These doctrines start with totally depraved sinners and end up with glorified saints - and that is salvation, that is soul winning. There is no conflict here. The doctrines of grace are the way in which God brings about the winning of souls.

Let us examine this in some detail. Total Depravity teaches us that men are lost and undone, and that their greatest need is that of being saved. Unconditional Election teaches us that God has elected a vast multitude from among totally depraved sinners to be eternally saved. Limited Atonement teaches us that Christ died for a vast multitude of totally depraved sinners, thus securing and assuring their eternal salvation. Irresistible Grace teaches us that the Holy Spirit works, using the gospel, effectually and brings a great multitude to the glorious experience of the saving grace of God - an experience that a totally depraved sinner could never know without the effectual work of the Holy Spirit. Perseverance teaches us that the life the Holy Spirit gives in regeneration (using the gospel to do so) is a life that will endure forever. Its activities and effects will keep on keeping on. It is a life that is characterized by repentance, faith, and holiness; and it will continue through all life with those characteristics - and of course, eternally therewith. Now, how could these doctrines of grace that constitute and set forth the way in which God saves sinners ever possibly be in conflict with the saving of sinners - the winning of souls? Again I say that soul winning is what the doctrines of grace are all about.

Now, get this point very care-

fully: The doctrines of grace should not be used as an excuse, and cannot be used as justification for not winning souls. I greatly fear that many sovereign grace people (one of them being Joe Wilson) have at times done this. I would here urge every reader to examine himself as to this. I readily admit that there is in the doctrines of grace the possibility for such a perversion as this. A man may say to himself (or he may act this without even daring to say it) that the elect are going to be saved no matter what I do, and the non-elect are not going to be saved no matter what I do; therefore I just will not do anything. A man may, in this way, seek to excuse his doing nothing in the great work of winning souls to Jesus Christ; but this is a perversion and misuse of the doctrines of grace. Let me illustrate.

A farmer knows that having a good harvest is in the hands of the Lord. It is up to the Lord as to having a bountiful harvest. There are things beyond the farmer's control, under God's sovereign control, that determine the harvest. So, the farmer just sits idly by and waits for God to give a good harvest. He will not plough, he will not plant, he will not cultivate; he just leaves it all in the hands of the Lord. What will happen? That farmer will have no harvest, and deservedly so. Will any man blame God because such a farmer did not have a good harvest? Will we rather not blame the farmer? Of course, God is sovereign over the sun, over the rain, over the different matters that enter into a good harvest; but the farmer is responsible to plough, plant, and cultivate; and if he does not do these things, he will have no harvest.

The unsaved person says that if he is elect he will be saved no matter what; and if he is not elect, he will not be saved no matter what he does. So, he decides to just give the matter no further thought. He will just go on in his sins and leave it all in the hands of the Lord as to whether or not he ever gets saved. The man who continues through life with that attitude will wind up in hell. We would all rebuke such a man. We would give him the gospel, we would preach against his sins, we would tell him that he must repent and believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved. We would say that the doctrines of grace do not justify such an attitude on the part of the unsaved man.

Now, apply this to the believer who is not seeking to win souls. He says that if God has elected a man to be saved, that man will be saved even if the believer never does anything to bring this about. He says, "I don't need to pray for that man, I don't need to witness to him, if God is going to save him, He will do it no matter what I do or don't do." He says, "If that man is not one of the elect, he will not be saved no matter how much I pray for him, how much I witness to him, or how much I urge him to be saved." Such a man is perverting the doctrines of grace to excuse his sinful disobedience to the Word of God, and he is ignoring many other portions of the Bible. My friend, you would be better off to just admit that you are deliberately disobeying God rather than to try to use some of God's precious truths to seek to excuse your disobedience. Of course, you would really be better off to start obeying God's Word and seeking

to win souls to Jesus Christ.

Now, what would you say to the farmer described above? What would you say to the unsaved man described above? More important, what would you say to the believer described above? Again I say that the doctrines of grace should not be used as an excuse, and cannot be used as justification for not winning souls. I think that many of us

need to give this matter some very serious thought.

I wish I could burn the following statement into all of our hearts. We do not win souls because we do not try to win souls. When we have tried and tried and tried, it will be time enough to look for some other reason. Really that again. It is foolish, if not wicked, for us to use this

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FROM THE EDITOR

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit. 3:5-7).

Now, let us see what some of our modern theologians would do with this Scripture. Mercy is one thing and grace is something else. You see we are saved by His mercy, but we are justified by His grace. Well, we have regeneration, and that is without the gospel. Later on, we have salvation! and salvation is with the gospel. But we must also understand that salvation by the gospel is time salvation, while eternal salvation is without the gospel. Then we must be sure to separate the washing of regeneration from the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Then we must understand that later on we are justified. Then sometime later we are made heirs. We must be sure to separate all these things. In this Scripture, we have salvation, the washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and justification. We must put each of these in its proper place and order. We must tell which of these are done by or with the gospel, and which are done without the gospel. We must divide all these things properly. (a parody) This is how many modern theologians would handle this Scripture.

Oh, we have had so many problems and so much division lately over men dividing what is really not divisible. Men trying to decide what goes where, and how each part is accomplished. We have had so many problems over men dividing up the salvation experience into different parts.

Brother Dan Phillips is a wise old East Tennessee hillbilly. He said something like this to me recently, "Brother Joe, we did not have all these problems until some of us started dividing these things up." Well, said, Brother Phillips. We used to talk about salvation. We used to talk about the salvation experience. We had great harmony. We did not have all this division about the salvation experience. We did not have all these problems. But then men started dividing things up, and we started having problems, and we started having broken fellowship, or lesser fellowship.

First I heard that men are regenerated, or born again, and later on they are saved. It might be a very short time or a very long time, but there was a time when a man was a born again child of God, but he was not saved; he was impenitent and unbelieving. Back then, when I first heard this, it was said that regeneration was with the gospel. I wrote some friends who held this. I warned them that their doctrine was opening the door for the Hardshells. Sadly, I have lived to see my prophecy fulfilled. I have seen men enter through the door of the "time lapse" theory right into Hardshellism.

Some men say a man is quickened and later on he is converted. One man says that the new birth is divided up into regeneration and conversion. One man says that there is conception, the giving of life without the gospel; and later on there is the bringing of that life to birth by the gospel. One man says that regeneration is divided into quickening and conversion; that the gospel is not used in the quickening, but is used in conversion. A popular division is between regeneration and conversion - there is a book on the subject. This teaches that one is regenerated by the Spirit without the gospel, and later on that one is converted by the use of the gospel. There is the division between eternal salvation with out the gospel and time salvation with the gospel. One man writes of over forty ways to be saved. One man divides between regeneration and being born again. Yes, Dan, you hit the nail on the head; we did not have all the problems we now have until men started making all these divisions.

Might I suggest that there is the salvation experience. Might I suggest that we might call this one salvation experience: regeneration, or being born again, or conversion without trying to draw detailed and distinct differences between these things - might I just suggest this for consideration? I do not say that there is no distinction whatsoever between these terms, but I am asking if men have not clouded and complicated the matter by their detailed and minute dividing of these things. Could I even hint that men sometimes get too smart for their own good? Could I just suggest that men sometimes try to read beneath the surface and try to see things that are not there?

I have grieved greatly over these matters. I have fought hard over these things. I have been severely criticized over these things. I have had good friends turn against me because I would not go along with their finely drawn, hair-splitting dealing with these things. I have grown weary of men teaching that a man is regenerated without the gospel, and later on he is saved by the gospel - and many such foolish fables coming from the minds of men. I believe that Dan Phillips has hit on something here, "We did not have all this trouble until we started all this dividing of things." Maybe, we ought to listen to the words of wisdom from this East Tennessee hillbilly. I, for one, would like to get away from all these hair splitting dividings that have caused so many problems, so many heartaches, and so many divisions of fellowship. What think you, my brothers, could Brother Dan have something here? Could this be a glimmer of light on a path that could lead us back to closer and better fellowship? I don't know, but I do think that Dan hit the nail on the head.

SOUL

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doctrines of grace to justify our not winning souls when we are not even trying to do so. It is sinful to seek to use such precious truths to seek to excuse our disobedience to the Lord.

The doctrines of grace are not a hindrance to soul winning. God teaches both of these; therefore they cannot be contradictory; neither can one be a real hindrance to the other. Even if these doctrines should be a hindrance to soul winning, it would be our duty to obey God in seeking to win souls and to leave the results with the Lord. Let us look at this somewhat in detail. Of course, Total Depravity cannot be a hindrance to winning souls, for it shows forth the great need thereof. Yet, one might consider it such by saying that men are dead and cannot hear the gospel; therefore there is no use preaching it to them. But it is the effectual work of the Holy Spirit that uses the gospel in giving spiritual life, so this doctrine is no hindrance. Unconditional spiritual life, so this doctrine is no hindrance. Unconditional Election is no hindrance to soul winning, for it assures us that a great multitude will be saved. Limited Atonement is no hindrance to soul winning. Jesus Christ died for the elect of God. This, in connection with the total of the doctrines of grace, involves the truth that Jesus died for anyone and everyone who wants to be saved. I do not, I should not, and I cannot tell every sinner that Jesus died for him. This just is not true of everyone. But I can tell every sinner to whom I witness, "Jesus died for you if you desire to be saved." Handled in this way, the doctrine of a Limited Atonement is no hindrance to soul winning. Effectual Calling is no hindrance to soul winning, for this is that which makes soul winning effective and successful. Perseverance is no hindrance to soul winning, for it gives the sweet assurance of eternal salvation to all who will receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. My friend, if your views of the doctrines of grace hinder you in inviting any and every sinner to Jesus Christ or in believing that God will receive everyone who comes, then your views are wrong. Some have allowed their views of the doctrines of grace to hinder their giving a full and free gospel invitation to the unsaved; their views are wrong. Believe with all your heart the precious truths of God's sovereign and saving grace; be faithful in witnessing to the unsaved, seeking to win them to Christ; these two things are not contradictory but wonderfully harmonious. I am one Sovereign Gracer who believes in the free offer of the gospel. If a sovereign gracer does not believe in this free offer, he is wrong in his views of the doctrines of grace. There is nothing in the doctrines of grace, properly understood, that hinders the free offer of eternal salvation to all who hear the gospel.

Maybe we should take a little time to deal with the difference between the Hardshells (new and old) and Missionary Baptists on this matter. Both groups believe the doctrines of grace. The Hardshells believe that the gospel is not used in regeneration. This naturally leads them to believe that there is no need of or use in preaching the gospel to the un-

saved. This is why the Old Hardshells are anti-evangelism and anti-missionary. This leads the New Hardshells to formulate a different purpose for the preaching of the gospel. The New Hardshells are those (many still wrongfully claim to be Missionary Baptists) who believe that regeneration is without the gospel, but that the regenerated will hear and believe the gospel before death - the Old Hardshells believe one may never hear the gospel until in heaven. The New Hardshells have, as I said, formulated a new purpose for the preaching of the gospel. They say the gospel is not used in the giving of life, but it is used to enlighten the regenerated one as to what has happened; or it is used to bring the one already regenerated, already a child of God (would you believe it?) to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

True Missionary Baptists believe that the gospel is used in regeneration. They believe that one must and will go to hell if he never hears and believes the precious gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Missionary Baptists should be constantly and continually active in soul winning efforts - they should be busy in giving the gospel to the unsaved. They should be active in "Telling the Old Old Story of Jesus and His Love." Oh, my missionary baptist brother and sister, let us become more faithful in telling the unsaved the story of Jesus. If the sinner does not believe in Jesus Christ, he will not be saved; if he does not hear about Jesus, he cannot believe - oh, let us be faithful in giving the gospel to the unsaved.

Many who are Missionary Baptist in doctrine are Hardshell in practice. Read that over a few times. The Hardshell says that the sinner does not have to hear the gospel to be born again; so he does not tell it to the sinner. The Missionary Baptist says that the sinner does have to hear the gospel to be born again, but many of them (of us) are not giving the gospel to the unsaved. Oh, I hate Hardshellism, but I do wonder if our practical hardshellism (not seeking to win souls) is not as bad. It does not look too good for a Missionary Baptist who does not seek to win souls, who does not give the gospel to the unsaved, but who says that the unsaved must hear the gospel to be born again; to throw stones at the Hardshell who is also not giving the gospel to the unsaved, but is not doing this because he does not believe it necessary to that one's being born again.

The doctrines of grace encourage soul winning. They do not hinder soul winning, they encourage it. The doctrines of grace guarantee that a multitude will be saved. These doctrines promote soul winning effort because they guarantee that much of such effort will result in souls being saved. The Holy Spirit gives the effectual call in conjunction with the giving of the gospel. The Holy Spirit never gives the effectual call of saving grace to one who has not heard the gospel. Now, the effectual call of the Holy Spirit is not necessarily tied to the time of the giving of the gospel. You might give the gospel to an unsaved man today, and the Holy Spirit may use that gospel in giving spiritual life at a later time. But understand that, in order to regeneration, there must always be the gospel of Jesus Christ and

the power of the Holy Spirit. No one will ever be saved without both of these. Be faithful in giving the gospel to the unsaved. God will bless you and reward you for this. Do not be discouraged and give up on this because you do not see the results you desire to see at the exact time you desire. God may save one to whom you witnessed some time after your giving of that witness. Perseverance assures and guarantees that the one saved by the Holy Spirit using the gospel we gave will be saved forever. So, you see that the doctrines of grace are an encouragement to soul winning.

