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THE DIVINE RESURRECTION

By Waldo Whiddon

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:10-14).

Beloved, if Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, then we have no Saviour! Other religions of the world have various kinds of gods, but none are alive today but our God! Beloved, we serve a



Waldo Whiddon

live, risen, able Lord. A keeping Lord. He is able to save and to keep what He saves forever through all eternity.

The Apostle Paul speaks

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THE SBC & ETERNAL SECURITY

by Ray Waugh, Sr.

Part III

Assurance For Peter

The man Paul, however, is not alone with this testimony that our salvation in Christ is both assured and eternal. We hear Peter, the saved man, who once had a perverted view of sacrifice; the saved man, Peter, who once both denied his Lord and blasphemed; and the saved man, Peter, who once had some difficulty understanding our Lord's word

concerning his need to love altruistically, saying, "The



Ray Waugh, Sr.

Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Pet. 2:9). God is explaining that He can provide the believer eternal security and that He is capable of reserving the unjust (those who have not been justified) unto judgment. God specifies the eternal state of the saved, even as the eternal state of the

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

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STUDIES IN DANIEL

CHAPTER 6

by John R. Gilpin

I am sure that the life of no individual who is mentioned in all the Scriptures illustrates this text quite as well as the life of Daniel. Surely if ever a man were tested with adverse circumstances without and problems within, and yet maintained the peace of God at all times it was this man Daniel.

If you will note carefully the chapters which we have studied thus far in Daniel, you will find in practically every one of those chapters, Daniel faced a problem. Yet, God kept him in the problem and God preserved him in the

problem for God's own glory.

At the time of which I have read, Daniel was not an unknown man. He had served through the reigns of two preceding kings and



John R. Gilpin, Sr.

with each of these kings Daniel had amply illustrated the truth of this text - "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

By way of history, it might be interesting to notice that when Babylon, which had been a world-wide empire, fell, Media-Persia became the dominant empire of the world, whereas Babylon had been controlling the world, now the world politically is controlled by Media-Persia. Darius was the king of the combined empire of the Medes and Persians, and

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DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY, HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

by Robert McNeill

Text: Acts 4:26-28

"The devil made me do it!"

This expression made popular by a national television comedian brings smiles and laughs to millions of people across the United States. But I wonder how many people are aware that the expression is almost a direct quotation of Eve's answer to God in Genesis 3:13! Listen to that verse in the first book of the Bible: "And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Eve blamed the serpent, the devil, for the fall. In the preceding verse Adam blamed his wife Eve for his sin, "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

Both claimed no responsibility for sin. Strange, isn't it, that when you mention divine sovereignty today, the first objection you receive from those who think this all important doctrine of Scripture is over emphasized, is that human responsibility is being destroyed.

Our first parents denied their responsibility in the fall but God said they were guilty. Adam walked right into sin with his eyes wide open and although Eve was beguiled she was still responsible as recorded in I Timothy 2:14, "And Adam was not deceived, but the

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD

"...as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Pet. 4:10). The word "manifold" means varied or different. Difference, not number, is the major significance of the word. It is used ten times in the New Testament. It is always translated "divers" except in my text and in I Peter 1:6. The manifold grace of I Peter 4:10 is more than sufficient for the manifold temptations of I Peter 1:6. In this message I desire to point out some things about this wonderful manifold grace of God. Instead of giving detailed divisions I will include several aspects of God's

grace under different main divisions.

1. The Saving Grace of God. Here I refer to the total of grace that produces the salvation experience. "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Salvation, from beginning to end (and it will never end) is by the sovereign, unconditional, effectual, and everlasting grace of God. Let us look at different aspects of God's manifold grace that can come under the head of saving grace.

There is electing grace. Before

the world began, God of His own sovereign will, chose, from among fallen mankind a great multitude that no man can number and predestinated them to be the recipients of His salvation. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain...." (Jn. 15:16). This Scripture does not refer to election to the apostleship or the ministry. It refers to election to salvation, and

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THE BIBLE AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE

by Elvis Gregory
(Now in Glory)

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ has the obligation and responsibility of discipline when it comes to the membership that makes up that particular body, wherever the Lord may have it.

Mr. Webster defines discipline: "to regulate one's moral or mental training by the regulation, or according to, strict rules."

When we speak of church discipline, we are saying that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, those particular assemblies where ever they are, have a responsibility to set bounds and limitations with regard to those who make up the membership of that body.

The doctrine of church discipline is founded upon the emphatic Word of God. That this is true, I do not believe any honest student would deny.

Because of the lack of church discipline there's no question that many churches are rendered ineffective in their witness for the Lord Jesus Christ because of the known and prevalent sin within the membership that goes

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that all saved people are ordained to bear fruit (compare Eph.2:10), and that the fruit they bear will bring eternal rewards. Especially notice that men do not, of themselves, choose the Lord; but that He chooses them.

"...and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Ac.13:48). God's eternal election (ordination or predestination) of some men to eternal life is the cause and foundation of their believing. The Holy Spirit will bring to saving faith all those chosen by God to salvation. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...." (Eph.1:3-4). Notice that the first of the spiritual blessings with which God will bless His people is the choice of them to be the recipients of those blessings. Many of these spiritual blessings are enumerated in Ephesians 1:4-14, and they all begin with the electing grace of God.

"...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thes.2:13). Election is from eternity. Election is to salvation. This purposed salvation is brought about by the Holy Spirit bringing one to the belief of the truth of the gospel. Oh, what a

verse is this! It is an Arminian killer, for it teaches eternal election. It is a Hardshell killer because it teaches the use of the gospel. It is a time-lapse killer for it teaches the belief of the truth as simultaneous with the sanctification of the Spirit.

God's election is sovereign and unconditional. It is "the election of grace" of Romans 11:5. God does not elect because of anything He foresees in man. Actually, all that God foresees in man, apart from the working of



Joe Wilson

divine grace, is depravity and sin. It is the utmost folly when Arminians teach that God elects on the basis of foreseen repentance, faith, and good works. If that were so, then election would not be of grace; but the Bible says that is of grace. The good that God foresees in man is the good that He foresees that He will work in man by the irresistible working of the Holy Spirit. Election is the first act of the grace of God in His work of saving men from eternal hell.

Next is redeeming grace. The elect of God are sinners like the rest of men. Some of them have and will sin more than some who will be in eternal hell. The awful guilt of the sins of the elect of God must be satisfactorily dealt with ere any of them can be saved. They are unable to satisfy the claims of a holy God and His just law. Praise God, Jesus Christ came into this world by way of the virgin's womb. He lived a sinless life. He died at Calvary. There he took upon Himself the total guilt of all of the sins of all of God's elect. He satisfactorily atoned for that guilt. He paid the price of redemption for His people. He secured and guaranteed their eternal salvation by His satisfactory death. He made the offering that God accepted for those sins. He, by His death, redeemed His people from the curse of the broken law of God.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa.53:5). Yes, praise the Lord, all those for whom He thus suffered will be healed by His stripes. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa.53:11). He will see, saved in glory, all those for whom He died; and He will be satisfied. He will not be defeated in the saving purpose of His death; all for whom He died will be eternally saved. He will justify all those whose iniquities He bore. "...and I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn.10:15). There are two classes, goats and sheep. The goats will always be goats, and the sheep

have always been sheep; they were sheep before they were saved, and they will be saved because they are His sheep. Jesus laid down His life for the sheep, not for the goats. Oh, praise the Lord for His redeeming grace!!

Next there is prevenient grace. "Prevenient" means to go before. This grace is that grace of God that goes before saving grace, and watches over and cares for the sheep until the time of their salvation experience. Oh, one might say, what if the sheep die before salvation? This will never happen. God knows who His sheep are, and He tenderly and lovingly watches over them, even prior to their salvation. His love is an everlasting love. He loves them the same before they are saved as He does after they are saved.

Then, in the matter of saving grace, there is effectual and irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit. We might call this saving, calling, regenerating, quickening, or converting grace. It is that work of the Holy Spirit by which, using the gospel, He gives spiritual life and enables and causes the regenerated soul to immediately exercise saving repentance and faith. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power...." (Psa.110:3). What a wonderful portion of Scripture is this. Though it is small in size, it teaches many great truths. It teaches us that God has an elect people, that they of themselves are unwilling to be saved, that God's power will make them willing, and that this will be accomplished at a predestinated time. No one can understand this Scripture without seeing these great truths. Under the total of saving grace, for the purpose of this message, I have placed electing, redeeming, prevenient, and calling grace. These all work together to bring about the saving experience of the people of God.

2. The Keeping Grace of God. Will those who experience the saving grace of God make it all the way to heaven? Is this saving grace eternal grace? Yes, praise the Lord; the once saved are always saved; they are eternally secure. They are kept by the grace and power of God.

There are the problems of keeping. The world is against their staying saved. The world allures them. The world will do all in its power to bring the saved back within its grasp and damning influence. The devil does not want to lose them. He will work with all his cunning and power against them. I do not know how smart the devil is. I would think that he knows that the once saved are always saved. I would think he knows that he cannot cause one to lose salvation. I think this, but I don't know for sure. Anyway, the devil will do all he can against the saved people of the Lord. Then, each saved person has a deadly enemy within. Salvation gives a new nature, but it does not do away with the old nature. Until death or the rapture, the old nature remains in the child of God, the same that it was before salvation. This old nature wars against the new nature. It would, if possible, destroy the life of the new nature. This Trinity of evil poses a great problem to security. But God's grace is greater than all opposition.

There are some promises of keeping, praise the Lord. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they

shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no one can separate them from me." (John 10:28-29)

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

FROM THE EDITOR

"The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways...." (Prov.14:14). Let me say right off that there are many who think they are backsliders who are not such. They just never have been saved. Let me say that nearly all who continue in what they think is a backslidden condition for a long, long time just have never been saved. Let me say that I fear that we Christians are often too easy in our judgment that a person is truly saved, but just backslidden. Having said these very important things, I now say a few things about backsliders and backsliding.

There is such a thing as backsliding. It is a Bible teaching. They are greatly mistaken who, because the word is not used in the New Testament, teach that it was only an Old Testament matter and never occurs today. There are a host of backslidden people in our churches today. They may well be the major reason that our churches are not what they ought to be, and not doing what they ought to do.

What is backsliding? Let me make it simple. If you have ever been closer to the Lord in your Christian life than you are at this moment, you are to that extent and at that time; backslidden. The Christian life should be a steady growing in grace and knowledge. It should be a steady growing in spiritual matters. Christian life can never be a "status quo" experience. You are growing, you are getting closer to the Lord, you are becoming more and more what a Christian ought to be; or you are backslidden.

According to my text, backsliding begins in the heart. One may still have all the outward matters as they were. One may be faithful in church, in tithing, in doing many outward works; and yet be a backslider in the heart. The backslider in heart is one who has left his first love - who does not love Jesus as he once did. All other backsliding begins here. And, if the backslider in heart does not get this straightened out, he will soon backslide in other ways. This hidden backsliding in heart will soon be seen outwardly in many other ways. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov.4:23). What a serious and important admonition is this. We must keep our hearts warm, sweet, and in love with Jesus; or the other issues of life will soon be affected thereby.

Backsliding must be corrected, or it will become worse and worse. It cannot be a "stalemate" condition. Many have backslidden in heart, failed to correct it, and have gone into sins they never ever imagined they would do. Great and ruinous falls by Christians do not come all at once. They are preceded by one being backslidden in heart, and failing to correct the matter. If you are a backslider; you will get better, or you will get worse. Backsliding must be cured by repentance, confessing, and forsaking; or it will steadily become worse.

