

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose--Jim Elliot

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The Baptist Examiner

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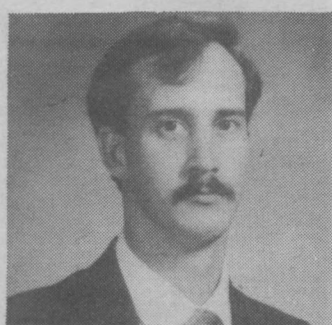
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"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" — Isaiah 8:20.

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GOD'S CONCERN WITH DETAILS

By Pastor Rick Presley, Gethsemane Baptist Church, Columbus, Ohio



"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31).

In the deepest reaches of the ocean where the light of the sun never shines there are thermal vents on the floor of the sea. These vents are caused by fissures in the earth's crust which heat up sea water and spew out minerals that provide a food source for a number of creatures that live there in this environment under tremendous pressure. There is a unique food chain established by God which is the only food chain on the planet not dependent on sunlight for energy. Some of the most delicate looking plant-like animals on the planet benefit from these thermal vents and live their entire lives unseen by anyone. This ecosystem has only been known to man in the past few years though it has existed from the dawn of creation. Since these delicately beautiful forms of life are only known to a few and have never been seen in person by man, why did God create them? What purpose do they serve? Hard questions to be sure in a world dominated by man.

It is easy for us to get caught up in our lives and forget the existence of anything that doesn't di-

rectly affect us, especially if we are not the center of what it is about. It is humbling to consider the enormous size and complexity of the universe and our relatively small place in it while at the same time contemplating the immense detail involved in keeping a world running. Yet our God is so large and so sovereign that He not only has the ability but takes the time to make things that only He can see and enjoy. He puts life at the bottom of the ocean where the vast majority of mankind never sees it or even knows of its existence. He knows what is on the dark side of the moon. He is the one who put the dust on Mars and knows the composition of the most distant star. It is God who examines life in the microscope and regulates it for His own pleasure without consulting man. God dwells in the deepest jungles, never visited by man and orders all the plant and animal life without our involvement whatsoever. God is very busy doing things that have no direct effect on our lives and is apparently doing so for His own pleasure. To the age old question, "If a tree falls in

a forest and no one is there, is there a noise?" there is an answer: there is never no one there. If God exists, and He is omnipresent, then He is always there. Not only did the tree fall but it did so for the pleasure and glory of God. But what does this have to do with us? Why should we be concerned about these seemingly minute details? What impact do they really have on our lives and what is their significance to our growth as Christians?

In the final chapters of the book of Job, the patriarch was upset with God for the lack of justice in his life because he was being undeservedly tested. He demanded an audience with God, threatening to bring his case before the great judge of the universe and accuse God on his own behalf of unfair treatment. It is interesting to note that before God allowed Job to present his case He asked him a few questions about the world around him. Job was given a biology test on the common creatures around him and even some pretty exotic species that don't seem to be in existence (Continued on Page 6)

The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Eugene P. Helton

HERE AM I, SEND ME

Please read Isaiah 6:1-13.

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

A SINNER SEES THE LORD AS HE IS

Isaiah 6 records the salvation experience of Isaiah. As is the case with every sinner saved by the



ZACCHAEUS

By Pastor Willard Willis, Northland Missionary Baptist Church, Delaware, Ohio

"And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich" (Luke 19:1, 2).

The above passages of Scripture point out that Zacchaeus lived in Jericho, that he was chief among the publicans and that he was rich.

Jericho

The original city of Jericho was about six miles from the Jordan river. The walls around this particular city enclosed about seventy acres. The New Testament Jericho, in which Zacchaeus resided, was about one mile south of the original city of Jericho. The present day Jericho is about one mile to the south east of the original city.

Dr. John Garstang, director of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, excavated the original city from 1929-1936. His findings revealed that the original city had been destroyed in 1400 B.C. the exact time as is recorded in the Holy Scriptures. He also found that the wall around old Jericho fell "down flat" as God said it did. The wall was actually made up of two walls which were fifteen feet apart. The outer wall was six feet thick while the inner wall was twelve feet thick. The height of each wall was thirty feet. The walls were joined together by houses that were built across the top. You will recall that the house of Rahab was on the top of the wall.

The record of the building of the second city, which was named "Jericho" is found in I Kings 16:34.



It was in this particular city that Zacchaeus resided.