Many preachers have been strong preachers of the doctrines of grace, and still have been great soul winners. This fact of history, multiplied many times over, is enough to prove that there is great harmony between these things. The great Spurgeon comes immediately to mind. Surely, he preached the doctrines of grace - oh, how wonderfully and frequently did he preach them! We still delight to read his great sermons. Spurgeon was also a mighty winner of souls. He was as strong on soul winning as he was on the doctrines of grace. He was constantly seeking the salvation of the lost. There is a book of his sermons on soul winning, called "The soul Winner." I am considering running them in this paper. But they are only a few of a multitude of such sermons by this mighty preacher.

Spurgeon was not the only preacher of the doctrines of grace who was at the same time a soul winner. Robert M'Cheyne was certainly another. John Bunyan was another example of such. Adoniram Judson was a mighty missionary and winner of souls who also believed in and preached the doctrines of grace. Whitefield, mighty winner of souls, was a preacher of the doctrines of grace. The pages of Christian history are filled with the names and deeds of preachers who were winners of souls and preachers of sovereign grace. Arminianism cannot come close to listing as many mighty winners of souls as can the doctrines of grace. The testimony of history is all on the side of sovereign grace.

No one will attempt to deny that the mighty Apostle Paul was surely a soul winner. Only the ignorant and prejudiced would even attempt to deny that he was a Sovereign Gracer. Let us look at three Scriptures. "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (I Cor.4:15.) Paul knew that men must be born again. He knew that only the Holy Spirit could produce the new birth. He also knew that the Holy Spirit used the gospel in doing this. He knew, and he was grateful to God, that God had used his preaching of the gospel in the salvation of a vast multitude. Paul was a sovereign grace soul winner - yes, he was.

"To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Cor.9:22). Of course Paul knew that he could not actually save anyone. But he also knew that God uses the gospel in saving men. He knew that God had used his giving of the gospel in the saving of man. He was willing to do whatever was nec-

essary in order to be used by God in the saving of men's souls. He did not say, "I can't save men, so I will just not bother with it." He said, "God can use my giving the gospel in the saving of souls, so I will be faithful in doing this." What do you and I say?

"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Tim.2:10). Paul did not say, "The elect are going to be saved no matter what I do or don't do; therefore, I will do nothing. There is no need in my suffering as much as I am, for the elect will be saved anyway. I am just going to quit." He said, "God uses the gospel in saving the elect, He might be pleased to use my giving of the gospel in the salvation of many. Anyway, I am responsible to give the gospel to them. I am willing to suffer anything so that I might be used in the salvation of many of the elect." What do we say? My brother, my sister, the Bible is all with me in my teaching in this message. There is a connection between soul winning and the doctrines of grace. All Sovereign Gracers ought to be soul winners. Oh, that the dear Lord might use this message (for me, especially for me, and for many) to, not at all lessen our love for or preaching of the doctrines of grace; but to stir us up to become winners of souls. I know of no greater need among Sovereign Gracers than that they become soul winners. Yours for souls in 1992. May God bless you. Comments welcome.

MAGIC

(Continued from Page 1)

tendence at our little Riverside Methodist Episcopal Church on a well-traveled road, where the Gospel was preached each time the doors were opened, I can recall the many, many warnings that fell from the lips of many evangelists and the pastors whom I loved. At times, in my youth, I would sometimes fail to follow their advice definitively, but even in my lost condition, I could never get away from it.

Time after time, as a direct result of that preaching, that counseling, and that advising, I would be spared the depths of sin which some of my fellowmen were experiencing, sometimes to their loss in time and in eternity. Later, after I was saved, I would be wonderfully blessed by the preaching and the teaching of great evangelists and great pastors and preachers who would help me to understand some of the things that had happened in the lives of my friends, fellow workers, and occasional loved ones. One young man in particular with whom I had gone through grade school and whom I had known as a dear friend subsequently had sunk to the depths of sin that God condemned, and before he was 25, he had passed from this life. He had cared not, about "the sin unto death"! And he would experience it before he was 25! Though men in those distant days of 50 or so years ago did not speak of "relationships" or "lifestyles" as some are inclined to do in our day, some of them were laying the groundwork for the discussions and the issues of that sinfulness which some are experiencing today. It is quite

probable that most people in those distant days would not have been able to define "Homosexuality" or "Bestiality," but some already were indulging in the practices. Too, if one had attempted to identify some of the sicknesses which today follow on and bring death to those who are supposedly or actually suffering from that which has been identified as AIDS in recent years, it is quite probable that they would have been laughed-out of the medical profession.

In this day, however, when "strains" of diseases are easily identified because of improved technology, computers, and medical expertise, that which we knew 50 years and more ago is considered now to be "ancient history"! And while the Apostle Paul may not have given the proper medical terminology, he had an insight into the issues of some of the sins of men that are sometimes violated with impunity today, but not apart from an awful; yea, a terrible price: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves; Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like, to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient..."

To this point, however, God has not provided that I should work with those who are in the throes of AIDS, or those who are practicing homosexuals or practicing lesbians. I have known, however, some of these who later would be diagnosed as such, and then die rather young. I did have the experience of sitting with one during his last night on earth, but he was in a coma from which he never recovered.

Thankfully, I do not feel at this point that our God has somehow done me wrong because I have not yet had the experience of "ministering consciously" to these who are in the throes of their final months or days of AIDS. If I am reading the Scriptures correctly, I do not find that Abraham ever had occasion to work with them. The Apostle Paul makes it rather evident, nonetheless, that these who have

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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

Briefly explain your method of interpreting The Song of Solomon. Does it describe a real love between Solomon and some woman?

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"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (II Corinthians 11:2)

How sad and deplorable in our present time, that the church, it's individual members, and their relationship with Christ is treated, or ignored as it is by most of the Christian masses. The ignorance which abounds concerning the joyous intimacies between the true churches and their coming Bridegroom is evident in our day of the soon coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Song of Solomon, which I believe is a book that shows the Bridegroom and Bride (Jesus and His church) and their love for each other, is a typical book little understood by most today.

The interpretations of this book are too numerous to mention. They range from Rabbis seeing only God and His love for Israel in the book, to interpreters who see only a description of physical marital love displayed. Some see the book as only allegory that permits an individual interpretation of anything and everything depending upon the diversity of the interpreter's imagination. Some of these interpreters see such things as the Virgin Mary, the Lord's supper, etc. in the book. This precious book is not a collection of pagan fertility, cult liturgies, nor is it an anthology of songs extolling physical human love. I do not believe it is a record of a true romance between Solomon and the Shulamite.

I subscribe to the typical method of understanding the Song of Solomon. I believe that the book contains the type of Christ (the Bridegroom), the true church (the Bride), and an expression of their intimacies of love toward each other that can have no true recognition, or understanding but by a true believer. I believe that Israel is also mentioned in the book, but the center of attention is Christ and His love, courtship, perfecting, and coming for His bride. Again I emphasize that only those who know and understand the church and her relationship to Christ, will understand, or truly appreciate

ate this book and the joy that it unlocks. I do not want to give the impression that it is a book easily understood, nor should we try to give every tiny detail a meaning and unmovable interpretation, but as the Spirit leads in the study of this book, it is profitable and invokes great love and desire toward our Lord and coming Bridegroom. I certainly believe that it should be studied, preached, and taught more than it is, to His glory and our profit. May God enable us to do so.

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Song of Solomon 1:1: "The song of songs, which is Solomon's."

The Song of Solomon is a very difficult book to understand. Much of what we get from this book will depend upon our method of interpretation. Let me first mention that I believe that Solomon probably wrote this book in his early days of proper fellowship with his Lord. Some think he wrote it in his latter years, after a return to God.

There are great difficulties in trying to interpret this book. The first difficulty arises from not always knowing who is doing the speaking. The second difficulty comes from not understanding all the different figures that are used by Solomon. The culture of that day is different from ours and we have trouble understanding their way of life.

Let me mention some possible methods of interpretation. First, there is the natural or literal interpretation. This interpretation says this book talks about a true and proper love between a man and a woman. Most believe it has reference to Solomon and some woman; possibly, Pharaoh's daughter, Abishag, or a Shulamite woman. There is indeed much needed truth in this book about such a relationship. The difficulty of this interpretation is that with Solomon's history with many women, it is hard to believe he had these kinds of feelings for one special woman. Secondly, there is the typical method of interpreting this book. This method says that this book is based on some true history of Solomon and some woman, but it is spoken of typically for the love of Christ for His people and them for Him. The third method is allegorical. This says that there is no true history involved. Names of persons and places are used only for setting forth the subject. This method says this book only deals with love be-

tween God and His people. The typical and the allegorical methods of interpretation say the love here can be applied to the following; 1. To Israel as the Lord's people. 2. The church as the espoused Bride of Christ. (I have a difficult time with this. Though things said in this book could be applied to that relationship, I do not believe that Solomon had that in mind. There was no church then.) 3. To the individual believer. I lean towards this. I lean towards the typical method of interpretation. I think in the main this book refers to the love there should be between God and His people. May God bless you all.

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There are about as many different opinions as to the Song of Solomon as there are commentaries. Some say that it is a fictitious story made up and written about King Solomon and one of his many wives, and that it was written in later times. They give no credibility as far as being a part of the inspired Scriptures.

Others will say that it was a fictitious drama written by Solomon himself, and is typical of the relationship between God and Israel. Yet another view is that it is a true drama written by King Solomon about himself and a poor shepherd's daughter, of their courtship and marriage; and his vivid description of their deep and devoted love for one another. This book also being a typical description of the loving relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and His bride, the church. I am more inclined to accept the latter interpretation for the following reasons.

First, the geography of the book is real. It speaks of real cities and real countries. Secondly, the story names many different kinds of trees, plants, animals, birds, spices, etc.; these being found in and around Judah in Solomon's day. Thirdly, though the woman, Solomon's bride is not named, she is referred to in Chapter 6:13 as a "Shulamite." Also Solomon refers to himself as well as Pharaoh. Fourth, the many references by the Lord, Paul, John, and John the Baptist in various books of the New Testament, speak of Christ's bride, and His divine love for His bride.

Without a doubt, the Song of Solomon is anything but simple to interpret unless one has his or her mind geared strictly to spiri-

tual things. There are perhaps no references to this book in any other book of the Bible. It is not mentioned nor quoted in the New Testament, and there is no direct mention of God in the book. Nevertheless, there is no more logical application of its content than the Lord's church. Thank you for your question.

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The Song of Solomon is one of the most controversial books of the Bible. The controversy is not over the inspiration nor its author, but rather upon its interpretations.

The fact that Solomon was inspired to call it, "THE song of songs" tells us it is an outstanding song. There was a "holy of holies" in the temple. Christ is "King of kings" and "Lord of lords." Likewise, in the Scripture, God has placed a "song of songs" among the songs of the Word.

While the book presents, in song, a beautiful love story, it carries very important Scriptural truths. As to what those truths are there is much division and debate. There are two views which I think we should consider. First, there are those who believe there are only two characters in the song, Solomon the king and a Shulamite maiden and this is the love story of these two. The spiritual application is Solomon is Christ and the lowly Shulamite maiden being the church, the Bride of Christ. This love story portrays the love that exists between Christ and His church.

The second view is that there are three main characters, Solomon the king, the Shulamite maiden, and a shepherd, who is in love with the maiden and she him, as well as some minor characters. This method presents Solomon as Satan, the maiden as the church which he is trying to woo away from the shepherd who is represented as Christ. Regardless of which of these two interpretations we use we can see that the song is using a moving earthly love story to illustrate the heavenly love that Christ has for His church, His bride, and she for Him. Looking at the song from this view point, we can see why Solomon called it, "The song of songs."

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(Continued from Page 3)

made it their intention to boldly, brazenly, brashly, and blasphemously violate God's law regarding men and women being made for each other only in a Scriptural relationship must have the reality of "a certain doom" which they bring upon themselves. Some are persisting unbelievers who are lost! Their judgment will be at White Throne! These who literally thumb their noses at God and who raise their protesting fists as to their supposed "Rights," however, discover that there is a most desperate price that they have to pay in time for their "hatreds" of

all that our God has deemed to be good in the male and female relationships. These may call themselves "gays," but look deeply into their eyes and, and you will see nothing but fear, desperation, and a cry for help, knowing that none will come.