The backslider is a very unhappy person. He cannot enjoy sin as the unsaved man does, for he has a new nature. And he cannot enjoy his salvation as he has in the past. Backsliding will not cause one to lose salvation, but it will surely cause one to lose the joys of salvation. As to the matter of enjoying sin, let me say that if you are enjoying your backslidden condition; you are not backslidden; you just have never been saved.

The backslider is a very poor testimony for Jesus Christ and His salvation. The backslider is not going to win souls to Jesus Christ. The backslider is not going to influence others for God. The backslider is not going to do good in the church services, and help promote the glory of God and the good of the church. The backslider is not filled with the Spirit, and cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit, or serve God in the power of the Spirit.

The backslider is a hurt and a hindrance in and to the church. The unsaved do not hurt the church like the backslider does. The backslider is a traitor. He should be honoring the Lord, he should be contributing to the church service and to the work of the church; instead he is a hindrance thereto. Could I say that backsliders are the greatest hindrance and hurt to the church?

The backslider is not doing any good (rather is he doing much hurt), and he is not earning any rewards. When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, we will realize that, during our seasons of backsliding (and we all have these) we did not do any good to the souls of men, we did not give any glory to God, and we did not earn any rewards.

One of the early outward signs of backsliding, as well as one of the contributing causes to further and continued backsliding, is the missing of the services of the church when one does not have a good reason for doing so. Backsliding will cause you to lay out of church, and laying out of church will increase your backsliding. Beware of missing the services of your church. This will do you no spiritual good, rather it will do you great spiritual harm. When you miss church without a good reason (not some silly excuse), you show that you are already backslidden; and if you continue doing this, you will backslide more and more.

There is nothing good about backsliding. Everything about backsliding is bad. We need to give very serious thought to this matter. I urge every reader to ask the question, "Am I backslidden?" Examine yourself thoroughly as to this. If you find that you are backslidden, take immediate steps to correct the situation. True repentance, confession, and forsaking are the steps of recovery from a backslidden condition.

We, I think, are all somewhat concerned about revival in our churches, and rightly so. Might I suggest that if the backsliders in the church will get straightened out, the church will have a revival. Might I even suggest that this is what a revival is, backsliders getting straightened out with God relative to their backslidden condition. Are you a backslider? I urge you, for your own good, for the glory of God, for the good of the church, for the good you might do to the souls of men; I urge you to get this matter straightened out. As I close, may I remind you in love for your soul, that many people who think they are backslidden, or whom others think are backslidden, are not backsliders at all; but rather have never been saved. Beware of going to hell thinking you are a backslider. Backsliders will not go to hell, but many who think they are only backslidden, will. God bless you all.

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man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand" (Jn.10:27-29). I know, I know that many false teachers say that a saved person can lose his salvation and eternally perish. Jesus says this can never be. Which will you believe? Jesus or false teachers? I prefer to believe Jesus, and to rejoice in the blessed assurance of eternal salvation. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom.8:38-39). No matter what falling from grace heretics might say, Paul was convinced that nothing could separate a saved person from the love of God, that a saved person was saved forever. Remember that Paul was inspired, and the falling from grace heretics are not.

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (1 Tim.1:12). Saving faith is to commit the saving of our souls to Jesus Christ. We are not able to keep them saved. He is able to keep that which we have committed to Him; and praise Him, He will do it.

We might say that forgiving grace is involved in this matter of keeping grace. After we are saved, we do sin; all of us sin. What are we to do about sins that we commit as Christians. The Bible tells us in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Oh, I love this verse. I use it more than any other verse in all the Bible. I do not know how many times I have come to Him, confessing my sins, asking for forgiveness; but I do know that He has forgiven me each and every time, and restored me to His fellowship with Him. I call this my "making up" verse. Oh, it is easy to "make up" with, praise His dear name.

3. The Living Grace of God. I put three things; living, learning, and serving under this one head. We are to live clean, holy, godly, dedicated, separated lives for the glory of God. We are to live the Christian life in all of its purity and power. It is so important that we live as Christians ought to. It is important to our personal blessings, to our witness and testimony, to our service, and to our receiving of rewards. The Christian life, lived as it should be, is the best and happiest way that any one can live. But the Christian life, as it ought to be lived, is beyond the power of the natural man. We just know that, in and of ourselves, we cannot live that life on the high plane required by the Bible. We need, we must have, the grace of God in order to live as we should. We cannot live this life in the power of the flesh, but we can live it in the power of the grace of God given us by the Holy Spirit.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness

there is no law" (Gal.5:22-23). I know of no Scripture that better describes what the Christian life ought to be. Note that this life is not obtained in or by the power of the flesh, but is the fruit of the Spirit. This is living grace. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor.10:13).

There is learning grace. Oh, there is so much to learn. When we are saved we enter into a school from which we will only graduate at death or the rapture, if then. We need to learn all we can of the Word of God. We need to learn its promises and its precepts. We need to learn its doctrines. We just cannot be the Christians we ought to be without being learned in the doctrines of the Bible. The flesh is useless in this learning. Human wisdom and training will not qualify one for learning the things of God. The unsaved man cannot learn the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. He cannot know them for they are spiritually discerned. But, oh, my Christian friend, neither can the saved man learn these things by the power of the flesh.

God has given us the Holy Spirit that we might know the things that are freely given us by God. We have the Holy Spirit as our divine teacher in the things of the Word of God. The believer should learn, and can learn the things of the Lord. We could know much more than we do if we were yielded as we should be to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will teach us by the Word of God. We cannot neglect the Word of God and expect the Holy Spirit to teach us the things of God. Men have neglected the Word of God, have imagined that the Spirit was teaching them by personal revelation; and all sorts of wild and unscriptural absurdities have been the result. Bible study and the teaching of the Spirit go hand in hand. We cannot learn the Bible apart from the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and we will not be taught by the Spirit apart from the study of the Bible.

Know that the Holy Spirit always teaches the truth. False doctrines are never the result of the teaching of the Spirit of God; oh, it is important to know this. Men teach different doctrines; they all claim to be taught these things by the Holy Spirit; this cannot be true. The Holy Spirit will not teach one man one doctrine, and teach another man a contradictory doctrine. The Holy Spirit teaches the doctrine of once saved always saved. Some man says he was taught falling from grace by the Spirit. Well, he likely was taught this heresy by some spirit, but it certainly was not the Holy Spirit.

There is serving grace. The saved person surely desires to serve the Lord. Proper service to the Lord begins with membership in, and faithfulness to, a true church of Jesus Christ. We are to do whatever we can in serving the Lord in the church. We are to witness to lost people about Jesus Christ and His saving grace. We are to do good works day by day. However, we cannot serve the Lord acceptably in the power of the flesh. God's work must be

done with God's power. "...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech.4:6). What a great Word is this about serving the Lord. Let us know that living the Christian life, learning Bible truth, and acceptable service to the Lord cannot be done by the power of the flesh. Let us also learn that God's grace is sufficient in all these things. Let us not give up in despair, but let us go forward in the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us live for His glory, learn all that He will teach us, and work in the power of the Spirit; all this to the glory of our God.

4. The Dying Grace of God. Many years ago, someone said of Christians, "Our people die well." A brother asked me about dying grace. I told him what I believed it was. He told me that he did not have that. I told him that he did not need it yet, but when the time came he would have it. I lived to see that brother blessed with the sweet dying grace of God. I visited a dear and long-loved brother. He was facing death; in fact he died about two weeks later. Oh, he had dying grace. I said to a friend as we left that brother that he would be disappointed if he did not die. He was ready to die. He had dying grace, and it was so real and precious. I saw my oldest boy die. I saw the sweet expression of peace and joy that came over his face just before he died. I knew that he saw things I could not see. I knew that God had given him dying grace. Stephen had dying grace when he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). Paul had dying grace when he wrote, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (11 Tim.4:6). I have seen the dying grace of God. I know that it is a sweet, real, and precious thing. I believe all of God's children will have it when the time comes, when they need it.

5. The Transforming Grace of God. All of God's people will be totally transformed some glad and glad some day. At the rapture, the dead believer will be raised with a glorified body like that of Jesus Christ, and the living believer will be changed into the same image in a moment of time. Oh, we cannot produce this change; it must be by the grace and power of God. We did not save our souls, and we cannot change our bodies; but God did the one, and He can and will do the other. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor.15:51-53). "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Php.3:20-21). Oh, the transforming grace and power of God

will perform this change in all believers.

6. The Eternal Grace of God. We will be in heaven forever and forever in our glorified bodies. This will never change. But it is not by our own power that we will continue as glorified saints of God and in God's wonderful heaven. Remember that a multitude of the holy and sinless angels fell, and that holy and sinless Adam fell. We will, even in eternal heaven, be kept by the power of God (1 Pet.1:5).

In this article we have seen the manifold grace of God. We have seen Saving Grace, Keeping Grace, Living Grace, Dying Grace, Transforming Grace, and Eternal Grace. We have seen that salvation, from start to glorious completion, even eternally, is by the grace of God. Oh, let us magnify the amazing grace of God. Let us realize that all these things are by grace, and let us continually praise God for His wonderful grace. Let us seek to show in our lives the wonderful grace of God. Let us witness to the lost of the saving grace of God. If you are not yet saved, remember that you can never be saved by your works. If saved, you must be saved by the grace of God. May the blessed Holy Spirit enable you even now to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...." Acts 16:31. God bless you all.

DIVINE

(Continued from Page 1)

woman being deceived was in the transgression." Yes, you will be responsible even if the devil tricks you into doing something! How like sinful man to be quick to deny responsibility for sin and the evil things of life, but so desirous to take credit for the good and commendable things of life.

Now we believe that the Bible teaches human responsibility and it also teaches divine sovereignty. Yes, sometimes within the same context and even the same verse. Look at our text as found in Acts 4:26-28, "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." This is not an isolated text; go back two chapters to Acts 2:23 and it reads, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

Do you know one of the reasons we fail to grasp this truth of God's sovereignty and human responsibility? We fail to see the office work of Christ as King and Christ as Judge. As King, Scripture teaches that Christ controls all things, human actions among them, in accordance with His own eternal purpose. Scripture also teaches that, as Judge, He holds every man responsible for the choices

he makes and the courses of action he pursues. That is why you can find both responsibility and sovereignty in the same verse as we have shown from the book of Acts. Now this wasn't something that developed after the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, this was actually the teaching of Christ when he was here in the flesh. Listen to Luke 22:22, "And truly the son of man goeth, as it was determined: (and appointed) but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed (and delivered up)!"

Many who have made theology a life study have said our subject of divine sovereignty and human responsibility is the Gordian Knot of theology. Others have maintained they can never be harmonized, still others have emphasized the one to almost the denial of the other. But we believe the Bible teaches that man is a responsible moral agent, though he is also divinely controlled, he is also a responsible moral agent. God's sovereignty is a reality, and man's responsibility is a reality, too. As usual C. H. Spurgeon had the classic answer for this supposedly hard subject to understand. One day Spurgeon was asked if he could reconcile these two truths to each other. "I wouldn't try," he replied; the other party was shocked. "You wouldn't try?" "No," he replied, "I never reconcile friends." Friends? Did Charles Haddon Spurgeon say that divine sovereignty and human responsibility were friends? Yes, he did. If the last of the puritans, one of the great princes of preachers whose sermons on particular redemption, election, irresistible grace are classics and still read, could say that these two truths are friends, maybe we had better look again at this subject. Perhaps this is the trouble of the 20th century, we do not read the Book enough, we do not know what the Bible teaches. Many people charge Calvinism with evils that are false, simply because they are ignorant and have not read or do not know what the teaching is all about. Have you ever heard anyone who believes in the doctrine of predestination called a fatalist? Listen to what John Calvin himself said about that term, "had you but been willing to look into my books, you would have been convinced at once how offensive to me is the profane term fate; nay, you would have learned that this same abhorrent term was cast in the teeth of Augustine by his opponents." Let us look at the Bible itself to see if these twin truths of divine sovereignty and human responsibility do not occur again and again and many times side by side.