Do any of these who are calling themselves "Gay," have any regard for their fellowmen or for their fellow women? No! And we might even say, ten thousand times, "No" All of those who are indulging in these homosexual and lesbian relationships are bringing upon themselves God's promise of doom in time. Others, by their illicit heterosexual relationships, and sometimes by their involvement in drugs that require needles, are passing on their disease to their fellowmen and their fellow women. And they are doing this in a "most cold-blooded" and "wholly heartless fashion." They know only their own selfish lusts and their own selfish interests. These enemies both of God and of men have no regard whatever for their fellowmen or their fellow women. Tragically, they obviously are doing this without care. They care not for their own welfare, or that of others! Today, America is being blanketed with the idea that "homosexuals" have their rights as "homosexuals" when they are in the process of destroying "The Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave" more fully than a "Tojo" or a "Hitler" ever did. Though illicit sexual activities of the homosexual or even of the heterosexual sort may be deemed to be commonplace and permissible in this 20th Century, we can know that our God who is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" has never given His approval of such. Therefore, we can know first of all that any who encourage illicit sexual activity or who put their approval on such as an "acceptable sort of relationship" or as an "acceptable lifestyles" is the destruction of their fellowmen and fellow women, we can know that they are traitors to the human race! It is no marvel that God sends quick "Judgment"! They are enemies of His cause and the Saviour! Yes, today, there is an apparent and appalling ignorance in the high places in our land regarding the judgments of God upon those who are involved in homosexual activity and illicit heterosexual activity. Still, men who should be wiser, and who should know better, often honor these enemies of God and of men, and of the Word of God, with high governmental jobs and high governmental responsibilities. It should be rather evident that many who are in high places in our land in the realms of government and in the realms of religion apparently have little or no regard whatever for the Holy Word of God.

In the days when Abraham was advised that God soon would be destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham conversed (prayed, if you will) with God. The climax came in that hour when "the angels" went to the house of Lot to advise him of the coming destruction. Those homosexuals who were desirous of having "relationships" with the visiting angels, and who had no desire for the daughters of Lot had an awful end ahead. First, they were "blinded" to the reality of the people of God and "blinded" to the reality of the Holy Word of God.

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The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

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

Explain Acts 2:38 as to "for the remission of sins."

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The religious world in one way or another teaches salvation by works. We do not find in the Bible any Scriptural proof that salvation is by works. But rather, there is abundance of proof that salvation is by grace. Being by grace then it is not by works. We read in Romans 11:5-6, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace." In Ephesians 2:8-9, we learn this same truth, "For by grace, are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

The preposition "for" in the quotation in the question is a word meaning "with reference to," or "pointing to something already in existence. The word "for" in the question does not mean in order to get remission but because remission was a possession already. Baptism was for or because of repentance, and that their sins had already been forgiven. We cannot make baptism an act of grace whereby we receive remission, if this were the case, then Ephesians 2:8-9, and Romans 11:5-6 would not be true, but these Scriptures are true, showing that baptism does not bring salvation.

We say, "A man is put in jail for stealing," that is because he has stolen, not in order to steal. If we were to make "for" to mean "in order to receive," we would certainly be teaching salvation by works, for baptism is a work. Even though it is a righteous work, we are not saved by righteous works. Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Again, "for the remission of sins," does not mean we get or have our sins remitted by baptism. It is no more possible to have our sins forgiven by baptism than it was for the Jews to have their sins taken away by the blood of goats and calves. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12). Redemption is by the blood of Christ and not in

the waters of baptism. The washing from sins is by the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5).

Again notice that there is no remission in the water of baptism. Remission is by the blood of Christ, "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

Let us take notice of Acts 2:39. Those people who were pricked in their hearts were the elect of God, and God calls His elect people. God promised before the world was, to call His people. Titus 1:1-2, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." And the inspired words of Peter in verse thirty nine, "For the promise is unto you..." Those that were pricked in heart. And the promise is, "to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." These some three thousand souls never would have called out unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, "...Men and brethren, what shall we do?" If God had not called them. This was an effectual call. God called them and He justified them, and then the apostles obeyed the command that God gave His church in the commission to baptism them.

If people would read and study the 39th verse of Acts two with the 38th verse, they would find God called them because He promised to do so before the world began. Baptism is in obedience to the command of Christ for those who have already repented.

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"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts. 2:38). This verse is stated in response to a question asked in verse thirty seven, "what shall we do?" A certain portion of the multitude had heard in a special way the sermon that Peter had preached concerning Jesus Christ. The way they heard had a distinct effect upon them in that they were pricked in their hearts. The word pricked means to stun and is used of strong emotion. The people that had been stunned in their hearts wanted to know

what they should do. Read chapter nine concerning the conversion of Saul and you will find the same word "Prick" translated "goad", not "stun", but the result is the same. Saul asked what he should do.

This question, "what shall we do?" has great importance. It asks, in response to the stunning of the heart, what must be done to complete the action that has been started. What is the required action that must be taken? Although it is not stated, the word saved is implied. Look at one other passage where the same question is asked. This question is asked of Paul in Acts 16:30 by the jailer, "what must I do to be saved?" At this point, Paul tells the jailer everything that is needed for salvation, every step that should be followed to obtain salvation. To leave out anything would make the act incomplete. So, Paul states everything that is needed for salvation. "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). The only necessary step for salvation is to believe, and you will be saved.

The question that these people asked is the same. Peter is going to tell them what they must do. His instruction is that they are to repent, to repent is to have a change of mind. To believe is to have faith. These two words, repent and believe, have a basic meaning relative to salvation. Change your mind and place your faith in Jesus Christ instead of those things in which you now believe. Up to this point, both men have given the same instructions. Repent and believe.

Two actions result from the word repent. The first is an outward, visible one performed by the one that has been stunned and repented. It is not a part of the salvation process; it is an added instruction by Peter. It says that everyone that has repented and believed should be baptized. Notice the phrase "for the remission of sins". The word "for" has many meanings. There are those, especially Campbellites, that contend that this word "for" means in order to obtain, and place baptism as necessary to salvation. Such a requirement is not only in error, it is an outright lie. There is nothing required to obtain salvation but repentance and faith. Paul said nothing to the jailer concerning being baptized when he asked what he should do. Was the jailer saved? He most certainly was. Did Saul, now Paul, have to be baptized to obtain salvation? He did not. Neither did this multitude of people.

What then, does the word "for" imply? The most logical meaning is that it means upon. Upon the remission of sins the believer is to be baptized. This is why Paul did not state it as a requirement to the jailer. It is upon, or after, the sending away of sins that a person is to be baptized.

When one is baptized, it is an outward sign to all that a work has taken place within. It shows forth, in picture, the gospel that one has believed. The death of sin, the burial of that sin, and the resurrection of a new life in Christ. No, the act of baptism is not in order to obtain salvation; it is because one has obtained salvation and wants to show forth to the world that a transformation has taken place in his life.

The act of baptism, besides being a picture of one's salvation, is also an act of obedience to the Word of God, and the process by which one becomes a member of a New Testament Church. These people that asked what they should do, did what they were told to do. They repented, they were baptized, and they became members of the church. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

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"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The question that prompted this charge by the apostle was "...what shall we do?" Not, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30b) It is apparent there is more implied in the answer here than in Acts 16:31. This verse does not teach baptism unto salvation. First of all repentance is placed before baptism, and if one has repented he is already saved. You cannot be baptized in order to be saved if you are already saved. Repentance and faith are inseparable and simultaneous. If you have been granted true faith, you have been granted true repentance; and if you have been granted true repentance, you have been granted true faith. According to the Word, you are saved. When the Eunuch asked Philip "what doth hinder me to be baptized?", Philip answered "...If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."

The Eunuch believed and was baptized. This is the Scriptural order; repentance and faith, then baptism.

The passage cannot mean, nor does it suggest that you are to be "baptized in order to receive remission of sins." But as the language demands, and correct interpretation requires, the passage means, be baptized for or unto the acknowledging of remission of sins; or because of the remission of sins. In Luke 5:12-14 there is an illustration of what Peter meant in Acts 2:38. Christ had cleansed a man of leprosy and then commanded him, "Show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." Thus baptism is a testimony to all present that you are indeed saved, that your sins

have been remitted, that you have had a change of heart and mind, the old man is dead and buried, you are rising in newness of life in the faith of Jesus Christ; acknowledging, symbolizing, and showing forth the remission of sins.

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Baptism has nothing whatsoever to do with salvation or forgiveness for sin. In Luke 3:10-14 three classes of people came where John the Baptist was baptizing. Note verse seven, "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come." Not one time did he include baptism when they asked, "what shall we do." John the Baptist baptized Jesus, our Saviour, did he baptize Him for the remission of sin? Verse three tells us that John was preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

In Mark 16:16, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Note, He did not say that he that is not baptized shall be damned, but rather those that believeth not shall be damned. Repentance and faith must come first, then baptism.

Now let us go back to Acts Chapter two. Acts 2:37, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Peter had just preached a strong gospel message to the people and they were under conviction, he told them in so many words, repent and be baptized, that is get in the church after repentance, and serve the Lord. Now look at Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" You notice Peter didn't mention baptism for remission of sins.

Baptism is a symbolic act showing the death, burial, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; and being acted out by the believer as he submits to being buried in the watery grave. Look at I Peter 3:21, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Read Romans 6:3-5.

When we are put under the water, we are saying that we believe Jesus Christ died and was buried. When we are raised out of the water, we are saying we believe He arose for our justification. In other words, we are sealing our testimony in the act of baptism.

UNBELIEF

(Continued from Page 1)

the same ground with the rest of mankind? Must he be satisfied in his own whims with respect to the evidence of this fact? Can he say with innocence, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe?" Did ever any infidel express a more unreasonable demand for the evidence of Christ's resurrection, and the truth of the Christian religion? The demands of skeptics are moderate and sober, compared to this intemperance and unbelief. The most unreasonable of them demand only that a particular revelation of the gospel should be made to every man. This falls far short of the extravagance and unreasonableness of the unbelief of Thomas.

But there is wisdom in this madness. If Thomas is unreasonable, God uses his unreasonableness to effect a great purpose. By this means, in the satisfaction given to Thomas, we have the fact of the resurrection established on evidence beyond all suspicion. The possibility of delusion is removed; and the reality that it was Jesus whom the apostles saw, rests not merely on the testimony of their eyes, but of the hands of the most unreasonable unbeliever that ever was in the world. Of all the infidels that ever existed, Thomas was the most extravagant. Voltaire and Hume are men of moderation, compared to this prince of infidels. Nothing will satisfy this philosopher but the handling of the prints of the nails in his Master. Was it not possible that the risen body of Jesus should have had no scars? Was not this the most likely thing to be expected? That Almighty power which could raise Him, could raise Him without a mark of crucifixion. But Thomas was in all respects unreasonable; that through this, Jesus might exhibit Himself with evidence of His resurrection, that the most extravagant incredulity could presume to demand.

By this providential fact the Lord teaches us that His own disciples believe in Him, not because they are naturally more teachable, or less incredulous than others. It is God only who overcomes their unbelief. They are not only by nature the children of wrath, even as others; but after they are brought to faith and life, the only security of their perseverance is the favor and love of God in Christ. They are kept by faith, and that faith is not of themselves but is the gift of God. The strongest of all the disciples of Christ would not abide in the faith for a single day, if, like Peter or like Thomas, they were to be given up to their own natural unbelief. But if the strongest would not stand in their strength, the feeblest will not be plucked from the hand of the heavenly Father. After the fearful example of Peter and of Thomas, let no disciple of Christ trust in his own steadfastness. We are strong only when, seeing our own weaknesses, we have our strength in the Rock of salvation. The world in general, and the philosophers in particular, look upon Christians as a weak-minded people, who are prone to

believe without sufficient evidence. The man of science, even when he can find no fault with the man of God, still thinks himself justifiable in considering him as utterly below himself in mental powers. He thinks there must be a soft place in his head somewhere. The best thing he can find to say is, that he is "an amiable enthusiast." The truth, however, is far otherwise. Whether the believer is a man of strength of intellect, or feeble in mind, he would be equally an unbeliever with the most talented of his enemies, were he left to himself. Yea, the weakest would likely be the most presumptuous, and rash, and blasphemous, in the extravagance of their complaints against the Gospel. Thomas would not be behind Paine in the rashness of his demands and assertions. The Christian is made a little child by the Word and Spirit of God; but by nature he receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are to him, as well as to others, foolishness, until his eyes are opened to discover them.

It is a matter of fact, worthy of particular attention, that the simplest of the men of God make a more correct and a more scientific estimate of the philosopher than the philosopher can make of him. The philosopher, with all his knowledge, knows not God by his philosophy. He knows not, then, the correct and enlightened views of the man of God on the highest of all sciences. The philosopher, not appreciating the value of the soul, nor the amount of the unspeakable glory of the heavenly inheritance, as well as of the danger of overlooking condemnation, sees not the wisdom of the conduct of the man of God. He has no way to judge of himself but by himself; and, therefore, as he himself is wise, the other must be a fool. The pleasure of knowledge, and the glory of fame are, with the philosopher, the very essence of the happiness of the third heaven. In all this, the man of God, even the weakest of them, can enter into the feelings and sentiments of the men of science; for, by nature, he is such a one himself. And he still finds, in his very best moments, that should he lose sight of Heaven, and be left of God, he would make his paradise with the philosophers, or at least, according to his taste with some group of those who are, in different ways in pursuit of earthly joys.