I. Scripture statements:

The Bible teaches that divine sovereignty and human freedom or responsibility co-operate in perfect harmony; that while God is the Sovereign Ruler and primary cause, man is free within the limits of his nature and is responsible and is the secondary cause; and God is not infringing upon man's freedom when He controls the thoughts and wills of men that they freely do what He has planned for them to do. Let us examine a few examples of this in Scripture.

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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

Should the church display the Christian flag and the American flag in the auditorium?

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I suppose my attitude toward the Christian flag is the same as with the offering plate and the church covenant. Our church does not use either one, but I personally would not make an issue out of any one of these one way or the other. If a church wants to pass an offering plate in their services, that is their business. If a church wants to display a Christian flag that is their business.

Some folks object to having the church covenant that is so common to Baptists on the wall of their church, and there are many different reasons for the objections; but again, I do not see that either having these things or not having them causes a church to depart from the faith. We tacked a picture of the American flag on the wall two of three years ago for the Fourth of July, and it is still there; and if the folks here wanted to put up the Christian flag I would not object.

However, I might advise that if a church is in some way incorporating the flag(s) as part of their worship of God, then they might well take caution. The second commandment says that we must not have any image or likeness of anything in heaven or earth to aid or assist us in worshipping God. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. There cannot be any kind of spiritual or mystical significance placed of a flag or offering plate, or anything else that is not clearly taught in the Word of God.

Let me take this opportunity to caution folks about making a major problem out of a minor issue. The devil loves making mountains out of mole hills. Many churches have been hurt and even split up over things that had nothing to do with doctrine or morality, but some little, minor thing that didn't amount to a hill of beans. I have a garden in my back yard most every year. I sometimes plant beans. If I plant a row of beans and one hill gets stepped on or I cut it with the hoe, as I sometimes do; it isn't going to affect my harvest one way or the other. I will have forgotten about it by fall. Do not allow the question whether to have a flag or not be such an issue that it ends up dividing your church! Sit down and think a

while and weigh the consequences on both sides. Is having a flag going to hurt visitation or hinder the gospel in any way? Is it going to compromise doctrine? Is it going to hurt attendance? Thank you for your question.

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"Oh love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer." (Psalm 31:23)

It is my opinion that the "Christian" flag should not be displayed in a church auditorium. As for the American flag, I probably would not object if the church desired it to be displayed; but I think it better if both are not. We do not display either flag in the Walnut Creek Baptist Church, but I probably would not object to the American flag being displayed. I would object to the so called "Christian" flag being there.

The Christian flag is the symbol of an organization. It smacks of universal churchism and ecumenicalism. It is an ecclesiastical symbol that means different things to different people; none of those things very Scriptural, or beneficial. I am aware of the supposed meanings of its colors, etc., but I would not use it any more than I would use a large "clergy" sticker for my bumper, wear an ecclesiastical collar, or use "reverend" in front of my name. God's true children have never been great users of religious symbols or ceremonial objects. They are not the center or means of true worship. I am not united under the Christian flag with all other Christians of whatever beliefs and practices. The Christian flag can be displayed in Roman Catholic buildings and Protestant groups, but it has no place in separated, blood bought, true assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I might add that nothing else which is ecumenical, or compromising should have a place in the assembly either. That includes perverted translations, as well as ecclesiastical symbols that detract from Him Who is the center and object of worship, the Lord Jesus Christ. As Sankey's hymn, "Faith Is The Victory", says, "His banner over us is love, Our sword the Word of God; We tread the road the saints above with shouts of triumph trod." We need no outward symbol to unification, save only that

people see in us the Lord Jesus in both word and deed.

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Matthew 22:21, "They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

I have seen one, but do not know anything about them. I would suppose that it is another gift from Catholicism, and you know what I think of her gifts. There is no Biblical mention of a flag. We do not read about the early churches having a flag. We do not see having this flag displayed as a part of Baptist history. I would oppose the church that I pastor displaying the so called Christian flag. It has nothing to do with the responsibility of the church and in no way honors God or adds to the service or decorum of the church. It might would associate us with a religious group of people that we would not want to be associated with.

Now let me deal with the question of the American flag. I would prefer to see this flag to the other flag mentioned, but am not a big advocate of either one being displayed in the church. Please do not think that I am un-American. I love this great nation. I am not at all ashamed of our flag. I greatly honor and respect those men and women who fought for the honor and freedom of this country. However, I do not see where the American flag has a part in our church services. I certainly am not adamant on this and do not care what other churches might do in their buildings. I would not overly care if the church here in Gladwin wanted to display the American flag. I might voice small opposition, but that would be all. The church is the place where we show our allegiance to God. I believe in patriotism. I believe the Bible teaches this to some degree. I do not believe that church is the place for honoring our country, it is the place for honoring our God.

In summation let me say that I would strongly oppose the church in Gladwin displaying the Christian flag. I would be in some opposition to displaying the American flag. Neither was a practice of our forefathers. What other churches do is their business and I surely would not make the displaying of either of these flags a matter of fellowship. May God bless you all.

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"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. he that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" (Rom. 14:5, 6).

While these verses are in reference to the observance of certain days and that of eating of certain meats, I believe it could be applied to other subjects of which there is no Scriptural reference, yet there is a question of it being right or wrong. I believe the displaying of the American and the Christian flags in the church building would come under this classification.

While we do not display these flags in Calvary Baptist Church, I see nothing in the Scripture that would prevent doing so, in fact I can see good in doing so. To display these flags in the church should be to indicate that we are citizens of a country of which we are proud and to which we are loyal. Yet at the same time we are acknowledging that we are citizens of heaven through the redemptive work of Christ.

The children of Israel had their memorial to remind them of how the Lord had watched over them as a nation. The stones taken from river Jordan was used to set up a memorial in the midst of their camp in Gilgal that they might ever be reminded that, "the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over," and to remind them of Who He is, That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever" (Josh. 4:23, 24).

If Israel needed to be constantly reminded of how God led, guided, and protected their nation, do we not need to be constantly reminded that on, "America, God shed His grace on thee"?

While baptism and the Lord's Supper are memorials of the redemptive work of Christ, the Christian flag would also be a constant reminder of that redemption each time we looked at it. As we look toward the American flag we should be reminded of God's mercy and grace which He has bestowed upon us as a nation. The flags should be reminders to us to give God thanks for all His care toward us. To answer the question, should a church display the flags? let us paraphrase Romans 14:5, 6, "Let every church be fully persuaded in its own mind. The church which displays the flags, displays them to the Lord, for they giveth God thanks; and the church that displays not the flags, to the Lord, it displays them not, and gives God thanks".

DIVINE

(Continued from Page 3)

(1) An outstanding example of the co-operation of divine sovereignty and human responsibility is found in the story of Joseph in the book of Genesis. Joseph was sold as a slave to Egypt where through a number of providential acts he rose to prime minister of the land and actually saved his family in time of famine. It was, of course, a very sinful act for the sons of Jacob to sell their younger brother into slavery; hate him and actually want to kill him. They knew they acted freely, and were responsible. Years later they admitted their guilt. Yet Joseph could say to them, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life...So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God..." and again later said, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, what it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 45:5,8; 50:20). Joseph's brothers simply followed their depraved natures; yet their act was a link in a chain of events that fulfilled God's purposes, but their guilt was not the least diminished by the fact that their intended evil was overruled for good by God.

(2) In the book of Exodus and the book of Romans we find the account of Pharaoh. Pharaoh acted very unjustly toward his slaves, the children of Israel; yet he simply fulfilled the purpose God for Paul writes in Romans, "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even though this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power unto thee and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth" (Rom. 9:17).

(3) If one will read carefully Isaiah, chapter 10, verses five through fifteen you will discover an exceptional incident of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Please note these things about the passage (a) The ungodly king of Assyria was the instrument in the hand of God to execute His purposes against the Jews. The free agency of the king was not destroyed or impaired by the control of God for he was free to form his own plans and to promote his own ambitious projects. (c) The king was held responsible for his pride and wickedness, though God so overruled him that he fulfilled God's wise purposes. (d) God decreed to chasten the Jews for their sin. He chose to employ the king of Assyria to execute His purpose and then afterward He punished the King of Assyria for his wicked plans and ways.

(4) Anyone who accepts the Bible as the Word of God has arrived at the conclusion that the most sinful act in all history, the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ was foreordained. Although being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, yet it was by wicked hands that He was slain. All the details of that crucifixion

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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

What is your opinion of the position held by Ronald Brady that the Negro is the Biblical "beast of the field", is not a human being, and does not have a soul?

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One of many things that separate man from the beast of the field is the power of reason and speech. Many black tribes of their native Africa developed languages of their own without help from other races. They are men, they have a soul, and Ronald Brady is wrong!

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In Ronald Brady's article "The Beast of the Field" written in 1990 he states: "I believe that the Negro is not a son of Ham. That the Negro is a creation of his own and by no means did he come from the generations of Adam. In the beginning there was the pure white man of Adam and the pure black kind of the Negro. The Bible calls him a beast of the field and he was created on the sixth day before Adam was created at the end of the sixth day. Negroes are not human and they neither go to heaven or hell."

This article was sent to me some months ago. I receive some articles and letters from time to time about answers in the forum. For the most part, they are unsolicited, as this one was. I have not studied this article in depth, but have scanned the pages as to their content. If it is necessary to agree or disagree with the contents of this article, I am in disagreement. I do not believe that the Negro is a creation of his own. I believe that he is a descendant of Ham, that he is a human being, and that he does have a soul.

It is obvious that there are those who believe in and give credence to this theory, it is also obvious that there are many that do not. There will be those, undoubtedly, who will disagree with me as to my belief as to the origin of the Negro race.

Before I state the way I believe this race, as well as all other races, came into being, let's briefly examine an event that dramatically changed the old world and propelled a small part of God's creation into a new world. That event was the flood. What was the purpose of the flood? To destroy all that God had created. "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth me that I have made them" (Gen. 6:7). The beast that was a creation of His own would be included in this destruction. All created beings were to be destroyed, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the

I have read Brother Brady's manuscript concerning the beast of the field being a Negro. I was not impressed with his views at all. I believe that God has given us His Word to be studied and rightly divided, but this view is way out in left field, so to speak. If this was true, why did God wait until now to show us this truth? I am a saved person and have the Holy Spirit living within me and have read the Bible through and studied it with prayer, why can I not see Brother Brady's view as truth?

I do not like to use the word Negro or nigger. It is an insult to the people who would prefer to be called black. They are not really black and we are not really white, but we prefer to be called white, and they prefer to be called black. So be it.

I believe the black man came or began at the Tower of Babel when God, in Genesis 11:7, changed the language of the people so that they couldn't communicate with one another and waste their time trying to build a tower to heaven. I believe when the language was changed that the people split up and went into different directions and started nations that spoke the same language. I also believe that the different races started at this time and resulted in black people, yellow people, red people, and white people, and the black race came from this.

I believe that black people are just as much human as anyone else. Sure, black people have souls. Those who are saved, born again, are more spiritual than any race that I know. My parents taught us to respect other people. We were reared near a black settlement and we children played with black children and thought nothing about it, we never had any problems with them. God put them here as well as other races, so let us not by-pass them and play up to the other races.

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I believe the Negro is a man, just as much a man as the red man, or the yellow man, or the olive skinned man, or the white man. I disagree with Ronald Brady's view, or any other man that would pervert any portion of this Scripture.

Lord. Noah, his three sons, and their wives were to be spared by God.

At the conclusion of the great flood, there were these eight souls upon the earth; four men, and four women. They were given a blessing and a command: "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1). This they did for about two hundred years, and during that time the families of the sons of Noah grew into nations and these nations divided the earth after the flood. All these nations were of one language and of one speech. It was at this time that they wanted to make a name for themselves so they decided that they would build a tower to heaven. From that time, the Lord determined to confuse them so that they could not accomplish their task. It is my belief that with the confounding of the language came also the separation into the peoples that were to speak that language. With the confounding, came also the scattering of these peoples to their portions of the earth. The three sons of Noah are responsible for three distinct areas of the earth.

Japheth, the eldest son, was responsible for the area to the north. His descendants were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. These were scattered to what is now Asia Minor, Europe, and Asia. "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations" (Gen. 10:5). The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan. They were scattered to the area that we know as Africa and part of the Arabian peninsula. In particular, the descendants of Cush were in what is now known as Ethiopia. It is this region that the black race is predominate. He is not black because he is there. He is black because of what God did at the tower of Babel. He is where he is because that is where God determined that he should be. This is true of all the different races that were established that day; they are where God had determined they would be.

The middle son, Seth, and his descendants were scattered into what we now know as the middle east, the land of the Bible, the land of a chosen people. From Seth's line we are given the name of one son, Arphaxad, to whom we can trace the lineage of Abraham, the father of a great nation, Israel. From Abraham we can trace the lineage of the one that in the beginning created all things, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

DIVINE

(Continued from Page 4)

were predicted hundreds of years before it took place, yet listen to the babble of hell around the cross and then try to say that those men were not free and responsible!

(5) In Proverbs 21:1 we read, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." He put it into the heart of Cyrus, the Gentile king of Persia to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. He elevated Nebuchadnezzar of

Babylon to be a king of kings, but because of his pride removed him from his kingdom and let him roam the fields as a wild beast for seven years and then gave him back his mind and restored him to his kingdom the second time. He had another Gentile king, Darius admit these words, "I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions" (Dan. 6:26,27). Let me ask a question, if God can turn a king's heart so easily as stated in Proverbs 21:1, what's so difficult about turning any other person's heart?

(6) In Exodus 12:35,36 there is an amusing incident, made so by the old King James Version which says that the Israelites "borrowed" from the Egyptians. Now this wasn't the same thing as today you would "borrow" your neighbor's lawn mower or grass clippers. The Israelites had no idea of giving back the things they had "borrowed" from the Egyptians. Now people don't give up jewels of silver and jewels of gold and their best Sunday-go-to-meeting dress or suit unless something miraculous happens, and that of course is the answer to this incident of "borrowing." Verse 36 reads, "And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians."

(7) What about the enemies of Israel? Were they all defeated in battle? Oh, no! According to God's Word in fulfillment of His promise He drove out some of Israel's enemies from the land with a little thing no bigger than the end of your thumb; hornets. Joshua 24:12, "And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow." These enemies did not leave the land against their will. God just made them willing to go. I have never seen any stubborn, depraved, Arminian argue about free will with a few hornets around. If these examples are not enough concerning sovereignty and responsibility then look up I Samuel 2:25; I Kings 12:11,15; II Samuel 17:14.

II. Scripture conundrums:

We have seen from many plain statements of Scripture that divine sovereignty and human responsibility are in the same context, yea, within the same verse, but let's go a step further. Is it possible for God to bring His power to bear upon men that they are prevented from doing what they desire to do and impel them to do other things they desire not to do, and yet preserve their responsibility? The Word of God

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APRIL 25, 1992
PAGE FIVE

STUDIES IN JOSHUA

by C.T. Everman
7:19-8:2

To briefly review the events leading up to this time, Israel had just received a humiliating defeat at the hands of the men of the little city of Ai. The root cause of their defeat was the sin of Achan. When Jericho fell into the hands of Israel, he had taken to himself that which belonged to the Lord, that which the Lord had commanded them through Moses many years before (Deu. 7:25, 26) and again through Joshua, not to touch for it belonged to the Lord (Josh. 6:19). Because of Achan's sin the "the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel" (v. 1). Joshua, not knowing of the sin of Achan and not waiting for the leadership of the Lord proceeded to make plans of his own to take Ai. Instead of seeking the will of the Lord, he listened to the advice of the spies and the result was a humiliating defeat. The men of Israel turned their backs and ran from the men of Ai, some thirty-six of them being slain.

When Joshua went before the Lord he was told the reason for the defeat, "sin in the camp." The Lord told him "neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you" (V. 12). He then tells Joshua how to find the man who was guilty of this sin. In the presence of all Israel, the Lord showed from which tribe, from which family, from which household, who was the guilty one. "Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken" (v. 18).

"And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me" (Josh. 7:19).

Achan now being exposed, Joshua tells him to give glory to the Lord by confessing his sin, to come clean and tell what he had done with that which he had stolen from God. No doubt, as the lot was being cast, first showing the tribe, then the family, and on down to the man, Achan had stood trembling, hoping that he would not be found out, but now that he stood before the congregation of Israel exposed as the guilty one, there was nothing for him to do but confess his sin:

"And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it" (Josh. 7:20, 21).

Achan's response was to the point. He confessed his sin without giving any excuse. But it might be noted that he gave no evidence of repentance for his sin.

He expressed no sorrow for causing the death of thirty-six of his brethren. Note that there were three steps to Achan's sin, he "saw," he "coveted," he "took". Where else have we seen these three steps to sin? "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6). King David "saw" Bathsheba, he "desired" her, he "took" her (II Sam. 11:2-4). How many of the sins which we commit begin the same way? "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14, 15).

"So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent, and behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it." (Josh. 7:22).

The messengers which Joshua sent to search Achan's tent found all that he had stolen just as he had confessed, "And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD" (Josh. 7:23).

Now there left only one thing to do. That was to execute the judgment which God had demanded if He was to again lead them, "neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you" (v. 12). "And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor" (Josh. 7:24).

Note it was "Joshua, and all Israel--" that took Achan out to the place of judgment. It was the duty of all the people. For any one of them to have abstained from helping in this would have placed himself along side of Achan. To remove God's curse from Israel all must share in the execution. This should be a lesson for the Lord's churches today in the carrying out of the command of the Lord in the discipline of members who are living in direct disobedience to God's Word. Any member who refuses to vote on such matters is in open rebellion to God, "when ye are gathered to together, -- put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Cor. 5:4-13).

"And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." (Josh. 7:25).

The end of this story is a tragic one. Achan, his family, and all his live stock were stoned and after they were stoned, they, with all his possessions including the items which he had stolen, were

burned with fire. Because Achan had identified himself with the curse which God has placed upon Jericho, he and all his were brought under the same judgment. Achan was without excuse. God had warned Israel against this kind of sin even while they were in the wilderness (Deut. 7:22, 24-26). To make sure they understood the command He again repeated the command. While giving the orders for the taking of Jericho, He told them what the result would be for anyone who failed to obey this command, "And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the sample of--Israel a curse and trouble it" (Josh. 6:18).

There are very few times it is recorded in the Bible that God uses this severe a judgment. Where it is recorded it is always when the guilty ones have willfully disobeyed God in His plain commands. It would seem that God wished to impress upon the people the importance of keeping His laws. When the tabernacle was first set up two of Aaron's sons "Offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD" (Lev. 10:1-2). Another case was of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 when they lied to the Holy Spirit, they were struck dead on the spot.

"And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of the place was called, The Valley of Achor, unto this day" (Josh. 7:26).

After Achan and all his were stoned and burned there was placed over him a great pile of stones. This pile of stones was to serve as a warning for the children of Israel. It was to remind them of Achan's sin and of God's judgment for that sin. The twelve stones taken from Jordan and set up in Gilgal was to be a memorial of God's mercy and goodness in opening Jordan so that Israel could pass over. This heap of stones over Achan was a memorial of God's judgment to those who disobey Him.

"So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger." This was said after Joshua, and all Israel had carried out the command of God in the judgment of the one who had "troubled" Israel. Is there not here a lesson for the Lord's churches today to practice discipline in the church for the honor and praise of our Lord?

Chapter 8

"And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed, take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given unto thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land" (Josh. 8:1).

Joshua and Israel were now back in fellowship with the Lord. For a time they had seemed to have forgotten their need of Him, but they had been taught a lesson and brought back to trusting in Him, and he was now ready to continue to lead and give them victories. He first assures Joshua

that he has nothing to worry about, "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed:" No, God had not brought Israel across Jordan just in order to deliver them into the hands of the Amorites as Joshua had asked God (7:7). He told him, "I have given into thy hand the king of Ai--". Note He did not say "I will give thee the king of Ai", but "I have given--". This is a very important lesson for us to learn. What God purposes to come to pass is already done in His sight. The Apostle Paul wrote concerning Abraham, ("As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). Note the links in the chain of salvation. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). In the sight of God all whom He foreknew and predestinated have already been called, justified, and glorified. This is the greatest of assurance for the eternal security of the believer.

When Joshua sent the three thousand men up to Ai the first time he had the assurance from the spies that the victory would be an easy one, yet that victory ended in disaster. This time, as he went up, he had the assurance from God that the victory was already won. This time they were to go as God had directed. Instead of only three thousand, "take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai." They had tried man's way and failed, now they were to go as God led, assured of victory. Joshua and Israel had learned their lesson. The old saying, "Experience is a hard school but some will learn in none other" was true in Israel's experience in their first attempt to take Ai. Remember, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4). Have we learned from their mistakes or must we likewise have to go to the hard school of experience?

"And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it" (Josh. 8:2).

In God's instructions in the taking of Ai to Israel they were to destroy all that were in Ai in the same way as they did in Jericho. There were to be no people left alive. There was to be one difference, the cattle and the spoil of the city the men were permitted to take for their own. Only that which was in Jericho, "the first fruits" of the land was "consecrated unto the LORD." If Achan had only waited. If he had not been so greedy and lusted after that which belonged to God, he would have gotten at Ai that which he had desired. But he moved ahead of God and disobeyed His law; thereby bringing judgment upon himself and his family. If only he had heeded God's command what a difference it would have made to him. Here is a lesson for us. Those who disobey God can expect judgment from God, while

those who obey His command will receive blessings from Him. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, -- and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

Achan disobeyed God and received judgment from God. The other Israelites obeyed God and received His blessing in that they were permitted to take the spoils of Ai as their own. Remember this was "written for our learning." Do we get the lesson?

To be continued.

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so teaches! It would seem that if God did any more than warn and invite men that their responsibility would be infringed upon. We are told that God must not coerce or compel or man would be reduced to a robot. This sounds great, this appears to be good philosophy, this theory seems to be sound reasoning and it has been almost universally accepted as an axiom in ethics. There is only one thing wrong the Bible shoots this theory full of holes. We are reminded again of Isaiah 55:8, 9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher: than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

(1) Turn to Genesis 20:6. "And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered (allowed) I thee not to touch her." Here's a case where God did exert His power, restrict man's freedom and actually prevented him from doing that which he otherwise would have done. This knocks over the old theory that God could not have prevented Adam's fall without reducing him to a mere automaton. If God could prevent Abimelech from sinning against Him why could He not have done the same with Adam? Someone will immediately say, "Well, then why didn't He?" There seems to be only one answer. Adam's fall better served God's own purpose which is wise and blessed, it served to demonstrate where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

(2) What about Balaam? Balak, King of Moab, sent for this Gentile prophet to curse Israel. A great financial gain was promised for his services and a careful reading of the book of Numbers chapter 22 through 24 will show that Balaam was willing, yea, anxious to accept Balak's offer and thus sin against God and His people. But Divine power withheld him. Mark Balaam's own admission, "And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak" (Num. 22:38). Again we read in chapter 23:12, 20.