The Christian is not amazed that men seek the praise of men more than that of God; and that they pursue the things of this world rather than the things of God. He is rather amazed that God has turned himself out of this course, and enables him to resist the temptations which he daily meets in the world. To him there is no mystery in the character and choice of the philosopher, of the sensualist, of the men of the world. In them he sees himself as he is by nature. It is with new eyes that he sees spiritual things in a correct manner. "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. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." (I Cor. 2:14, 15). The Christian is the true philosopher. He not only has knowledge of the most

sublime of all sciences, of which the wise men of this world are as destitute as the wild ass of the wilderness, but he has that discernment of human views and character which human wisdom never has attained. The Christian knows the philosopher better than the philosopher knows himself.

Of all the sciences, the science of mind is the most sublime; Christians have a knowledge of the mind of man which no mere philosopher can obtain by his art. The philosopher gives an account of himself and the others, and of his own notions and views, which every Christian can detect as delusive and unreal.

In this providential fact, we see the forbearance and condescension of Christ to His people, even when they are unreasonable. He graciously removes the doubts of Thomas, though He might justly have left him to perish in his presumptuous unbelief. From this we may be assured, that, in one way or other, the Lord will remove the doubts of His people with respect to the evidence of the Gospel. If He will not give them that evidence which extravagance may rashly demand, He will keep them from such extravagance, or remove their doubts by opening their eyes to understand the proper evidence. This will be the same thing with presenting to their view and to their touch His hands and His side. He will assuredly overcome the unbelief and hardness of heart of the most obstinate of His chosen ones.

If He was not provoked to give up Thomas, His patience cannot meet with a more extravagant case of incredulity. He could call a Saul of Tarsus in the midst of his furious enmity to Him, and He did overcome the unbelief of the incredulous and obstinate Thomas. What a consolation is this to the believer! What thoughts of unbelief arise in the heart! And how Satan could perplex the mind of the highest saint on earth, none but the believer can have any conception. If we were for a few minutes, from a state of the most assured faith, to be given into the hands of Satan to sift us as wheat, how would our faith fail us! Who knows what effect the fiery darts of the wicked one would have upon our minds, if they were not quenched? And quenched they cannot be but on the shield of faith; and in the case supposed God permits that faith to fail. What then will support us? How shall we without dismay look into an eternal world? But though God may for a moment suffer us to be tried by the tempter, He will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. Our constant prayer to God ought to be, that He would not give us into the hands of Satan, or that He will continue to give us the shield of faith. In matters of so great moment, the mind, particularly at death, naturally looks for and wishes every evidence of the truth, and sometimes demands unreasonable evidence. Nothing but the blood of Christ should be before our eyes: and we should always remember that we glorify God, not by doubting, but by believing His Word.

Were not the Lord Jesus present with His people at the time of their trial, and especially at the time of their death, nothing could deliver them from horror. That they were not only saved from

fear, but enabled to rejoice and triumph in death, is the surest evidence that the Gospel is true. It is not surprising that persons ignorant of the character of God, or their own character, and of the consequences of sin, should be stupidly unconcerned at death. But the Christian knows too much to be kept from the very agonies of Hell, if he has not the life of Heaven when he passes through the valley and the shadow of death. In the removal of the doubts of reason, let us gain confidence that the Lord will not forsake us in the time of our need. To a Christian, who is deeply acquainted with his own weakness, Hell itself is not a greater object of horror, than to be given up without assistance from God, to wrestle and combat with the prince of this world at the hour of death.

It is remarkable that the Lord, though He complied with the unreasonable demand for evidence in the case of Thomas, yet He would not listen to the request of the rich man in Hell, for the conviction of his relatives on earth: "Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Did Abraham yield to the proposal, and admire the plan? No. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16). Our skeptics are still calling for more or better evidence. If the Gospel is true, they allege it should have evidence against which no man could find objection. Let them alone. Press on them the evidence that God has given of the truth of His Gospel. If they believe not this, it will be found out in the day of judgment, that they have not rejected it from its insufficiency, but from their own enmity to the truth. Testimony is a sufficient ground of evidence; and if they reject the testimony of God by His apostles, they will justly perish.

And the same thing will hold true with respect to the denial of the testimony of God with regard to any particular doctrine, and any particular part. The enemies of the doctrine, or fact recorded, will allege a want of proof; and, on the authority of philosophical doctrines will take on them to modify the testimony of God. They make the dogmas of human science an authority paramount to the testimony of God in the Scriptures. This is the boldness, the blasphemy of infidelity. If God has given His testimony on any part, it is evidence paramount in authority to every other. To prove the truth alleged on such authority, nothing is necessary but to show that it is the result of the fair exposition of the laws of language. Let God be true, and let all men be liars. Against the testimony of God the philosopher is not to be heard more than a convicted perjurer. Our Lord, even though, for His own wise purposes, He indulged Thomas, yet did not approve of his unbelief, nor of his demand. He did

not ascribe his incredulity to greater talents, or greater caution, or concern about the truth, than were discovered by his brethren. On the contrary, He shows that they rather are blessed who will believe without such evidence as Thomas demanded. There are two extremes, equally to be abided, into which men are prone to fall. Some believe without evidence, believe against all evidence, believe what all evidence, capable of being submitted to the mind of man, shows to be absurd and impossible. On the other hand, there are some who unreasonably refuse evidence that is sufficient evidence which God has pronounced sufficient, looking on themselves as manifesting greater intellect or wisdom, in demanding evidence of another kind, which God has not appointed. "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

SING UNTO THE LORD

by Paul Jackson

"Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song..." (Psalm 33:2-3).

God's children have many blessings for which to sing. They can hum about the small blessings or make great melody about the great blessings. One thing is for sure, God blesses His children; and every one of His children will some day sing unto the Lord.

God will gather His elect children from the sin-cursed earth and when they see the worthiness of their Redeemer, they will sing unto the Lord. Their song will be a new song. Their song will be to Him who is able to bring all things to its end and begin all things anew. Apostle John says, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and has redeemed us (elect) to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation; And has made us (elect) unto our god kings and priests: and we (elect) shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10). Hallelujah! I can't wait to sing with that great choir!

The angels of Heaven will sing unto the Lord when they see His worthiness. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:11-12). He is adored with great esteem in the celestial realm. What a Saviour!

Even the reprobates along with the creatures of the creation will sing unto the Lord. "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and

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MAGIC

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the coming destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Are there any thinking men and women in America today who are capable of realizing that those homosexuals who desired to know the angels in "a sexual fashion" had no human respect even for angels of God? It is no marvel, then, that the homosexuals of our day have no respect for God, the Word of God, or the people of God?

Thankfully, we know the end of the story! Abraham's prayers could not effect the redemption or the saving of those cities of Sodom and Gomorrah or the unbelieving people in them. We need to realize, however, and give thanks that the saved ones in the cities did escape the judgment that came. This contrasts somewhat with the later experience of another prophet. We remember that the preaching of Jonah brought repentance to that great city of Nineveh, and every living soul was saved. Fortunately, we have the Word of God, and we can read, that in that distant day:

"So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." (Jonah 3:5-8).

Do we ever hear of any of these in our day who are in utter and absolute violation of the teachings of the Word of God regarding sexual relationships turning in humility to repent? No! Generally, even as they are in the final throes of their disease and sometime in the process of dying, we hear only their screams concerning what they call their "rights"! And, tragically, as long as they are able to walk, we guide them "parading in the streets" protesting our government's failure to find "a cure for the diseases" which they brought upon themselves. Sometimes, long after they have ceased to walk on their own, we find that they will "parade in the streets concerning their rights in wheel chairs that some kind souls have graciously provided for them at no cost. They, however, and tragically, have provided nothing but agony and pain and desperation and death for their friends who were stupid enough to have illicit and unscriptural sexual relationships with them, either of a homosexual or a heterosexual sort.

We do err, dear friends, if we marvel that these piteous people are under judgment such as God had planned for Sodom and Gomorrah. And because they periled in these cities never believed and never knew repentance, they died and went to hell in their

sins. Whereas the people, in that great and sinful city of Nineveh which was under a similar judgment of God, heard the cry of the prophet of God. Then, they believed God and repented in sackcloth and ashes. As the result of their belief and the evidence of their repentance, the people of Nineveh had the final word of God, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." (Jonah 3:10).

It is quite likely that many of these of the homosexual and the lesbian sort, as well as some of the heterosexuals of our day, have committed "the sin unto death." Consequently, many of them have gone on into eternity in their unbelieving condition: to participate in that judgment which Jesus references in, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Editor's note: I believe that "the sin unto death" is the sin of the believer punished by physical death.) Still, and thankfully, some of these who have violated every law that our God has set forth in His Holy Word, are yet among us. Can these be saved and go on into the very presence of our blessed Savior in the realms of the blessed? If they will believe, the answer to that question is a resounding, yes! If they will believe as did those repentant Ninevites! Yes! If they will believe, as did that repentant Roman jailer who cried, "What must I do to be saved?" their redemption, their salvation, is as fully assured as is that of any of the redeemed in any age.

Though homosexuality is a great sin, and a condemned sin, it still is just sin! And our God is very careful to explain to each one of us that our sin is as every other sin. And He very carefully advises each of us that "if we have been guilty of one sin"--having broken one law--"then, we are guilty of all"! Just what is our God telling us here? If I have even a measure of understanding, I believe that He is telling us that no one of us can ever even suppose that we are any less a sinner (better than) than some other sinner. In His holy eyes, our little sins of which we may make little note are just as bad as the supposedly greater sins of our neighbors that we can see with such ease.

This may be contrary to the thinking of many or maybe even most. But our God has no more of a problem with the greater sinfulness of our neighbors than He does with our supposed lesser sinfulness. It may be a truism, but sinfulness is sinfulness whether committed by a Moses who goes to glory but not The Promised Land, a sinfulness committed by a David who is a man after God's own heart, or a sinfulness of a believing and repentant homosexual who is dying from the disease that his awful sin brought upon him. Without any fear of Scriptural contradiction, I proclaim, that if there is belief and a repentance as in the case of the Ninevites, and as in the case of the Roman jailer, then "The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ" as easily covers the sin of the homosexual as it does the Lesbian or as it does the sin of the illicit heterosexual, and there will be repentance when one believes truly.

As men, who have a tendency to delight in our own Pharisaism--our own self-righteousness, if you prefer, we may attempt to make some distinctions, and thereby come to some supposed judgments that the sinning of others is less likely to please God than our sinning, but we have to do so without the approval of our God. Sadly, unless I have misunderstood what I have been reading for the last decade or so regarding homosexuality, lesbianism, and illicit heterosexuality, this self-righteousness is one of the problems that these who are bringing destruction upon themselves have not yet comprehended.

Therefore, we hear them blaming others for their self-inflicted plight, and their call is to the famed and the infamous and all of those in the middle who have no better sense than to come to their defense. What the so-called gays or homosexuals need to realize is that they do not need another Liz Taylor or a Magic Johnson who have never learned the meaning of Scriptural sexual fidelity to defend them and approve their relationships or their lifestyles. What they need is someone who will be able to get them to humbly concede that they have sinned both against God and against their fellowmen and their fellow women. They need to know the Word of God so that they can know the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and how they can be freed from their sexual enslavement, and then be able to rejoice in knowing the truth, that they might be truly free!

In recent days, we have listened both to the great and some who are not so great commending the man, Magic Johnson, for his bravery in announcing that he now is infected with the HIV virus, and, sooner rather than later, that he will be suffering the ravages of AIDS. Can you imagine a saved governmental leader of these United States setting up a man who has violated the laws of God both going and coming as he has sought hundreds if not thousands of sexual partners as an example of one who can advise the young people of America on safe sex? I fear dear friends, that our governmental American Leadership may have slipped a cog or two. Or, it may be that the homosexuals and the lesbians have been in charge of the government, and that they have been making the decisions.

Our leaders, dear friends, need to be reading something that a man by the name of Bill Smith was able to get published in one of the most liberal religious papers that has ever seen light of day in America. Bill Smith, or perhaps the editor, titled the article, "Falling Stars: On Magic and AIDS." This man rightly says: "When I read of how Earvin 'Magic' Johnson had probably caught the HIV virus, I thought, with horror and fear, of all the women he had had sex with and what they must have felt when they heard the news--of how the sun became dark for them, how the moon stopped giving light for them, and how the stars fell from the sky... I wonder how many of those women had been infected. I wondered, do they have the luxury of being tested confidentially? Do they have the medical support that Magic has?... Will anyone invite them to participate on discussion panels or pay them \$12 million to appear in condom ads? Or would their days be dark nights of the

soul?"

Bill Smith, it seems to me has touched upon some points in "the Magic situation" that have not been referenced in the unnumbered thousands of pages of copy that have come forth from the media since he resigned from his basketball team and made what the public has claimed to believe to be a brave statement. As Bill Smith notes, a multitude of others are involved in Magic Johnsons coming forth, as it were. Sadly, however, we have not heard of his grieving about the disease of AIDS that he doubtless has passed on to some of his lady friends. Neither have we heard of his having repented for putting a host of young ladies at risk, some of whom he doubtless has infected with the disease that may very well bring him and them to the end of their earthly lives. Just think, too, if you will of the multiplied thousands of others who will be infected subsequently by the hundreds or thousands of those whom he has infected. The cumulative issue of his professed promiscuity which really should have been an humble confession" will doubtless continue on until the end of time!