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SBC

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lost who refuse to believe.

Peter then explains, as Isaiah and Paul, that the thinking of God cannot be compared to that of men with the word, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 3:8). Peter addresses the saved to whom he writes concerning their salvation, and says, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him as written unto you" (II Pet. 3:13-14).

Peter assures us that our salvation in the Lord Jesus is secure with, "Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen" (II Pet. 3:17-18). Peter makes it very plain that though we, in following the error of the wicked, may "fall from your own steadfastness," there is not a hint here that would indicate that one who knows the Lord Jesus Christ in saving faith could ever apostatize or be lost, or lose his or her salvation.

Perhaps it would be good to say here and that with emphasis, no saved person ever becomes an apostate! Peter's word is clear as he goes on to note that we should shun this "error of the wicked" that we might "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." We may be assured that all who teach that the saved can ever be lost are countered finally in the commendation, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"! We can know that this is an experience that an apostate can never know. Though Judas Iscariot walked with Jesus throughout most of his public ministry, he never had the experience of growing "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Rather, as we learn in a further word of the Bible, even in the book of Hebrews (which Dale Moody supposes was written by Barnabas, a book which he does not believe is the infallible Word of our God, but the book upon which he bases his teaching), we find in his most recent book, ("Apostasy," p.44), the Holy Word of God, that one who is an apostate (one who refuses to believe, after hearing the good news) knows himself or herself to be under our God's fiery judgment, as we shall see in a moment. Hear the words and never forget them. You may even relate

them, if you so desire to, "The unpardonable sin" (Mt. 12:31-32, Mk. 3:28-30, Lu. 12:10, Heb. 6:4-8). This passage in the book of Hebrews is most exact, "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26-27).

If this last passage of Scripture from Hebrews were speaking of those who had believed unto salvation then no mortal--no man and no woman who has ever lived, no mortal who is living, and no mortal who will ever live--could ever go to Heaven. If this passage in Hebrews were referencing those who have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ then every person who has ever lived upon the earth, every person who is living upon the earth, and every person who ever will live upon the earth is in hell, headed for hell, or will be going to hell. If Hebrews 10:26 and 27 related to the saved, then no one who has ever lived upon the earth other than Jesus Christ will ever experience the wonder of Heaven's glory or the presence of God in that eternal land that "...had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it..." (Rev. 21:23).

If it were possible for a saved person ever to be lost, then he or she could never be saved again (Heb. 6:4-60). By the Word of God, we can know that no unsaved mortal and no saved mortal has ever lived a day, or perhaps an hour, or maybe even a few moments without sinning. The fact that death is abroad in each of our bodies every moment is proof of that sinfulness that will in time bring us to our date with physical death. Therefore, if our sinning could cause us to lose our salvation, then the whole human race would be doomed to a devil's hell. God Himself is very positive that "...all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

God does not leave anything to question. In the very book that some delight in using as the basis for their doctrine of salvation by works, we find the ultimately definitive word, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Since every mortal who has ever lived is under the weight of this guilt, were it possible for the saved to sin away their salvation, then no one other than Jesus--and that, only before He bore our sins--could go to heaven.

Men who presume that the saved can apostatize or be lost really are consigning all men to God's hell that He "...prepared for the devil and this angels" (Mt. 25:41). If those who believe the good news concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus do not experience eternal life, they must experience the terrors of hell and the lake of fire. If the death that Jesus died on Calvary's cross, when He "...his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree..." (I Pet. 2:24), did not provide eternal salvation for those who believe on Him as their Savior, then everyone for whom He died must end up in the fires of eternal punishment. The tragedy in all of this is, if the death and resurrec-

tion of Jesus did not provide eternal salvation for those who believe, then Jesus Himself must end up in the fires of hell because He "...his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," as we noted above.

The issue of "apostasy" that is being held by some truly is sad far beyond compare! Were such a scenario possible, then every mortal creature that has ever been created would end up finally in hell and subsequently in the lake of fire. And God, the Father, would forever be alone without His Son, as in that tragic and eternal moment when there went forth the cry, "...Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mk. 15:34).

Thankfully, then, by the holy Word of God and by the personal testimony of our Savior Himself, we can know that all who attempt to bring works into salvation or who attempt to provide a salvation that is by works have missed the wondrous teaching of our God. By the holy Word of God, we can know that Jesus "...his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Thereby, we can know that He provided for each of us who will believe salvation, and that salvation must be eternal.

Thankfully, the Apostle Paul had a threefold proof that the crucified and resurrected Lord Jesus was actually in the realms of glory. Therefore, when the Apostle Peter explains for us that the salvation that we have in Christ Jesus is eternal, we can know that he and the Apostle Paul agree.

If the saved are not saved eternally, then the death of Jesus Christ upon Calvary's cross would have been an utter waste of God's time and man's! If the death that Jesus died did not effect an everlasting salvation for all who believe the good news of the gospel, then all Old Testament prophecies were wasted efforts, and all subsequent reflections concerning the cross of Jesus Christ have been the same.

We say, therefore, and that with some confidence, if it were possible for a saved person to lose his or her salvation, then forever and forever, God would have to wonder why he allowed His Son to die on the cross at Calvary. The death of Jesus Christ, then, would have been eternal mockery! The death of Jesus on that cross would have been nothing but God's eternally wasted effort! Too, the Apostle Paul's word, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2), would have been nothing but hot air on wasted wind and invisible ink on wasted parchment!

If it were possible for those who once have been saved ever to be lost on the basis of the passage in Hebrews 10:26-27, or any other passage of Scripture in the Bible, God's Holy Word, then David would be in hell, today. This David who, as God tells us, was "...a man after mine own heart..." (Acts 13:22); the man who said, "The LORD said unto my Lord..." (Ps. 110:1, cf. Acts 2:34); the man who said, "...I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (II

Sam. 12:23); and the man who

said, "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest" (Ps. 51:3-4) would be eternally in the fires of hell this day awaiting his transfer to "...the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15, cf. 20:11-15). All we need to do in order to know that he sinned tragically after he was saved is to turn to Psalm 51.

Can there be such a thing as "apostasy," as Dale Moody, the long time professor of theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, teaches? I believe that the answer is clear that such is not possible! When God saves a person that person is eternally saved. When God redeems a person, that person is eternally redeemed! With confidence, then, we can declare for all to hear that not in a million billion years can anyone ever be saved and then lost. The saving that our omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent God effects is eternal salvation, and that salvation is secure far beyond a million billion years; it is eternally secure!

Wonderfully, when Peter declares that when we are saved, he tells us that we are eternally saved. Even more, he emphasizes that we are eternally secure. Peter is positive in this regard. Here in our God's Holy and infallible Word, we find, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you," (Continued on Page 10, Col. 1)

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"And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?...Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it."

Surely these verses show us God's sovereignty and Balaam's powerlessness: man's will frustrated, and God's will performed. But will anyone maintain that Balaam's freedom or responsibility was destroyed?

(3) In II Chronicles 17:10 we read, "And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat." The implication is very clear; had not the "fear of the Lord" fallen upon these kingdoms they would have made war upon Judah. God's restraining power alone prevented them. The same procedure is found in Genesis 35:5, "...the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them..." although Jacob was afraid he and his household were going to be destroyed because of Simeon and Levi's cruelty and violence, the other nations and cities did not pursue after him because of the terror of the Lord being upon them. God's restraining power alone prevented them from doing what they desired to do, thus we see that

God can withhold nations as well as individuals.

The answer to this question of how God can do such things and not destroy responsibility is that real moral freedom is being delivered from the bondage of sin. The more any soul is emancipated from the meshes of sin, the more does he enter into a state of freedom. Remember what Christ said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." God withheld Abimelech, Balaam, heathen nations from sinning, and therefore did not interfere with their real freedom. The nearer a soul approximates to sinlessness, the nearer does he or she approach to God's holiness. The Bible says that God cannot lie, that He cannot be tempted with evil. Is God any the less free because He cannot do that which is evil? The more man is raised up to God, the more he be withheld from sinning, the greater his real freedom. True liberty is not the power to live as we please, but to live as we ought!

III. Scriptural results:

Although there will always be some mystery concerning divine sovereignty and human responsibility we don't like to have it that way. We like to tie up everything into neat intellectual parcels, with all appearance of mystery dispelled and no loose ends hanging out. To our minds, or at least to many minds, divine sovereignty and human responsibility sounds like a contradiction and our first reaction is to complain that it is absurd. Paul notices this complaint in Romans 9:19, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he (God) yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" If, as our Lord, God orders all our actions, how can it be reasonable or right for Him to act also as our Judge, and condemn our shortcomings? Now notice how Paul replies. He does not attempt to demonstrate the propriety of God's action; instead, he rebukes the spirit of the question. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?..." What the objector has to learn is that he, a creature and a sinner, has no right whatsoever to find fault with the revealed ways of God. If my car stops, and I can't move it without calling a mechanic, surely I'm not going to try and tell the Creator of the universe how to run His program! Creatures are not entitled to register complaints about their Creator. We had better remember Genesis 18:25, "...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" A young pastor was complaining to the Puritan John Brown one time about the smallness of his congregation and Brown said, "It will be large enough in the day of Judgment."

Paul goes on to say that God's sovereignty is wholly just, for His right to dispose of His creatures is absolute. Earlier in Romans, he had shown that God's judgment of sinners is also wholly just since our sins richly deserve His sentence. Our part is to acknowledge these facts, and to adore God's righteousness both as King and Judge. Our speculations are not the measure of our God. The Creator has told us that He is both sovereign Lord

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and a righteous Judge, and that should be enough for us. Why do we hesitate to take His Word for it? Can we not trust what He says? We ought not in any case be surprised when we find mysteries of this sort in God's Word, for the Creator is incomprehensible to His creatures. As one has rightly said, "A God whom we could understand exhaustively and whose revelation of Himself confronted us with no mysteries whatsoever, would be a God in man's image, and therefore an imaginary God, not the God of the Bible at all."

Go back to your own experience. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. I know without a shadow of a doubt that if God had not saved me, and I mean by that term (elected me, called me, regenerated me, adopted me, justified me) I would have never been saved. I'm also quite sure that if He hadn't saved me I would have never been able to stand at the judgment and say that I was not responsible for my cursing, my gambling, my meanness, my laziness, before I was saved. In other words I was responsible to call upon God. But someone might object and say, "How could you, you are dead in trespasses and sins." Do not let anyone fool you here! Inability does not cancel responsibility! If you can't understand that statement or it just doesn't seem to make sense to you, remember the same Bible that says, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). also says in Acts 17:30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

If a man slips on the ice in the winter and breaks his leg and cannot rise, is unable to rise, he will freeze to death in a short time. He had better call out; he had better ask for help. If he lies there silent he is to blame. Sinner, you are lost and you had better cast yourself on the mercy of God, you had better call out for the Bible still tells us in Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Yes, God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are both in the Bible.

DANIEL

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Daniel, who had been blessed by being used by the two previous kings of Babylon, is now blessed again by being elevated to the position that would roughly correspond to the Secretary of State under Darius.

The Word of God tells us how that Darius appointed 120 princes over his kingdom so that each of

these 120 had a particular province or county to look after; and these 120 gave their report to three presidents, and the top man of those three presidents was Daniel, so that Daniel actually controlled the entire affairs of the whole land over which Darius was king.

There just wasn't any opportunity for financial chicanery, there wasn't any opportunity for graft, there wasn't any opportunity for governmental corruption with Daniel as Secretary of State. All the reports were made by the princes unto the presidents, and the presidents, in turn, headed up by Daniel, so that Daniel had the opportunity of feeling the pulse of the nation in every particular. Accordingly, Daniel, as a man of God, saw to it that those rulers under him by way of presidents and princes, walked the chalk-line and did not allow corruption and dishonesty in the government.

You can naturally imagine that Daniel was not loved any too much by those presidents and princes. What's the use of a man having a governmental office if he can't get his hand in governmental pie? What's the use in an individual having an office if he doesn't get an opportunity to do a little graft on the side? What's the use in him becoming a political leader if he isn't going to be allowed this privilege of at least a small amount of graft? Therefore, when Daniel insisted that these presidents and princes do the right thing in the government, immediately these individuals began to seek a way they would be able to get rid of Daniel. They realized that he was the man who was standing between them and financial success. Accordingly, they began to see if they could find a way for the disposal of Daniel. The farther they looked, the more non-plussed they became, for as they observed Daniel, they found him nonchalant, they found him standing out with spotless morality and with an integrity that could not be shaken. They found Daniel doing the things that would please both God and king, and finally, these 122 princes and presidents agreed among themselves that the only way they could find anything contrary to Daniel was to find it in the way in which he served his God.

They went to the king, thinking they had the shrewdest, most subtle scheme in the world in order to get rid of Daniel. They said, "O King Darius, we are asking you to make a law that if anybody prays or asks a request of any god or any individual for 30 days except you, that he be thrown into the lion's den." The king, not knowing that the law was aimed at his Secretary of State, passed the law, signed the law, and when it became the law of the Medes and Persians, it meant it was a law that could not be changed even by his royal veto.

Can you imagine that scene? All connection between a throne of grace and helpless, hungry, thirsty, dying men was shut off for 30 days time. What a spectacle! For a whole month, widows and orphans were at the mercy of their oppressors without appeal. For a whole month, property was at the mercy of the thief. Worse than all else, for a whole month, dying sinners in the land of the Medes and Persians must die in their sins, unable to call upon God for mercy. By royal edict it became a law that nobody could pray in the land of the Medes and

Persian for thirty days.

But, beloved, there are some people who respect the laws of God more than they respect the laws of men. Daniel was one of those individuals. He knew that God had said to pray. He knew that God had told the Jews, when they were yet living in Palestine, "If ever you are taken captive in a far away land, set your face toward Jerusalem and pray, looking toward Jerusalem, and God will hear your prayer." Knowing that, three times a day Daniel went on his knees before an open window that faced toward Jerusalem, and three times a day with clasped hands, with upturned eyes and with uplifted heart, Daniel called upon God and asked God to take the Jews out of the land of the Medes and Persians back to Palestine.

When the plotters saw Daniel on his knees, they were sure then that they had succeeded. They knew they had won the day. But wait, beloved, sometimes God upsets even the plans of the plotters. They went to the king and demanded that Daniel be cast into the lion's den. Though the king labored all that day to find a loophole in the law, when sundown came, the law had to be put into effect, and the king personally took Daniel to the lions' den, and said to him, "...Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." I don't know whether he believed it or not, but it sounds as though old King Darius had observed enough of Daniel's religion that he had a conviction that Daniel's God could stand by him.

All that night Darius fasted and prayed. He didn't allow any music to be played softly while his meal was served. He didn't allow the usual festivities of the palace to be carried out that evening, but instead, he fasted and prayed. He looked to God, hoping that perhaps Daniel might survive the night in the lions' den.

When the morning came, Darius rushed out to the lions' den and looked in and said, "O Daniel, is thy God whom thou servest continually -- has that God taken care of you?" I expect the most glad some note that ever fell upon the ears of that old king was the voice of Daniel when he answered back and said, "...O king, live for ever." He said, "My God sent His angel, and hath shut the mouths of the lions and I have spent a night as pleasantly here as if I had slept in your palace."

The Word of God tells us they lifted Daniel out of that lion's den immediately and when he is brought out, the accusers -- the 122 princes and presidents, are dropped down in the place where Daniel was, and those lions that walked harmlessly around Daniel the night before, broke the bones of those envious, corrupt politicians before they even got to the bottom of the pit.

From that simple Scripture story, let me give you a few lessons that are just as simple, but so precious to the believing child of God.

I. The Character Of This Man Daniel

He was a long way from home. There is an old adage, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," and the majority of people live accordingly. Lots of folk might shun to do wrong here that might think it perfectly permissible to do wrong 500 miles away, with far less compunction of conscience than here. Not so with Daniel. It didn't make any differ-

ence if Daniel were far removed from home, Daniel did what he knew God wanted him to do just the same as if he had been walking the streets of Jerusalem.

Here's a man who is nearly 90 years old. He isn't a boy now. He was a boy in the first chapter of Daniel when they put him in the king's college and he pushed away from the wine and pork and said, "I will not eat this pork and I'll not drink this wine, for it is contrary to the teachings of my God." He was just a boy then, but he learned how to say "no" then to temptation. Thus, it was easier to say "no" to temptation when it came later on. Now he is 90 years old, and you would more or less expect a man when he gets 90 years old, not to be as strong as when he was young. Most individuals, when they get into elderly years, come to the place they will compromise just a little and they will swerve from their former position. Many times I have noticed that even on the part of preachers.

Look at Daniel who is now 90 years of age. He has been honored by three kings. He served under Nebuchadnezzar, he served under Belshazzar, and now he is serving under Darius. You just naturally would not expect a man who has served as Secretary of State under three kings, to go against his own government and defy the edicts of the kings. You wouldn't expect that of the ordinary man -- but remember, Daniel was not an ordinary being. Look at him: The Word of God says they couldn't find any fault in him except in the way in which he served his God. Here are 122 men who have their eyes riveted on Daniel every day, looking at him, trying to find some flaw, hoping to find some fault, endeavoring to find something whereby they can accuse him. After they have watched him for days and weeks and, doubtlessly, for months, they come together, and it is the consensus of their united opinion that there is nothing they can find wrong with Daniel, and if they are going to get anything on him, it will have to be in the way in which he serves his God.

Beloved, wouldn't it be a glorious thing if you and I and every member of this church might so live that the world could not say anything against us except the way in which we serve God? Wouldn't it be a glorious thing if all the Baptists in the world were to live, from this hour on, in such a way that the world could not find anything wrong with us except the way in which we serve God? I tell you, beloved, you would have the human foundation for the most glorious revival that would be far-reaching and far-sweeping in its effects, if Baptist people, or even the people of this town could look upon us and say concerning us that there is nothing wrong with us except the way whereby we serve God.

Look at this man Daniel and observe his character. Here's a man who loved the Bible. How do I know he loved it? It doesn't say one word in this passage of Scripture about Daniel reading the Bible, but it tells us that he prayed with his face toward Jerusalem three times a day, looking toward Jerusalem. How did Daniel come to do that? Listen: "Yet if they shall be-think themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land

of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them" (I Kings 8:47-50).

What does it say? Solomon built the temple, and as he was praying the dedicatory prayer, he uttered the words which I have just read to you -- words whereby he said that whenever the time might come that they were carried captive into some foreign land, let the people of God turn their face toward the temple and pray, looking in that direction, "O God, hear their prayer and give them compassion, give them favor in the land of their enemies and cause the enemies to be compassionate toward them." Daniel knew that was in the Word of God and he went on his knees to pray. Why? Because he loved God's Word. Here's a man who loved the Word of God more than he feared the word of the king. He loved God's Word to such an extent it made no difference what the king said -- he prayed.

Daniel was a man of backbone. I tell you, he is the kind of preacher I like. He is the kind of layman I like. I have often tried to imagine when they put him down into that lion's den, that the first old mangy lion came out and looked him over, walked all around him, sized him up from every angle and every direction, and I think that old lion must have shaken his head and walked back and said to the rest of them, "No use, boys, not a sandwich on him; he is all backbone." Listen, beloved, Daniel was a man of backbone.

He didn't care for the king, he didn't care for the presidents, he didn't care for the princes. It didn't make a bit of difference to him what any of that crowd said or did, his concern was the Word of God. It takes a man of backbone and courage to stand up for the things of God.

II. Daniel Put Down Into That Lion's Den

You have seen his character, now look as they put him down into the lion's den. God took care of him.

I am contending, beloved, there are many lions that stalk your path and mine today, just like the actual lions Daniel had to face. God took care of Daniel. What a blessing it is to read this story, and what a wonderful blessing it is to find Daniel walking around unharmed and unhurt within that lion's den. How God did take care of him!

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DANIEL

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Let me say to you, beloved, concerning the man or woman who is God's servant. God will take care of that individual just exactly the way He took care of Daniel. Mark it down, if there hasn't been some lions cross your path thus far in life, there will be some cross it before you leave this world. There are lions of jealousy, lions of envy, and lions of compromise that confront God's people every day.

Daniel walked around in the midst of those lions unhurt, for God took care of him. I like the words of that song we sing --

"Never a heartache, and never a groan,

Never a teardrop and never a moan;

Never a danger but there on His throne,

Moment by moment He thinks of His own."

Don't tell me that God didn't keep His eye on Daniel in that lion's den! God saw him and took care of him. The same God who took care of Daniel, is the same God looking down upon me today, and He can take care of us.

III. The Sovereignty Of God

Of all the Scriptures in the Bible, there isn't any Scripture that exalts God and shows Him to be a sovereign Being more than this passage. Who was it that shut the mouths of those lions? Daniel said, "My God hath shut the mouth of those lions." I have no doubt but what Daniel lay down and slept in perfect peace, using one lion for a pillow and one for a footwarmer, and they didn't harm Daniel. Why? Because God had shut their mouths. I want to tell you that He is a sovereign God.

That same God one day sent a prophet by the name of Elijah out to a brook and told him He was going to take care of him. Every day God sent the ravens out in a time of dearth, and instead of eating the food, God held back their appetite and caused them to bring the food and give it to Elijah. Our God is a sovereign God.

Go back to the land of Egypt and you will find in the time of those plagues, the sovereignty of God.

I can't hold Him up, nor picture Him high enough, and yet I tell you, beloved, the God we serve is absolutely sovereign. He can control the lions, He can control the ravens, and, beloved, He can separate the waters of the Red Sea; He could separate the waters of the Jordan River. There isn't anything our God can't do, because God is sovereign and omnipotent in His power.

IV. How It Paid Daniel To Be True

He didn't have a bit of discomfort the night he spent in the company of the lions. The next morning the king wrote a letter and in that letter he told everybody about Daniel, and especially about Daniel's God. If Daniel had not been true to the Lord that day and had not stood up for the things of God, that letter never would have gone out. Daniel did more by way of missionary work that day than he could have done in years personally, because the king wrote a letter urging everybody to respect and honor the God of Daniel as greater than all other gods.

I tell you, it paid Daniel to be true to God, and it will pay for you to be true to Him.

V. What Envy Brought Those Princes And Presidents

It was envy, greed, graft and crookedness that caused them to desire the death of Daniel in the lion's den, but the next day, they themselves receiving the same thing they had thought they would bring upon Daniel.

Oh, beloved, I have lived long enough in this world to see God do the same thing lots of times. I read it here in the Word of God. Pharaoh killed the boy babies back in the land of Egypt, and later Pharaoh himself was drowned in the Red Sea. He reaped just what he sowed. I read of Jacob, who, by goat skins upon the backs of his hands and the small of his neck, was able to deceive his old, nearly blind father. I read later how his boys deceived him with goat's blood.