Back in the days when tuberculosis and leprosy were the scourges across this land and in others, were those who had the diseases deemed to be heroes worthy of great and respected notoriety? What was the cry in that day when "Typhoid Mary" was loose in the land? Did our president of the time give her a place of honor where she could continue her infecting of those who came into her "circle of clients"? What, dear friends, has happened to the thinking of America's leaders? Yea, what has happened to the thinking of Americans?

We might expect the famed ones who have never had any regard for the Word of God or for the Laws of God to join with Magic Johnson in his "call for safe sex." But how stupid do we have to be to suppose that one whose sexual promiscuity which has doomed him to an HIV death--if he does not go for other reasons, earlier-- can have "a word of truth" for the young people of America? Is this the final issue of sexual education in our public schools from which Almighty God has been outlawed, and in which His Word is no longer welcomed, and where His Holy name is officially precluded? It may be that the whole of society may be wholly insane! Perhaps, then, it is no marvel that safe sex is promoted! Thankfully, the man whom we earlier referenced, one by the name of Bill Smith, continues on to give us a bit more enlightenment: "Magic's case...tells us that the sexual patterns that put people at risk are much more intricate and involved than was previously thought. It tells us that the disease is not confined to drug users, male homosexuals, Africans, Asians, Hispanics and Hatians. It reminds us that because we have failed to follow God's demand to do justice, heal the sick, shelter the homeless and care for the widow, the darkness of sunless days and moonless nights, fallen stars and shaken powers can enter any of our doors, even the doors of millionaire heterosexual superstar athletes... It is through this time and place of darkened sun, moonless nights and fallen stars that we journey and can come to recognize and be reconciled with each other..."

Unfortunately, however, this author was very careful not to reference Genesis 18 and 19. We may be reasonably certain and even assured that the article never would have seen the light of day or been published in The Christian Century, if he had made even the slightest allusion to Romans 1:18-32. No! He dramatically notes that the tragedy of HIV is its extent into a multitude of lives. And he is careful to identify some of the discrepancies and discriminations of those who are involved in promoting safe sex. At one place in the context, he notes that it is "the most frightening illnesses, dementia, incontinence, body lesions, paralysis and blindness," and that it is "a truly horrible disease." But, and this is the cumulative tragedy, he does not mean by his words, "how the sun became dark for them, how the moon stopped giving light for them and how the stars fell from the sky" (emphasis, R.W.) to in anyway discourage those who are involved in such or cry for them to "believe on Jesus Christ and be saved" or to "repent of their sinfulness"!

Perhaps, then, we would not be amiss in noting that most men involved in the unlimited ramifications of homosexuality, lesbianism, and illicit heterosexuality have no intention whatever of ever calling for a return to the Word of God. They have no intention whatever of calling men or women to "a believing on the Lord Jesus Christ," or to "a Scriptural repentance." Though some of these may have noted the awfulness and the terribleness of this sinfulness which even now, today, is a plague upon America, they have no intention whatever of giving a call to salvation or to repentance! And certainly, never a call to abstinence!

Thankfully, the Apostle Paul has the concluding word that none can gainsay or deny. Believe me! There is no magic in Magic Johnson's call for safe sex! That is a myth which has been dreamed-up by a media which does its very best day-in and day-out to exclude God from the universe that He has created. "Magic Johnson's Safe Sex" will just result in more and more and more stars and some who may not be so starchy being diagnosed as being HIV positive! And for all of those young people who buy his condom package or better take Satan's bait, believe me: they can anticipate more suns becoming dark, more moonless nights, and more stars falling from the sky.

Our governmental leaders and Magic Johnson, together with the biased media, may suppose that they are "getting away with their murders" as they sell their bill of flawed and fraudulent goods. Yet, when all is finally said and done, they and all of those who are deceived by them will be the ultimate losers. These piteous hosts will know in finality that they have given themselves and committed their lives to defy a sovereign God whose ultimate judgment which is spelled out in His holy Word, the Bible, as the Apostle Paul most competently explains will forever and forever be intact! Hear his word, and

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MAGIC

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stake your life on it: "Being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." (Rom. 1:29-32).

COVENANT

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seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed" (Acts 3:25).

"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6).

THE INTRODUCTORY:

When one does a study of our redemption that is in the person of Jesus Christ a blessing will become most evident. From the beginning of time, man has known of only two kinds of ways in which they can please God: the first is man's own doing, and it points to man's efforts and works; the second is God's way of doing business with His creation, and it points to God's glory.

From before the foundation of this world God made plans and a decree to save sinful man. It is clear from the Word of God that these plans were ordained and decreed by God to bring about the salvation of sinners and the ultimate glory of Almighty God.

"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..." "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:4, 5, 11).

There are few men in this world that have an understanding of the Covenant of Redemption; and yet, the world is full of very religious men and women. In fact, Cain and Abel give to us a perfect example of man's efforts to gain God's favor, and God's true and only way of redemption. It has been stated, and yes, it is true that religion by itself will do us no good; however, when the Spirit of God works within our hearts, then we have received far

more than just mere religion, but God's eternal salvation. The salvation of God as spoken of throughout the Scriptures is most wonderful and glorious.

The Decrees of God

When we speak of the decrees of God, what do the Scriptures mean by that term? Dr. A.H. Strong gives this definition: "By the decrees of God we mean that eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, past, present, and future." These may seem to be beyond our comprehension; and indeed, they are to a point, but they not only embrace the effects but also the causes. If we are to understand the Scriptures in their proper place, then we must see that God has made some decisions (we call that divine decrees) that will effect His creation, and in particular, the salvation of sinners. Let me illustrate my point:

In Romans 8:28 - "...called according to his purpose" the many decrees for the salvation of many individuals are represented as forming but one purpose of God. Ephesians 1:11 - "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" - notice again the word "purpose", in the singular. Ephesians 3:11 - "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." This one purpose or plan of God includes both means and ends, prayer and its answer, labor and its fruit. God has His plan for every man.

Some dear folk, have assumed that Biblical theology and philosophy are one and the same; but they are not the same. Biblical theology does not discover truth - it will present truth as found in the pages of the Scriptures. Biblical theology does not attempt to reconcile the Scriptures with other sciences, for it simply states what God has seen fit to reveal unto us through His Word, the Holy Scriptures. We may and often times do err, beloved, when we try to reconcile God's Word with what science has said. While it is true that true science and the Bible will not disagree, that does not say that man has looked at science from the correct perspective.

The Eternal Purpose of God Noted:

The decrees of Almighty God are His eternal purpose, and they are according to the counsel of His will, whereby we are told that they are for His own glory because He hath foreordained whatsoever cometh to pass. To the one that knows his Bible, and indeed, to the one who studies the Scriptures, he will soon learn that the final cause of all God's purposes is His own glory. Once again, that is noted from the writings of Paul to the Church at Ephesus as already noted.

Hence, the decrees of God are said to be: 1 eternal, 2 unchangeable, 3 absolute, 4 free, 5 discriminating, and, 6 extensive. Let me now elaborate as to what we mean by these six terms. First they are eternal. Much could be said here, and if time and space permitted, we could spend hours; nevertheless, we must see that not only our God is eternal, but His plan and very program is eternal. If you please, we must recognize that the Christ of God is eternal, that He is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8); hence, God's predestination to

eternal life must of necessity be before time began, and that because the Lord of glory, Jesus Christ, is the very foundation of election. This statement, as such, can be supported by many different Scriptures, the following given only to demonstrate the point in question:

"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" (II Tim. 1:9).

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

"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" (Eph. 1:4).

"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11).

Many there are that object to this doctrine, God's eternity and all that goes therewith; however, in light of the Scriptures, we must see that it is the prerogative of God to appoint the things of life as He seeth fit to do. Note the words of Isaiah:

"And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them" (Isa. 44:7).

Again, the words of Jeremiah: "Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me" (Jer. 50:44)?

Many there be, beloved, that would reject the idea of God choosing; and yet, the divine record, the Bible, tells us that "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). And yes, Paul would have us to know that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). Wherefore, those that God foreordained to eternal life believed; for God in His infinite wisdom and knowledge, not only foreknew them, but ordained them unto eternal life.

Second, let us look at the unchangeableness of Almighty God; for we are told, "I am the LORD, I change not" (Mal. 3:6). The writer of Hebrews, Paul, tells us that God's counsel is immutable, (Hebrews 6:17), that is, it is fixed, unchangeable. The Psalmist writes, "The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations" (Psa. 33:11). Therefore, God's Divine decree of election must stand upon an unchangeable foundation, yea, the Rock of Ages, even "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

As noted, yea, as the Scriptures so plainly state: as the first Adam was the downfall and ruin of the race, the second Adam, even Jesus, the Christ, has become the

very foundation of our salvation. We may say, and yea the Scriptures does, that God Almighty has blessed us, the chosen redeemed ones, with Christ; yea, and He has therefore pardoned us in Christ: and yes, He hath chosen us in Christ; and our God has, built us up and made us complete in the Lord Jesus Christ. We lack nothing - that being, in Christ our Saviour, we stand righteous and holy. That, beloved, is unchangeable, it is most sure.

There are many things within the Scriptures that we are told that are unchangeable - yea, the Christ, our Saviour, was foreordained before the world began (I Peter 1:20), and therefore, the Scriptures refer to Him as the "elect Stone" (12 Peter 2:6). We could say, that Christ is the first person elected as noted by Isaiah:

"BEHOLD my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect..." (Isa. 42:1).

"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased" (Matt. 12:18).

But, beloved, why is it that these things are said to be unchangeable? Because God has made a decree that is written in heaven - a place where man cannot reach and change - a place where the old arch enemy of God, the devil, can not enter and cancel out God's plan and program. Do we not read, "The Lord knoweth them that are his" (II Tim. 2:19)? Of course, we most certainly do!

Beloved, do we not read, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure..." "I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isa. 46:10, 11).

Nevertheless, let us move on, for we may see, too, that God's divine decrees are absolute. It stands to reason, beloved, if God's decree is eternal, then they must be totally absolute. Now, beloved, I would agree that if God was not absolute and eternal, then we would be in a world of hurt; but He is not only the Almighty, but the eternal wise God of the universe; hence, His decree of unconditional election is not based upon man's conditional responses to God, but upon God's absolute and unchangeable nature.

We must see, and of course the Scriptures will point out that the potter has the right to do with His own work (Romans 9) as He sees fit; and yes, the clay has no right to question His doing.

But again, let us move on, for it is declared in the Holy Writ that God's divine decree is free. If it were properly understood, we would be forced to say that God is a free agent - therefore, He cannot and does not fall under any obligation to man or creature. That cannot however, be said of man! He, man, is free in that he can only do that which is in keeping with his sinful, wicked nature. But man cannot and will not do good apart from outside influence - and of course, you must recognize that only God's quickening Spirit can change man's will.

What we seem to forget, beloved, God has never been under obligation to respect man one way or another; for He was happy within Himself from all eternity; and yes, God would have been happy forever without man, but God in His infinite wisdom and knowledge, saw fit to express His

love upon a definite number of individuals, of which the Scriptures refer to as elect. This, beloved, is why we must say that election is free; for it is determined and confirmed by the free act of Almighty God; to which, He has chosen in Christ, those that He would save.

I am convinced, beloved, that when we say that our salvation is free, it cannot be free if it is not a work of God. If man, by any means or methods, can assist or help out God, then it would not be said to be free. It is free, beloved, because God gave to His sheep the forgiveness of sin. Since you have neither the desire nor the ability to come to Christ; hence, as the Scriptures have said, then Christ must come and seek out those whom the Father hath given to Him.

And then, beloved, we must see that God's election is discriminating. When therefore, the Holy Writ speaks of God extending unto individuals a call to salvation; that call being effectual, it must be understood that in so doing, some were preferred over others. Do we not read, "...for many be called, but few chosen" (Matt. 20:16)? Did not the Lord of glory say, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you..." (John 15:16). And yes, do we not read the Psalmist's words, "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Psa. 115:3)? Do we not read, beloved, that God said, "...Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13)? And yes, do we not read, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. 9:16). And yes, Paul agreed with John, for he wrote: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13).

And then, we may see too, that God's elective grace is extensive. When all is said and done, God's sheep being gathered in one place, do we not read these words: "...I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb..." "And cried with a loud voice, saying Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9-10).

When we say that God's grace and mercy is extensive, we mean it reaches to all kinds of people: regardless of rank, sex, age or nationality. We do not, however, mean by that, that God's grace and mercy reaches every soul; for we know that not all are God's chosen, elect children. "All that the Father giveth me (that is election) shall come to me (that is effectual calling), and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out (that is our security)." (John 6:37).

Beloved, when I think of our redemption -- I must and so should you, keep in mind that only the elect are said to be redeemed - to be purchased out of the slave market of sin. You can not purchase, that is, redeem something that is not already yours; God's sheep belong to

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STUDIES IN ACTS

by Willard Willis

"Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship" (Acts 24:11).

Beza, in his writings, believes the twelve days to be as follows. The first was that in which he came to Jerusalem (Acts 21:15), the second was spent with James and the apostles (21:18); six days were spent in fulfilling his vow (21:21,26; the ninth day was the one in which the tumult arose, being the seventh day of his vow. It was on this day that he was rescued by Lysias (21:27); the tenth day was the one in which he was before the Sanhedrin (22:30); it was on the eleventh day that a plot was made to take his life. It was on this same day at evening that he was removed to Caesarea. The day in which he was confined at Caesarea is not enumerated, since his design in mentioning the number of days was to show the improbability of his having enough time to have caused a tumult, especially since he had been confined during a portion of these days.

Paul, in his first appeal to Felix, then, emphasized that he had not had enough time to have done all that he had been charged with. Paul advised Felix further of his purpose for being in Jerusalem. He, in fact, had gone there to "worship" and not to cause an uproar.

"And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people neither in the synagogues, nor in the city" (Acts 24:12).

Paul, by this statement, challenged the statements which had been made against him. He asked them to back up their charges with solid evidence. The reply of any good judge would have been to say that Paul was not asking too much from his accusers.

"Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me" (Acts 24:13).

Paul, then, in essence, by his above statements, said that he had not had time to do the things for which he had been accused. He, in essence, said that he did not do it and that they could not prove otherwise. The bottom line is that Paul, by his statements, asked Felix to investigate the matter very carefully.

"But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts 24:14).

Paul, when saying, "The way they call heresy", was referring to Tertullus' remark about him being a "ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes". The word "sect", as used by Tertullus, refers to heresy.

Paul responded by saying, in essence, that what was heresy to them was not heresy to him. He, in fact, found that what he believed and taught did not conflict with God's Word, that is, the "all things which are written in the law and in the prophets". He, for example, found that his belief was in perfect harmony with the fifty third chapter of Isaiah. We are to see that the entire

controversy centered around the man Christ Jesus. The Jews, in the main, were convinced that Jesus was not the Son of God while Paul was convinced that He was.

Paul was convinced that there was "no other name given among men whereby we must be saved".

"And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15).

The fact that the resurrection of the "just and the unjust" occur in the above passage of Scripture, does not mean that they will occur at one and the same time. A careful examination of the Scriptures, in fact, will show that the resurrection of the "just" is said to be from the dead while the resurrection of the "unjust" is said to be of the dead. Note for example, the following passage of Scripture.

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:11).

This passage of Scripture, in the Greek, reads, "If by any means I might attain unto the out resurrection which is from the dead".

The above words by Paul have no meaning if there is to be only a general resurrection. It is obvious that Paul planned to be in a particular resurrection, namely, the resurrection from the dead (note Luke 20:35, 36; I Cor. 15:20; I Thess. 4:14-18).

There is also to be a resurrection of the dead after all the redeemed have come forth. The resurrection of the dead, or of those who remain in their graves, is described in Revelation 20:11-15.

"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

The fact that we are to be resurrected from the dead makes it imperative that we "always have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men". We, on the other hand, would not have to be concerned regarding our action towards God and men if there was to be no resurrection, that is, if we did not have to give an account for our actions. The following passages of Scripture make it obvious that an account must be given to God for offences toward God and men.

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14).

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

Believers must give an account for their good and evil deeds, but such will be for the sake of rewards. There, according to the following, is to be no condemnation for the believer.

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

"THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 8:1).

Why is condemnation for the believer a thing of the past? The

answer is found in the following passage of Scripture.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24).

The future judgment, as far as the believer is concerned, is described in the following passage of Scripture.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).

"Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings" (Acts 24:17).

Tertullus' charge against Paul was that he had come to Jerusalem for the purpose of profaning the temple. Paul's reply, in essence, was that such was the farthest thing from his mind. He, in fact, had come to Jerusalem with alms and offerings for the nation. The alms had been given to him to deliver to the "nation" by the people from Macedonia and Achaia. It is as stated in the following passages of Scripture.

"But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (Romans 15:25-26).

We find that Paul, even though he was right, was always being required to defend his actions. He, at times, was even beaten because of his stand for the truth. This fact shows how far away from God the natural man has gone. He is so depraved that he considers wrong to be right and right to be wrong. He, in other words, cannot distinguish light from darkness when it comes to the things of God. The Bible says that he even loves darkness rather than light. He is so far away from God that God says, **"For my thoughts, are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD"** (Isaiah 55:8).

"Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult" (Acts 24:18).

Tertullus had charged Paul with being a "mover of sedition", or one who caused others to rebel against the government. Paul, however, in his response, asked how that such a charge could have been levelled against him. He, after all, as he states, was in the temple quietly worshipping God rather than making a speech to a multitude, or participating in a tumult with others. The word "tumult" refers to a disorderly agitation of a crowd.

The Jews from Asia, who had laid certain charges against Paul, had no basis whatsoever for their accusations. They, in fact, when finding him and observing him, saw and heard no more than his quiet observance of his vow.

"Who ought to have been there before thee, and object, if they had ought against me" (Acts 24:19).

There would have been no controversy if it had not been for the charges made by the "certain Jews from Asia". It was very appropriate then, that there be an investigation made regarding the charges made by the Jews from

Asia. One, in order to get to the bottom or source of a problem, must go to the source itself. I'm sure that Paul's argument had a definite effect upon Felix.

COVENANT

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Him by the Covenant of Redemption - hence, we are told that we were lost sheep. The non-elect, beloved, have never and will never be the recipients of God's love and great mercy. Do we not read, beloved, that **"...the Son of man is come to save that which was lost"** (Matt. 18:11)?

Do not misunderstand us, dearly beloved, for God has and continues to use the preaching of the Word of God to save precious souls - Romans 10. But it has pleased God to reach out and touch the lives of those by His Spirit, who were the objects of His love from before the world; hence, you and I must preach to sinners as though they were God's elect. We do not know who they are; only God does! We are to be found faithful in preaching the gospel, that Jesus Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and God raised Him from the dead I Cor. 15. Beloved, a man or woman is saved that believes the gospel.

Conclusion:

God, from before the foundation of this world, made provision for sinful men; and that, beloved, is why the Scriptures tell us that Christ is the "Lamb slain from before the world." The covenant of God's redemption is a work of God in behalf of sinners. Do you, my dear friends, know the Christ of the Bible? Without Him, there is no hope of eternal salvation. Look to Him, dear sinner, for our hope and glory is in the Beloved.

God has provided salvation. The elect child of God is the object of God's love and great mercy. Oh! dear ones, you should count it a blessing and a great privilege to be the recipient of God's love. How do we know that God has shed His love upon us? Beloved, the very fact that God has touched your heart and made you concerned about yourself is evidence that God has worked in your heart; therefore, we should stop dead in our tracks and praise God for His goodness unto us.

Let us, dear ones, look unto Jesus, the one and only one that can and does satisfy the soul! May our great God and Saviour become very precious and dear to us that know we are redeemed. John, the beloved apostle, tells us that, **"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).

DANIEL

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to happen when I pass on?"

The Word of God tells us that as Nebuchadnezzar thus communed in his own mind, he fell asleep, and as he slept, God gave to him a dream which was the answer to his question, that he had had in his wakeful moments, as he wondered about the future. The Word of God tells us very definitely that it made a tremen-

dous impression upon King Nebuchadnezzar -- so much so that when he awakened, he wondered what it was that he had dreamed. He called in his wise men, his counselors, his private advisers -- he called in all of his brain-trust and said to them, "Tell me the dream and give me the interpretation thereof." The wise men, knowing that it was not in them to do this, said, "It is a rare thing that the king requireth. If you will just tell us the dream, we will give you the interpretation, but it is not in us to tell you what you dreamed and also to give you the interpretation."

When they could not give to King Nebuchadnezzar the dream and the interpretation thereof, he commanded that they all be slain. When the word reached Daniel, he requested of the king's chamberlain that additional time be given. The Word of God tells us that Daniel got together his three faithful friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these four young Jews in the land of Babylon, bowed themselves before God to intercede, and ask God to give to them the dream that the king had had and the interpretation thereof.

The balance of the chapter tells how God answered their prayer, and how that God revealed to Daniel the dream, and how Daniel made known to Nebuchadnezzar what it was he had dreamed and the interpretation of the dream.

Now let's get a few unusually helpful and inspiring lessons from this passage of Scripture.

I. The Helplessness of the King's Wise Men

When he demanded of them that they tell him what it was he had dreamed, as well as the interpretation thereof, they were baffled, they threw up their hands, and were unable to do the thing which the king demanded. Of course they couldn't tell the king the dream that God had given him. Naturally they could not. They didn't know the God who was the source of that dream, and no man who is a stranger to God, can receive God's message.

In the fifth chapter of Daniel, which follows a little later, the king had a vision of handwriting on the wall.

When he called in his wise men, again they shook their heads and said, "We cannot read nor interpret this strange writing to you." Naturally they couldn't, for it was God's message, and the devil's children can't understand God's message.

Every once in a while some unsaved person will say, "Brother Gilpin, I just wish I could understand the Bible." Well, I wish you could, too, but I'll tell you frankly, beloved, no individual can understand the Word of God unless he has been saved. Until you become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ as your own Saviour, you cannot understand God's Word. There's a reason for that. The Holy Spirit wrote the Bible, the Holy Spirit is within you as a believer, and the Holy Spirit only reveals His Word unto those who have His image and His likeness. Listen: **"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"** (I Cor. 2:14).

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DANIEL

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2:14).

The "natural man" is the unsaved man. The "natural man" is that individual who has never yet become a child of God. He is not a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is a stranger to God and to God's grace, and the Bible says that the "natural man," the unsaved man, the unbeliever, cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. They have to be spiritually revealed to the man who has the Holy Spirit within him.

Come back to these men of the king's brain-trust. They said, "We can't tell you what you have dreamed. We can't tell you the interpretation thereof." Of course, they couldn't. An unsaved man can understand the history of the Bible, he can understand the geography of the Bible, he can understand the literature of the Bible, he can understand the general trend of the teachings of the Bible, but to understand the spiritual lessons of the Word of God, an unsaved man is absolutely powerless to do so -- as powerless as were these wise men to understand what it was that the king had dreamed.

II. Prayer Meeting Which Daniel And His Friends Had, And The Divine Answer That Came.

When the king commanded that the wise men be slain, that meant that Daniel and his three Jewish friends would, likewise be slain, for they were part of the brain-trust; at least, they were students in the king's college, being schooled to be added to the brain-trust later on.

Daniel immediately asked for time and he and his three friends took the matter before God. They went into God's presence and prayed that He would give to them understanding that they might know the meaning of the dream which King Nebuchadnezzar had had. When they prayed, God gave them the answer.

I'm saying, beloved, if you want to learn the message from the Lord, the best way to learn God's Word and God's message is to learn it on your knees before God.

Do you believe that God can give intelligence and that God can give wisdom and understanding to His people? Let me read to you from God's Word: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:5, 6).

What did these men lack? Daniel and his three friends lacked wisdom. They went to God and asked for wisdom and God gave the answer. Here, then beloved, is a prayer meeting and the divine answer that came from the Lord by way of the wisdom that God gave to them.

It reminds me of King Solomon of the Old Testament, when God said, "Ask what you will, and I will give it unto you." I suppose Solomon might have asked for many things. You and I might easily think of many

things which we might ask for if God were to give us unbridled liberty of prayer. Solomon asked for wisdom that he might govern his people right and God gave the answer.

Oh, beloved, if there is something you want to know, the place to learn it is on your knees in the presence of God. God gave the answer -- the wisdom that came to Daniel and his three friends came because of the prayer meeting they held with God.

III. Daniel Stood in the Presence of the King

After he had prayed and God had given him the answer, the Word of God tells us in the 28th verse of this second chapter of Daniel, that he stood in the presence of the king and said, "...there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets..."

He reminded King Nebuchadnezzar that the wise men were right in what they had said, for they said there was no man, soothsayer nor astrologer who had the ability to tell the king his dream and the interpretation thereof. They had told the truth when they spoke thus to the king, and Daniel reiterated the truthfulness of their statement when he said that while man can't tell you, "...there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets..."

Oh, I would that you and I might realize that there is a God up yonder in the skies who is looking down upon us -- who sees us, who beholds us and knows our every thought and our every action.

There never was a time when there was not a God. There was a time when there was no church. There was a time when there was no Bible. There was a time when there was no earth. There was a time when there was no man. There was a time when there was no devil. However, beloved, there never was a time when there was no God. As the Psalmist said in the 90th Psalm: "...from everlasting to everlasting thou art God."

When Daniel stood in the presence of the king, before he told him one thing about the dream, before he mentioned in any wise at all the dream he had had, Daniel reminded the king that the dream was a message from God.

I don't know how much God deals with us today in the realm of dreams -- I couldn't say. I had a good woman tell me of her experiences relative to dreams and how that God had made known to her certain things through dreams. I'm not to gainsay, nor to say, as to how much God has taught her, or how much God can teach anyone else thereby, but I do say this, that this dream and the interpretation thereof was nothing more or less than a revelation from Almighty God and Daniel knew it, and before he would in any wise at all give to the king the message, he reminded him that it was from God. Then Daniel gave him the dream, and what a dream it was!