The Italians have an adage which says, "There is nothing that goes over the devil's back but what it comes under his belly." You can mark it down, beloved, that is another way of saying, "...Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." They desired the destruction of Daniel in the lion's den, and they themselves were destroyed thereby.

I believe it, beloved, because it is here in God's Word, and I believe it because I have seen it come true time and time again. It is rather interesting to me today to take an hour or so off once in a while and take a walk in the cemetery. I can tell you of some individuals, beloved, who have plotted the destruction of life and the ministerial experience of this preacher. It is interesting to go out in the cemetery and look at their tombstones and count them one by one.

Listen, beloved, I am glad that I serve a God like Daniel served. I am glad I serve a God who can take care of His own just like He took care of Daniel.

VI. One Thing Else

The old king, when they came to him and asked him to pass the law that nobody was to pray to any god except to him for thirty days, he passed the law and then took his signet ring and sealed it and said by that seal, "It can't be broken. This is the law of the Medes and Persians and it can't be altered, even by my royal veto. I seal it and that makes it final."

The day the Lord Jesus Christ saved me, He not only saved me, but He sealed me. Do you want to know how it is that I know when a man is saved once, he is saved forever? I'll tell you why: Because the law of God is just as unalterable as the Medes and Persians, and a thousand times more so. Listen to it: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

When the law of the Medes and Persians was passed and sealed, it was unalterable. When the Holy Spirit saves you, He seals you. For how long are you sealed? Until the day of redemption. I am glad that the Lord Jesus Christ didn't save me and turn me loose and say, "All right, it is up to you to get home." If He had, I never would get there. If He had saved me and said, "All right, old boy, it is your business from now on it. I have done for you what I could, and now it is up to you." -- I never would have made it. I thank God that when He saves a man, He seals him, and that seal of God is even more unalterable and unchangeable than the law of the Medes and Per-

sians.

Let me ask you a question: Have you been saved and sealed? If you are a saved man, you are a sealed man. Have you been saved? If so, thank God for the fact that you are not only saved, but sealed and safe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you are not saved, there is just one way of salvation. Long ago the Philippian jailor said, "...what must I do to be saved?" Paul answered, "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved..."

There aren't a dozen ways, there aren't two ways -- there is just one way of salvation and that is by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. May it please God to save you and add you to this body today.

RESURRECTION

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repeatedly in his letter to the Romans about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:" (Rom. 1:3-4). He points out that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is proof that He is truly the Son of God. Now, beloved, we know that God does not have to offer proof to us, but the strongest evidence we have is that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead.

As Paul was nearing the end of his ministry here on earth, before his execution for preaching Christ, he spoke often of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He told his spiritual son Timothy; "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead..." (II Tim. 2:8). May I put emphasis on the fact that he was alluding to our own resurrection.

What he simply means here is; "Don't forget." Especially when you seem to drown in temptations and trials and when you are in the midst of battles where the powers of darkness are about to suffocate you.

As children of God we have been incorporated into a resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for that reason we should keep in mind the following seven points that we would like to talk to you about at this time.

The first one is "LIGHT." Because Jesus did rise from the dead, we have been resurrected with Him, and therefore have a reason to be a light! "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). How can we be a light? Jesus said, "...I am the light of the world..." (John 8:12). So, we must be in unity with Him, and have a reason to be a light, the light, that is. Oh, what a glorious light. In Him is no darkness at all.

Back in the Old Testament we find words written in the form of a commandment; "ARISE, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." (Isa. 60:1). There is yet something else there that thrills

me so very much, verse three says; "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,...." There is no race, creed or color, that Jesus would not die, or did not, die for. That, beloved, is why He told us to tell the world about Him, and who He is. The secret as to how in practical terms this can be brought about, is given by Samuel the prophet: "For thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness" (II Sam. 22:29). If He, the Resurrected One, who is eternal life in person, lives in me, then I can, and must, be a light in everyday life.

Then the second one is "LOVE." Love, too, is a commandment which Peter expresses with the words, "...above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (I Pet. 4:8).

Of course, the word charity means love. We know from the Bible that God's greatest act of love was the sending of His own Son, and the Son's resurrection from the dead.

Jesus Christ not only died for our sins, but God the Father also raised Him from the dead for our justification. "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:24-25). Then again Paul said in Romans; "THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). This was not done for his own sake, but for our sake as well. Thus, we clearly see that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is actually a part of God's love. Therefore the admonition, "Love ye one another," is very necessary if we are in the light of the Risen One. If we believe that Jesus Christ rose again, then we must permit this love of God to work in practical terms throughout our lives.

Then the third one is "FORWARD." Beloved, children of God must never look back, but must look ahead, must go forward. "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). The power of the resurrection is not something stationary, but rather, is dynamic! It is living life that is on the move! "WHEREFORE seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

On the grounds of the resurrection of Jesus Christ we must take steps with faith and go forward in His name. We are blood bought, live from the inexhaustible source of life; therefore, let us run the race of the battle of faith with new courage. May the Risen One help us to do so!

The fourth one is "READ." What should we read? It is a fact that too much is being read today except the essential, God's Holy

Word; but for us it is important to read the book in which the Resurrected One, Jesus Christ our Lord reveals Himself to us.

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine"

(I Tim. 4:13). Back at that time there was no printing press as we know it today, and the only books in existence were those written by hand. Timothy was exhorted to read the Word in the church. Beloved I believe that "Till I come," means exactly the same for us today! Continue to read the Bible, and read it studiously, until the Lord does come.

Reading the Word also means to take the Word into our heart, to devour it. How many times have you read through all the Bible, from Genesis through the Revelation? Our constant reading in the Holy Scriptures causes us to experience the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ in our daily lives. Whoever reads little in the Word of God can expect to have only little dynamic power of the resurrection of the Lord.

Then the fifth one is: "SUFFER." If we fight the good fight of faith then we must understand this does not go without suffering. Timothy was told; "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3). This admonition was concluded in verse, 8 "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel; (I Tim. 2:8). Here the writer is saying that he has a burning desire to know the Lord better and deeper, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11).

The experience of the resurrection power of Jesus Christ in our daily lives requires our willingness to suffer. Dear child of God, are you willing to suffer for the cause of Christ? This is the exact point where our daily walk with the Lord begins. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Pet. 2:21-23). The sixth one is; "LEARN." From whom should we learn? The Lord Jesus invited us; "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." (Matt. 12:29). This type of learning is synchronized with the new resurrection life the believer has received when he became one in the Spirit with Him. Listen to

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this; "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:11). With the fact that He dwells in us Spiritually, we should not be difficult pupils, but such who eagerly work to learn from Him who stated; "...I am meek and lowly in heart...." (Matt. 11:29). As a result; our lives can reveal the character of Jesus Christ, and with it, the resurrection life of Jesus is demonstrated in us and through us.

The seventh one is; "LIVE." Because Jesus Christ arose and we are admonished to remember that Jesus Christ arose from the dead, then we also know that all those who believe in Jesus, the very God; "...hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:6). Also another Scripture bears out our hope in the risen Lord. "It is a faithful saying; For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." (II Tim. 2:11). Dearly beloved, based on that fact alone, that Jesus arose, this resurrected life of Jesus Christ has now become my life within my mortal flesh.

I am weak and well aware of the power of death, but realize immediately that God always uses the weakest tools to fulfill His mighty intention... Let us not forget; "For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you." (II Cor. 13:4). Therefore, we too, in our position, are crucified with Him. Remember these words as we conclude this message; "...because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14:19). Trust Him today, while it is yet day....Amen.

SBC

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Who are kept by the the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:3-5).

Can anyone deny what Peter is saying? Can anyone question the clarity of his declaration; namely, those who are begotten of God have a lively (living) hope? Hear his proclamation again: those who are begotten of God have "an inheritance incorruptible," and those who are begotten of God have "an inheritance...undefiled." We can say, also, that those who are begotten of God have "an inheritance...that fadeth not away," and those who have been begotten of God have "an inheritance...reserved in heaven..." There is something wonderfully climactic in this truth. Peter is telling us that those who have been begotten of

God "are kept by the power of God," and they "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

Very simply, if we are grasping intellectually and understandably what Peter is saying, we find that God is explaining that the saved are so completely and so eternally saved that already He has them scheduled their revelation in "the last time." This is truth that we have looked at in other contexts earlier, and we may even see such clearly in some further words. It is truth in which all of the saved may rejoice every moment of every day.

We notice, for example, the words of the Apostle Paul as he was dealing with the saved and sinning Corinthians. He says, "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons, I warn you, For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have you not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (I Cor. 4:14-16). As we have noted, in part, the Apostle Peter follows to emphasize, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible..." (I Pet. 1:3-4). In all of this, God is declaring His sovereignty! God is telling us that He is the One who set the program in motion, and it is He who will bring it all to fruition in finality!

Peter enables us to know absolutely that the saved are kept "by the power of God"! Further, under the infallible guidance of our God, Peter tells us that this "inheritance" that is ours is "ready to be revealed in the last time." This simply means that God has already effected the final keeping. Men may have some questions regarding preservation and perseverance, but God, who has determined the final outcome, has no such questions. Even in time, God already sees the eternal issue and fruitfulness of the Word that His Son accomplished on Calvary's cross.

That is, in the mind of God, it is already accomplished! Some men are deceived by other men and by the devil, and they may teach that the salvation that our God provides is not eternal. We may be assured, however, that they did not get their word from God. Men who follow other men may conclude by their human reasoning or by their rationalizing that the saved can apostatize, but be assured that their words are those of him of whom God says, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

God's Holy and infallible Word is definitively absolute! Peter clearly emphasizes what the Apostle Paul was inspired to tell us in Romans 8:29 and 30. There is no mistaking God's teaching. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did

predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Very simply, God is telling us that in His mind, it is already done! God obviously does not think as we. He certainly is not bound in time as we. Therefore, while it may be difficult for us to think of salvation that is eternal, this is no problem for God.

If we are understanding the Scriptures that we read, whether they be in Genesis or in Revelation, or any book in between, God never ever speaks of salvation other than eternal salvation. Thereby we can know that anyone who comes to us with the word that they have a salvation that has been accomplished by men or a salvation which can be disposed of by men, then we can know that they have not been dwelling in the heavenlies with Peter or with Paul. Somehow, they are missing that personal relationship with Jesus wherein faith truly abounds, even if they are saved. Though we may never grasp intellectually the wonder of the truth of our salvation, God still promises us that a person who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ has Eternal Life. Let us, then, hear the Word of God. Let us also believe the Word of God that we have heard.

When we have ears to hear the Word of God, and we have faith to believe the Word of God, we are assured of victory both in time and eternity. In our humanity, we may run the gamut of human emotions, but if our faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ, and if we have the understanding of the Word of God that is available to us through faith, then every hour of every day can be one of great victory. Obviously, this is something that the men who gave us "The Abstract of Principles" knew and in which they were able to rejoice on a continuing basis. Dale Moody, however, must live in daily fear that he may lose his salvation--if he truthfully believed as a young man--cannot know this victory.

Without such a personal experience of such a personal victory on a regular and on-going basis, Dale Moody, as he grovels in the throes of his belief in "apostasy," must live a tragically confused life. He has the Word of God, but he does not believe the Word of God as the Word of God. He has the message of the salvation, but he cannot have any confidence in that message of salvation because he must live in fear that he may lose it through his sinning or his sinfulness. Therefore, as he attempts to live in the midst of believing people, he must deliver to them continuously his message of unbelief. Whereas he might have had victory and thereby hope eternal, he is plagued with the fear that e're another sun rises, he may be in a hell in which he does not believe. What a tragic plight!

BIBLE

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unabated by the church.