He said, "Nebuchadnezzar, you have dreamed and in your dream you saw a great image with head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and miry clay." I can see old King Nebuchadnezzar as he snapped his finger and said, "That's right -- that's exactly what I dreamed." Then Daniel said, "Nebuchadnezzar, I'll give to you the interpretation of this dream."

It is highly conspicuous that this dream and the interpretation thereof was nothing more or less than a dream of history -- history which was to come to pass which Daniel was able to prophesy, having gotten his message from God -- history which we can look upon today and know that it has come to pass. Not one word of it had failed. Nebuchadnezzar was a world-wide emperor. His empire was a world-wide dominion. After him came Media-Persia. After that came the country of Greece with Alexander the Great as world-wide emperor. After that came Rome under the Caesars, and that ended the world-wide dominion of any country. God said there would be four world-wide empires, and there have been, but there will be no more.

In 800 A.D., the next bid for a world-wide empire came under Charlemagne, who thought he was going to become a world-wide emperor. Next came Napoleon, then Kaiser Wilhelm, and then Hitler. The Word of God said there would be four world-wide empires and there never would be another.

IV. The Inspiration of the Bible.

Of all the passages of Scripture that would tell us that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, this stands out in my mind as the greatest. I'll show you why.

At the time Daniel made this statement by way of interpretation of this dream, Persia was just a little province under the supervision of Babylon. To think of Persia as a worldwide empire was as ridiculous as to think of me being president. So far as Greece was concerned as being the third world-wide empire, that was an utter impossibility, for Greece was not ever heard of in that day. The fourth world empire of Rome had just been established -- a little insignificant village on the banks of the Tiber River. Yet, Daniel said there would be four empires -- Nebuchadnezzar the first, Media-Persia to follow, then Greece under Alexander the Great and the fourth, the Roman Empire. How did Daniel get that information? How did Daniel know that such was coming to pass? He knew it because God had revealed it unto him. He knew it because of inspiration, and, beloved, to me this is definite and conclusive that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Man can't even prophesy with accuracy twenty-four hours in advance. You can't tell me what the weather will be tomorrow. Even the meteorological experts who have all the facilities of noticing what the prospects of the weather will be, are often deceived. But here Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the interpretation thereof, which revealed future history for all generations to come, and even part of this dream, as we will see presently, has not been fulfilled yet. He did it because it was the inspired Word of God, and God knows the future far better than you and I know the past. Listen: "Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come

hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together" (Isa. 41:21-23).

What does it say? Simply this: A man has to be of God to know, to foretell and to prophesy what the future has in store. When I read how that Nebuchadnezzar had this dream and Daniel retold to him the dream and gave to him the interpretation which has been so completely fulfilled, I am impressed more and more to insist upon the fact that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. It could only come from God, for only God could show history in advance before it came to be a reality.

V. Dream that Daniel answered the question as to whether or not the world is getting better.

There are those who say that the world is improving, that the world is getting better and that ultimately we will have an utopia here within this world.

A few years ago, I heard a preacher who was a post-millennialist in his theory as to the return of Jesus Christ to this world. I heard this preacher say that the world was getting better at an astonishingly rapid rate, and he listed ten events of the year preceding which would show how fast the world was getting better. I thought, as I listened to him, that I could have shown him ten events, likewise, to the contrary that would show how fast the world is getting worse. We don't have to list events to see whether or not the world is getting better -- all we have to do is come to God's Word and let His Word give the answer. Listen, I do not believe one particle in the evolution of the human family, but I do believe strongly in "devolution" from the Garden of Eden on.

God's Word answers the question as to whether the world is getting better. Notice the answer. In that image, the head was of gold, the chest and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron and the feet of iron and miry clay. Notice -- gold, silver, brass, iron, and iron and miry clay mingled together. In this you have an increase in strength, for iron is stronger than gold, but while you have an increase in strength, you have a decrease in the finer qualities. Gold is far more precious than iron, silver is more precious than brass, brass more precious than iron, and iron more precious than iron and miry clay, so that in all this dream you have the answer given as to whether the world is to get better or worse.

God tells us in this dream by way of a study of the component parts of this image -- God would tell us that the world is getting worse, for it has come from golden head down to feet made of clay mingled with iron.

There are other passages within God's Word which tell us the same thing. Listen: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13).

Talk about the world getting better -- talk about the world getting so much better that ultimately we will bring in the millennium right here -- everybody loving one another -- listen again to God's Word.

"For whosoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matthew 24:28).

What does it mean? The word for "eagle" is the word for "buzzard." You know what it means when you see an old buzzard floating around in the air above. It means there is something dead down on the earth below. Our Lord says that when Jesus Christ comes back to this world again, society will be just like a rotten, decomposed carcass. That doesn't sound like we are getting better very fast, does it?

VI. Daniel also told of Christ's coming empire.

Daniel went farther than just to tell us about these four empires. He told Nebuchadnezzar that he saw in his dream a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and that stone, as it started to roll down the mountain side, slowly, little by little gained momentum as it went, until finally that stone crushed the image of gold, silver, brass, iron, and iron and miry clay. Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that as he looked at that stone, it began to grow and expand and develop until it became a great world-wide empire.

What did he mean? Beloved, that stone represents the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Listen: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ" (I Cor. 10:4).

That stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands tells us of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was born of a virgin. Just like this stone was cut out; supernaturally without hands -- He was supernaturally conceived -- was born of a virgin without a human father.

It says that that stone is going to crush this image which represents Gentile world power through all ages to come, and then shall become a great empire itself, which would tell us, beloved, that the Lord Jesus Christ is some day going to put an end to, He is going to crush Gentile world power. Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome and then the feet spread out with the ten toes representing the nations that have come out of the old Roman Empire, -- God says that some of these days Jesus Christ is coming and He is going to set up an empire of His own, which will put an end to Gentile world sovereignty. My prayer to God is -- "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

There isn't a nation on the top side of God's earth but what is a disgrace morally, spiritually and every other way to Almighty God. There isn't a nation but what is shot through and through with anarchy and rebellion toward God; however, some day God is going to give to us His Son who is coming again to this world, and when He comes, He is going to grind into powder Gentile history so that it shall be no more. He is going to set up a kingdom and live and reign here within this world.

Several years ago I preached from this second chapter of Daniel, and after the service was over, a little lad, who has long since become grown, came around and said, "Brother Gilpin, I have two questions I want to ask: The first one is -- Which one of those ten toes are we?" I said, "Well, if your second question is as hard as that one, I'll just say 'No' to both of them in advance. 'No' for I don't know." He said, "My second question is a little more

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DANIEL

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serious -- Whereabouts are we now in this image as far as history is concerned? He was bare-footed and I said, "Buddy, we are right down almost to the end of your big toe."

I believe with all my heart that Gentile history is fast running out, and that we are almost to the end of the big toe so far as this image depicting history is concerned.

In view of that fact, we can look for, and expect His soon return.

I have a question I would like to ask: Are you ready for His return? Are you ready for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ? The only way you can be ready is by faith in the Lord Jesus Himself. Religion won't save you. There may be someone who is depending upon the fact that he is religious, or depending upon the fact that he is affiliated with some denomination, and who thinks that is all he needs. Listen, beloved, religion won't save any man. Good works and a good life won't save, neither will church membership save. I tell you, beloved, your sins, which are many, have to be paid for, and the only one that can pay for them is the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God bless you and may you be ready when Jesus comes!

DOES

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is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Perhaps we should start by explaining the reason for the question. There are those who actually believe that a person must agree to and accept the five points of the doctrines of grace or else they are not really saved. It is an error to believe this teaching, and heresy to teach this doctrine. It is heresy because it adds to the gospel. Anything which adds to the true gospel is a perversion of the gospel, therefore it becomes another gospel; and if any man preaches any other gospel than that which is found in the Word of God, he is a heretic. Galatians 1:6-12 The Campbellites add baptism, others say speak in tongues, still others say that you must pray through. The Hardshells say you must believe the "doctrines." The doctrines of grace revolve around the gospel of Christ, but they are not the gospel. You might even say that the doctrines of grace are what the gospel is all about, but still they are not the gospel.

I offer to you now an explanation of the doctrines of grace. (1) The total depravity of the human race: that is, that all mankind without exception are totally sinful, totally alienated from God and totally unwilling to repent of their sins and trust the redemptive work of Christ as the only means of escape from damnation. Romans 5:12,14,17,21 (2) Unconditional election: that God in eternity past, because of His infinite and perfect love, elected or chose to save a certain number of individuals out of Adam's race for Himself. That that election was not based on foreseen faith, but strictly on His own foreknowledge, good pleasure, and determinate counsel. I Peter 1:2-5 (3) Particular Redemption: that because of His election of indi-

viduals unto salvation, He also determined that the sacrifice of the Son on the cross would pay the purchase price for only those. That not one for whom Christ died will miss hearing the gospel message, repent, and receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. (4) The effectual calling by the Holy Spirit: those of God's elect and subjects of His infinite and divine love are moved upon by God the Holy Spirit so that they are made to see their desperate need for salvation. That they are also at the same time made willing to come to Him, and made willing to strip themselves of all their natural pride and prostrate themselves before God. (5) Preserved forever: The elect of God, being predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son shall never fall into perdition. That they are forever and always secured by the same grace that bought them and saved them. That they shall all their lifetime, to one degree or another, manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

I now offer you an explanation of the true gospel. First, the gospel is God's means whereby He calls out His elect. It is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. It is how that Christ died for our sins, and how that He rose again the third day. Though the Word of God contains the gospel, the whole Word of God is not the gospel. Though the doctrines of grace are the essence of the gospel they are not the gospel. In Matthew 4:23 the Bible says that "Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom..." In Matthew 11:28 the Lord invited "...all ye that labour and are heavy laden" to come to Him for spiritual rest for their souls. In Luke 3:3 John the Baptist. "...came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." The Jews who had rejected the Lord Jesus as the Saviour asked Him to give them a sign from heaven that He was truly the Messiah. (See Matthew 12:38,39) It is very interesting to note that the only sign given was that which signified His death, burial, and resurrection. Remember, that is what Paul said that the gospel consisted of.

Now those proponents of this heresy may think that I have misinterpreted the statement. I do not think so. I realize that they are saying that one will believe the doctrines of grace if they are saved. But this error only leads to other errors such as: one will be baptized into a Baptist church if he or she is saved, or that one cannot pray or serve God in any way outside a Baptist church, or that there can be a lapse in time between regeneration and the manifestation of the new birth.

Beloved, the devil is bent on destroying the precious gospel any way he can, whether it be by diluting or polluting. The Arminians dilute the gospel by trying to give man a part in it, and the Hardshells pollute it by eliminating man's part in it. The Arminian says that God did His part by sending the Son to be the Saviour of the world, and now it is up to man to do his part by exercising his human will and accepting Christ as his Saviour. The Hardshell says that God saves sinners by His sovereign

will and power and He doesn't even need the gospel to help Him. Some even say that you may go all your lifetime never hearing the gospel of Christ and wake up one day in heaven because you were one of the elect. A regeneration without the gospel is like baptism without water, the Lord's supper without wine, or the law without holiness. Now please do not accuse me of believing that the gospel alone regenerates. My position is that the Holy Spirit regenerates, enabling the individual to receive the gospel by faith imparted unto him.

Now, I want to be fair in saying that there are various degrees of hardness among the Hardshell crowd. Some are not as hard as others. Nevertheless, a shell is a shell and a shell hardens with age. Beware! There is no Biblical support for these teachings when the Scriptures are examined fairly and squarely. Obviously, there is support when the Word is not properly divided, and it has been my experience that just because someone is educated formally does not necessarily mean that they have a full grasp on the Scriptures. I know of a number of individuals who have a good knowledge of the Bible, but they have a very poor ability in spiritual discernment, at least when it comes to the doctrines of salvation. John Calvin, who has been given much more credit than he deserves in the doctrines of grace, was a heretic in many ways, such as the doctrine of infant baptism. Besides, as I understand history, he hated true Baptists for their positions on these and other doctrines, such as the local church and the Lord's supper. So another good name for the Hardshells is Calvinist. Nevertheless, true Baptist people continue to be verbally persecuted because they continue to preach and teach the truth.

Allow me to state my position on the question at hand. I do not believe that a person must believe the doctrines of grace in order to be saved, nor do I believe that everyone who is saved will embrace the doctrines of grace. It is fairly obvious that many of the folks who were members of true churches during the Apostolic age either did not understand or did not accept these teachings. After the Lord's great message in John 6 the record shows that "From that time, many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." There is every indication that not everyone in the church at Rome understood or embraced these truths. We all admire H. Boyce Taylor for his position on sovereign election. He was the editor of a great Baptist publication, and author of the famous booklet "Why Be a Baptist", but few realize that he held to a universal atonement idea. (See Heresies of Hardshellism, an article published in the Ashland Avenue Baptist, vol. 39, March 23, 1962). Now does this mean that Boyce Taylor was not saved? Furthermore, if you were to say that the thief on the cross even knew about the doctrines of grace per se, much less believed them, you would be doing some mighty tall speculating. It is also quite obvious that even the Lord's closest disciples did not fully understand these great truths until they had been taught, and even then some doubted.

Finally, beloved, I feel very strongly that in many cases where saved people turn away

from sovereign grace teaching, it is not what is being taught, but the way it is being presented. How often do you hear preachers preaching on "the doctrines" as if they were in a heated argument with someone? How many times do we preachers present grace in a negative way? How often do we leave people feeling like they have been whipped with an ugly stick rather than being caressed with a sovereign hand of divine love and affection? Sovereign grace teaching ought to leave God's people weeping in humble joy rather than feeling insulted and beaten. May God enable me to present these wonderful and glorious doctrines in a spirit of love and joy. Furthermore, I pray that God will enable me to continue to proclaim the gospel in truth and purity, for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes it.

PRAYER

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the will of God. Through prayer, the soul and spirit of the believer is made pliable and conformable to God's perfect will. Prayer becomes a spiritual force which imbues all things and is propelled by the saints of God upon and into all circumstances. The Bible record stands replete with confirmation of this truth. Prayer brings all things into conformity to a divine fiatism.

No one in heaven or earth or in hell can change the will of God. It is predetermined, foreordained and immutable. It is perfect and therefore cannot be changed. Nothing can be added to perfection, nor can anything be subtracted which would make it less than perfect. In all our human endeavor we must learn and do the will of God. Prayer is one of those ordained means to discover the will of God and thus to interpret it and do it and thus experience the harmony and peace that comes from knowing and doing it.

Even though we cannot change the will of God, nor should we ever desire or strive to, we can through effectual praying change ourselves, our circumstances and others around us. When we pray scripturally, not only are we ourselves made conformable to God's Word and will, but our immediate associates are rendered changeable because we have been changed in having been made conformable to the will of God.

It is objected: "Why should we pray, since the God we have to do with is unchangeable? Can we work any alteration in Him by our requests?" No, the Scripture says, with Him is "...no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

I answer, prayer makes not a change in God, but a change in us: it does not make Him more merciful and bountiful, but disposes us for the receiving His mercy and grace. This notion you must all well understand, that the design of prayer is not to make any alteration in God but to make an alteration in us, that we may be fitted and made meet for those blessings which God has promised to give. When God pardons any, the change, to speak properly, is in the person pardoned; He that before was an enemy, is become a child, God's wrath is the same that it was, and His love the same that it was, only the person that before was out of Christ is now in Christ.

When we pray for grace and holiness, we are more fitted for receiving it. God alters not, but we are altered; how much for the better when we are sanctified! This subject may be made more plain by this similitude. Suppose a man ready to be drowned in the sea, a rope is cast out to him from a rock on the shore; the man does not pull the rock nearer to him for the rock stirs not, but he pulls himself nearer to the rock and hereby is saved. God is our rock, prayers draw us to Him from whom alone salvation is to be expected.

There is no man alive or who has lived that knows who the elect of God are. There may be much presumptuous affirmation to the opposite, but they only manifest their ignorance of Scripture. Even St. Paul was made to realize that only God knows who the elect really are and where they are. Paul said, "...The Lord knoweth them that are his..." (II Tim. 2:19). God said to Elijah who thought he was the only true prophet left in Israel, "...I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (Rom. 11:4). When Paul left Athens and came to Corinth God came to him in the night and said, "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10). It is the height of presumption to attempt to divide mankind into elect and non-elect, although that separation is absolutely true. However, only God knows who and where they are. Therefore, shall I not pray for Mr. Jones because he is not one of God's elect? Who told thee that he was not? If the slaves of Africa had been told that John Newton was one of God's elect when he was a cursing slave trader, trafficking in the souls of men, they would have laughed him to scorn, yet he was one of God's elect. To say that I shall not pray for Mr. Jones because he is not one of God's elect is the height of human presumption.

While we are on the subject, we note that many people have argument with God because there are elect and non-elect. I personally do not have trouble with this simply because God is God. It is presumption of the deepest dye to say, "Well, I shall pray for the non-elect to be saved anyway." Then you choose to pray against the will of God. We might reason thus, since the Scriptures say that we shall judge angels, we ought to pray for fallen angels that they might be saved. Who wants to begin such a ministry against the will of God? One might as well say, "I shall take my thimble full of water and extinguish the sun!"

Man has become so presumptuous and self-opinionated that one would almost expect God to get down on His knees and start praying to man to discover what He can and cannot do so as to be sure to please man or to conform His will to the so-called free-will of man. In today's philosophical determinism God is dependent upon man rather than man upon God. We have reached a new low in satisfying the corrupt ego of mankind. "God is dead" becomes a tenant of humanistic rational-

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PRAYER

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ity. According to one author, with millions of copies sold to the unsuspecting public, man is good. The object of his existence is to survive. Thus, on a near Darwinian survival of the fittest level, man by a process of inherent urges, moves on a plane of rejecting mental aberrations (a very astute name for sin) toward complete mental sublimation and thus projects himself into his own social utopia without the help of any God. Millions of people have swallowed this hog wash. It was not my intention to insult the hogs with the comparison, however. Men who reason thusly do not pray. They see no need of it. They are not in any wise dependent upon God. They see themselves as self-sufficient, not needing assistance, nor finding dependence other than upon their own human determinism. Thus they cannot equate with the divine fiat that is discovered to us by Holy Scripture which says; "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11).

In the words of one writer, with whom I do not agree in all things, but do concur in the following: "The theory of the universe which underlies the Bible, which is everywhere assumed or asserted in the sacred volume, which accords with our moral and religious nature, and which, therefore, is the foundation of natural, as well as of revealed religion, is that God created all things by the word of His power; that He is everywhere present in the universe, cooperating with and controlling the operation of second causes on a scale commensurate with His omnipotence and omnipresence, as we, in our measure, cooperate with, and control them within the narrow range of our efficiency. According to this theory, it is not irrational that we should pray for rain or fair weather, for prosperous voyages or healthful seasons; or that we should feel gratitude for the innumerable blessings which we receive from this ever present, ever operating, and ever watchful benefactor and Father. Any theory of the universe which makes religion, or prayer, irrational, is self-evidently false, because it contradicts the nature, the consciousness, and the irrepressible convictions of men. As this control of God extends over the minds of men, it is no less rational that we should pray, as all men instinctively do pray, that He would influence our own hearts, and the hearts of others, for good, than that we should pray for health" (Systematic Theology; Hodge; Vol.III, Soteriology p.698).

I am sure that there are dispensational contingencies to consider in respect to prayer that should be carefully considered so that we do not create a blanket under which all kinds of misinterpretation would naturally converge. None the less, Paul tells us that prayer is to be made for all classes of men without distinction. "I exhort therefore, that, first

of all, supplications; prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (I Tim. 2:1).

He continues by saying: "For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (I Tim. 2:7-3).

In this Holy Scripture we are told that praying, of which intercessions and supplication are but forms of praying, is a contingent factor in leading a "quiet and peaceable life" and is a conditioning factor in godliness and honesty. This substantiates what I have already submitted that true prayer is a conditioning factor in the well being of society as a whole. This praying is that which is carried on by the elect of God for only their prayers avail. It is a Biblical tenant that God does not hear the prayer of sinners. "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31).

Looking in particular to the question at the beginning of this article let us review it at this time. "Where is there Scriptural example or precept to teach anyone to pray for the salvation of the wicked or for sinners to be born again?"

Let me be the first to report that I do pray for the unsaved. I have prayed for their salvation which includes that they be "born again" without which there is no such thing as salvation. I know that my praying does not make it Scriptural-unless the Scriptures do teach us to pray for unsaved folks and for their salvation. As a principle of praying for unsaved people let us remember that our Lord Jesus Christ said, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). Our Lord surely practised what He preached for on the cross He prayed, "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..." (Luke 23:34). This is not a prayer endorsing universal. This prayer does not procure salvation for the whole world of men without exception. It was prayer in the trinitarian dimension of accomplishing the decrees which both the Father and the Son had predetermined. It is better said in the language of Scripture, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). Matthew Henry says, "The petition; 'Father, forgive them,' one would think that He should have prayed, 'Father, consume them; the Lord look upon it and require it.' The sin they were not guilty of, might justly have been made unpardonable, and justly might they have been excepted by name out of the act of indemnity. No, these are particularly prayed for. Now he made intercession for transgressors, as was foretold (Isa. 53:12)."

Another commentator says, "The persons for whom this prayer is offered cannot be the Roman soldiers, who are blindly executing the orders which they have received; it is certainly the

Jews, who by rejecting and slaying their Messiah, are smiting themselves with a mortal blow (John 2:19). It is therefore literally true, that in acting thus they knew not what they did. The prayer of Jesus was granted in the forty years' respite during which they were permitted, before perishing, to hear apostolic preaching. The wrath of God might have been discharged upon them at the very moment." (Editor's note: I believe that all of those for whom Jesus thus prayed were later saved, for it cannot be that one of our Lord's prayers would go unanswered.)

Stephen also prayed for the unsaved when at his death he prayed, "...Lord, lay not this sin to their charge..." (Acts 7:60). In Genesis chapter 20 we have an Old Testament example of Abraham praying for the King of Gerar at God's instruction to do so and Abimelech was not a saved man. "Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live..." (Gen. 20:7).

Abimelech was sick and unsaved, filled with lust and wickedness yet God instructed Abraham to pray for him. Abraham's intercession for Sodom is also an example of the saved praying for the unsaved. This is recorded for us in Genesis chapter eighteen. Abraham was not pleading and praying before God in behalf of persons in Sodom who possess the imputed righteousness as did Abraham's nephew, Lot, whom the Scriptures declare was a just man. They did not possess imputed righteousness as did Abraham. Peter said, "...Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). "The judgment which fell upon the wicked cities immediately afterwards (Abraham's intercession), proves that there were not ten 'righteous persons' in Sodom; by which we understand, not merely ten sinless or holy men, but ten who through fear of God and conscientiousness had kept themselves free from the prevailing sin and iniquity of these cities" (Keil-Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament).

Of course the prayers of the elect are the prayers that God intends to honor. They go hand in hand with the workings of God in His providence. This is brought forth in the Scripture which says, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them" (Luke 18:7). In the great revelation of Christ we read, "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne" (Rev. 8:3). "In a word, men can never order their addresses to God in prayer, suitable to their conditions, without due observation of His providences. Your prayers are to be suitable to your conditions, sometimes we are called to praise, sometimes to humiliation. In the way of His judgments you are to wait for Him (Isa. 26:8) to prepare to meet

Him (Zeph. 2:1-2; Amos 4:12). Sometimes your business is to turn away His anger which you see approaching, and sometimes you are called to praise Him for mercies received (Isa. 12:1,2). But then you must first observe them. Thus you find the matter of David's Psalms still varied, according to the providences that befell him, but one who is unobservant and careless can never do it. And thus you have the grounds of the duty briefly presented" (The Mystery of Providence, John Flavel).

In closing, let us consider God's servant Job, as an example of praying for the unsaved. There were the friends of Job. It is not stated that these men had a true relationship with Jehovah. They did not come unto Him as did Job. Notice in the first chapter of Job that he comes to God on the basis of the shed blood, in the sacrifice that he offered for himself and for his children. How graphically this is presented in Job 1:5: "And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."

In spite of all the pious counsel which Job's friends gave him they were not accepted before God. They needed someone to pray for them and God said that Job was the one to do it. When it was all said and done God said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "...My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept:

lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job." It is evident that God heard Job's prayer in behalf of his friends for we read in verse 10: "And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before."

Do we have Scriptural example and precept to pray for the wicked, the unsaved to be born again? The answer, to me at least, is yes we do. Christ prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Stephen prayed, "...Lord lay not this sin to their charge..." Abraham prayed for the life of the king of Gerar and he lived. Abraham prayed for the unsaved in Sodom. Job prayed for his unsaved friends. The saints in all ages have thus prayed because the saints do not know whom God elects. Although it is not said that they prayed for them to "be born again," yet we cannot conceive that we or they would pray to the contrary.

SING UNTO

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such as are in the sea, all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Revelation 5:13). Apostle Paul states, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). What sovereignty! What sadness to think that those whose reprobation has forever doomed them to the eternal abyss will be compelled to sing unto the Lord.

CHOSEN, REDEEMED, SOUGHT OUT I AM

Don Fortner

(Tune: Must Jesus Bear The Cross Alone?)

Chosen, redeemed, sought out I am,
And saved by sovereign grace,
In Christ complete, I lift my voice,
The triune God to praise!

My Father chose me by His grace
Before He made the world,
Adopted and predestined me
To be His holy child.

Christ Jesus shed His precious blood
Upon the cursed tree;
My Substitute has satisfied
The law of God for me.

The Spirit, by almighty grace,
Awakened me from death,
Revealing Christ, He brought me life
And gave this sinner faith.

Chosen, redeemed, sought out I am,
And saved by sovereign grace,
In Christ complete, I lift my voice
The triune God to praise!

CAN YOU IMAGINE THIS?

Godly women of the Bible wearing mini-skirts or exceedingly expensive and very showy clothing, or overloading their bodies with expensive jewelry?

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (I Tim.2:9).