Church discipline may take more than one kind of form: i.e., a member might receive a mild rebuke from the church, or he

might receive a public rebuke from the church that demands repentance and an apology. Likewise, a member might be excluded from the church because of a known fact, or a common report that is based upon the facts as they are presented.

I believe that it is also true that if we guarded more carefully the front doors of the Lord's churches of which we may be pastors; then we would need to use the back door less, when it comes to excluding those who are rebellious or unruly, or who become heretical in their thinking.

It is true, however, that the church that takes this thing of receiving members honestly and sincerely, will also need, at times, to exercise her responsibility and authority to discipline members who walk not according to the truth.

I realize there are many wonderful aspects of truth, and even when it comes to church discipline, there are many aspects of truth. Realizing that each of these aspects could take up the time allotted me, I want to confine myself to the fact of church discipline and the execution thereof.

For instance, I could take all of my allotted time talking about the unorthodoxy and ungodliness that is carried on, oftentimes, in the name of church discipline, but suffice it to say perhaps this is not the greatest of all sins with regard to church discipline and the Lord's churches, but on the contrary, it is our lack of knowledge and practice of the Bible doctrine of church discipline. Therefore, with this discourse, I would like to consider the Bible and church discipline in this light: the producer of church discipline, the problem of church discipline, the program of church discipline, and the purpose of church discipline.

1. The producer of church discipline:

By producer, we mean the one that supervises in the discipline of its members. Every organization that I know anything about, having its by-laws and charter and constitution, puts some limitation upon those who make up that organization.

Needless to say, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ has been commanded by the Lord out of the Word that we set bounds and regulations upon those who would make up the body of the Lord. If we were to consider negatively, the one who supervises is not a fellow member, though we as members of a particular body have responsibility one to another. The Bible says in James 5:16: "Confess your faults one to another..."

That is a responsibility I have to brothers and sisters in Christ and the assembly where I am a member.

The Bible further states in Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Beloved, we have responsibilities, one to another, within the Lord's church, and perhaps, if we took more seriously this responsibility, then the church would have to take less action with regard to the disciplining of those members.

We are to confess our faults, pray for one another, and when one is overtaken in a fault the spiritual ones are to restore such an one.

So the one who supervises discipline, negatively, is not a fellow brother or sister in Christ.

A deacon board is not to supervise in discipline, for such do not exist in a New Testament Baptist church.

Those who supervise in discipline is not a committee appointed for that purpose. Those who supervise in discipline is not the pastor or the elder of the church. Negatively speaking, those that I have mentioned do not supervise or execute church discipline.

Positively speaking, the church itself is the supervisor in the disciplining of a member, and they alone are to determine the extent of that discipline. The church, the one to whom the Lord Jesus gave the authority to preach, to baptize, to teach--who receive and dismiss and exclude and restore members--is the one who supervises in church discipline.

We are told in I Corinthians 5:4: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together..."

You'll notice that the inspired apostle declared, "when ye are gathered together," so positively speaking, church discipline is supervised by the church in question itself.

I Thessalonians 5:14 says: "Now we exhort you, brethren..."

This is speaking to the church of the Thessalonians, and it says, "we exhort you, brethren;" not "you, brother," but "you, brethren."

In II Thessalonians 3:6 we read: "Now we command you, brethren..." Brethren, it is the church that supervises in church discipline. Did not our Lord Jesus Christ, with regard to personal offenses between members of the church, give the members of the church the order of how they were to take care of that? They were to go to the brother. If he would not hear him, he was to take one or two more. If the one doing the offending did not hear them, then they were to tell it unto the church. The last court of order is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The highest court in the land to the child of God is the Lord's church of which he is a member. So the one who supervises in church discipline is the church itself. It is the many, and not the few.

We are told in II Corinthians 2:6, with regard to a member who had been excluded by that body: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many."

The exclusion from the Corinthian church was done by the church; by the many, and not by the pastor nor any other individual or group within that church.

So when we talk about the Bible and church discipline, it is the church that supervises in the discipline of that member, and to determine the extent of that discipline.

2. The problem of church discipline:

Discipline entails problems with regard to the flesh, with

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regard to many feelings, and with regard to the church. Quite often, there are many problems when it comes to disciplining a disorderly, or ungodly, or unscriptural church member.

I believe convenience is a problem when it comes to church discipline. The Apostle Paul, in I Corinthians 5, seemed to rebuke the church at Corinth for not taking action against the sinful man the incestuous man, by excluding him, and then seemed to say it was convenience that led them to fail to carry out the responsibility that was theirs. In other words, it made the work of that church less difficult just to ignore and to pretend that the sin did not exist.

Beloved, convenience is never a standard for conduct or for truth. We must rely upon the naked Word of God as a church in executing our responsibility of church discipline. So convenience is not the rule of order for us.

Carnality is another problem that enters in, in that the flesh opposes discipline. Beloved, the old carnal nature, that old Adamic nature, that is still present with us, rebels against authority.

Not a few Baptists that I know today are like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, who cried, "We will not have this man to rule over us!" Beloved, every child of God and every member of the Lord's churches ought to be taught that they must bow to authority of God's Holy Word, and that they must say, "So be it, Lord." I believe if we were more diligent in our teaching each member the responsibilities that are his, as is taught in the Word of God, we would have to discipline our members less frequently.

So, beloved, carnality is a problem in church discipline, in that the flesh opposes it. There seems to be wholesale rebellion and anarchy against any kind of authority, and it has found its way into the Lord's churches. God forbid that it should be so! We ought to be as submissive to the will of God, as revealed and found in the Holy Scriptures and taught to us by the Holy Spirit of God.

Conformity is another problem in church discipline. That is, we just do like everybody else does, and nobody else is taking strong action against sinning members.

Romans 12:2 says: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Conformity is not the standard for the Lord's churches, but rather, the plain teaching of the Word of God.

In the problem of church discipline, company always imposes a problem. Amos 3:3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

I am not suggesting that we ought to break fellowship with any church that does not discipline members like we do, or that we feel that the Bible teaches a church ought to do. To say the least, we are affected by what others do, or do not do, and oftentimes, the company that we keep imposes a problem when it comes to executing our responsibility as a church in

disciplining disorderly members.

Often I have heard that our Association does not believe in church discipline, and our Convention or its Sunday School literature doesn't teach church discipline. Well, I know that if it teaches anything, it teaches rebellion against the Word of God, rather than conformity and obedience thereto. Beloved, the Association and the Convention are not a standard for the Lord's churches, but rather the Word of God.

In a day of church ecumenicalism, certainly church discipline would be a hindrance to union, and therefore we drop it.

Beloved, there are many and sundry problems that enter in when it comes to church discipline, but to practice it when it is needed is incumbent upon the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, who desire to be obedient to her Head.

3. The program of church discipline:

By program, we mean those that ought to be disciplined by the church. Only members of the body could be disciplined by that body, but I believe that the Scriptures enjoin upon any particular church that they are to discipline, first of all, the unruly. We are told in I Thessalonians 5:14: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."

So, beloved, we are to discipline the unruly, and by unruly, we mean those who cannot be ruled, those who cannot be restrained. There are not a few Baptists who cannot be ruled and restrained from going their own headstrong and rebellious way, even when it is against the commandments of Christ, and against the will of the church of which they are a member.

Oftentimes, this might be confined to personal offenses. The church at Thessalonica was commanded to warn those who were unruly.

When a member within a body begins to be unruly and will not be confined and restrained and ruled by the authority of God's Holy and Divine Word, then they are to be warned about that rebellion and unruliness, and warned that stiffer action will be taken unless they conform their lives to the will of God.

In II Thessalonians 3:6, the inspired apostle declares: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

We cannot continue to tolerate a member walking disorderly, and not walking according to the truth as found in Holy Scriptures, but we must warn them, and they must conform their lives to the will of God as found in Holy Scriptures.

Beloved, the child of God that is unruly is an unspiritual child, a child that is not growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus, will always be a problem instead of a blessing. You are doing that individual member a blessing when you warn him about his rebellion and his being unruly.

We are not only to discipline the unruly, but the ungodly. We

might term this as those who commit public offenses, whereby the public in general knows about it.

We are told in I Corinthians 5:4,5 about a man within the church at Corinth that was committing such a diabolical sin that it, no doubt, was known at least by others outside the church. The Apostle Paul says: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Notice, "My spirit with the power" that is, with the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The church does have the

authority to meet together with the purpose of disciplining a disorderly member. I Corinthians 5:13 says: "...Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

So, beloved, the ungodly, those who live in open and immoral sin, are in no way to be tolerated or permitted to remain in the Lord's church, but they are to be excluded until attendance and restitution is made.

The church is commanded to discipline the unscriptural. That is, those who commit heretical offenses, the teaching and preaching and embracing doctrines that are foreign to the Word of God.

Titus, who was left in Crete to set all things in order in the churches, was commanded that a man that is a heretic, after the second admonition, was to be

rejected, "...knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

There is no place for members in a Baptist church, whether they have always believed it or just come to believe it, who teach, for example, baptismal regeneration. If that is what one believes and he is going to propagate that doctrine, the only thing that the Lord's church can do is to exclude him from membership within the church. He is to be rejected. That is to be true of any doctrine foreign to the Word of God, relative to the foundational and fundamental doctrines of the truth of the Word of God.

In Romans 16:17, the church at Rome was commanded to: "...mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

Beloved, there is no place in the Lord's church for a heretical one that believes things that are contrary to the Word of God.

This does not mean that every time someone does not agree with the pastor or the Bible teacher that he is to be excluded, but when there are those who embrace doctrines foreign and hurtful to the Word of God and to truth, and continually persist in that, then there is nothing to be done by the church other than to expel them from membership therein.

4. The purpose of church discipline:

The Lord does not command His people or churches to do anything without having a purpose in mind.

I believe the purpose in church discipline, as found in the Word of God, is that the Lord's church might practice the Bible doctrine of separation. We are told in I Corinthians 5:11: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

Beloved, if the Lord's church is going to practice separation, then they are going to have to exclude members who do not conform, and are not what they ought to be, according to the Word of God.

The church is to practice separation and then to avoid contamination, for I Corinthians 5:6 says: "Your glorying is not good..."

Paul says to the church at Corinth in this same verse: "...Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"

Beloved, the incestuous man at Corinth was to be expelled from membership lest he contaminate the whole body.

So, beloved, when we have a problem such as that, and of that magnitude, there is no question. To avoid contamination, we must deal with the problem at hand. You are aware, as I am, of the problems that keep on growing if a church fails to take care of a problem such as existed in the church at Corinth.

So the purpose is to practice separation and avoid contamination. Thirdly, the

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One of the first things a physician says to his patient is, "Let me see your tongue." A spiritual advisor might ask the same thing.

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purpose of church discipline is that it might produce condemnation in the one that is disciplined. II Thessalonians 3:14 says: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

The word translated "ashamed" means that he might be turned in. Beloved, when one is disciplined, this is to work in him, and for his good, and for God's glory; that he might get his eyes upon himself, that he might see himself as he really is, that he might not be condemned of the world. Beloved, it will bring him to repentance and to confession and to ultimate restoration in the church.

So the purpose of discipline is that it might work self-judgment in the individual offender, or the one that has committed the sin and is being disciplined.

Above all, the purpose of church discipline is that the church might glorify God. We read in I Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Beloved, the purpose of the church in executing her responsibility in discipline is that she, by obedience to the Word of God, might bring glory to God, rather than a reproach upon His holy and blessed name.

Beloved, one of the greatest problems of the church that I know of today is her failure in church discipline. It is not enough for us to teach church discipline. But we must engage therein when it is demanded by the problems that exist, or do come, in our churches.

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