Zacchaeus Was A Chief Publican

Zacchaeus, since he was "a chief publican", was the manager, or head of a large office of tax collectors, or what we refer to today as the IRS.

Zacchaeus, and his office force, were a hated group of people. They, in fact, in Matthew 21:31-32, are placed in the same class with the harlots. The main reason for the hatred of Zacchaeus and his office force was because they taxed the people in behalf of the Roman government—a foreign power. It therefore was taxation without representation.

Zacchaeus Was Rich

Zacchaeus had become rich by skimming the cream from the people in Jericho, and no doubt, the area which was adjoining Jericho. His riches, then, rather than being a feather in his hat, were a monument to his sinful lifestyle. We, then, may refer to him as a chief robber as well as a chief publican.

God's Sheep Are Found In Strange Places

The Lord's sheep, that is, those that He agreed with the Father to seek out and save, are to be found in very strange places. Zacchaeus, as was true of the apostle Paul and the woman at the well in Samaria, were all in the category of "chief." They were each a chief of sinners.

Zacchaeus Sought To See Jesus

Zacchaeus, whose responsibility it was to collect taxes, did not have such on his mind on the particular day which is before us. He, in fact, according to our text, "sought to see Jesus" (Luke 19:3).

It was no accident that Zacchaeus "sought to see Jesus." Jesus, in fact, was in the process of drawing Zacchaeus to himself. The same

grace of God, at the time of spiritual awaking, Isaiah saw for the first time the Lord as He really is. He saw Him not at the mercy of men, as some believe. Isaiah said: **"I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up..."** (Isaiah 6:1). God is so much higher than man. **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are**

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THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

Eugene P. Helton

Editor

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HERE AM I

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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" (Isaiah 55:8-9). Isaiah saw the holiness of the Lord. "...Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). Isaiah could now see the Lord as the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent One. Isaiah must have known and we must know that God will have His way. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven,

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

MARCH 1, 1995

PAGE TWO

Editor's Update

By Pastor Eugene P. Helton, Editor

Greetings in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Everything continues to be well at the Calvary Baptist Church. Yesterday, Sunday, January 15th, we had thirteen visitors in our morning worship services and last night we had nine visitors in our evening service.

We enjoyed a special time of worship last night and a wonderful time of Christian fellowship after our service. Brother Sidney Fisher, one of the great preachers and pastors in this area for many years blessed our hearts as he preached on God's authority and man's authority. After our worship service, we gathered in the fellowship hall in the basement of the church building and enjoyed a time of eating and good Christian fellowship.

Our plans are now complete for our spring meeting. The meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2, and 3. On June 1 and 2, we're going to have the wonderful gospel group "Ministry." "Ministry" is a group of three Baptist pastors who preach and sing for the glory of the Lord. They are Steve Kittle, Jonathan Gordon, and David Pitman. On June 3, we have plans to host an area wide singspiration and fellowship. We would be blessed by having you in attendance at our spring meeting!

Well it's time to close and go to work. May the LORD bless you and your church richly!



and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35).

A SINNER SEES HIMSELF AS HE REALLY IS

A lost sinner, before being visited by the Holy Spirit to bring conviction of sin, doesn't see himself as being wicked and in desperate spiritual need. After Isaiah saw the Lord in the greatness of His glory, he then saw himself as a wretched sinner. "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5). Humanism tries to tell the world that man is basically good, however, the Word of God reveals that man is not basically good but inherently basically bad. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it;

but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isaiah 1:6). "But we are as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6).

GOD JUSTIFIES A SINNER

The sinner, Isaiah, saw God as He really is. He saw Him as the great and sovereign God. He saw Him as the majestic One. The sinner, Isaiah, saw himself, as he really was. He saw himself as being wretched and undone; a man of unclean lips, living in the midst of a people in the same spiritual condition. God acted and a sinner was saved. "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my

mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isaiah 6:6-7). Isaiah did not reach out to God. It was God who reached out to Isaiah. He was cleansed and made ready by fire. "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zechariah 13:9). "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:15). Isaiah's sins were removed. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25).

A JUSTIFIED SINNER RESPONDS

Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord asking: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:8). God saves people to serve. No one was ever saved not to serve. When the saved Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord, he responded: "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Then the Lord gave this new soldier his marching orders. Isaiah's orders were: "Go, and tell this people" (Isaiah 6:9). Like Isaiah, we are to go and tell all the people what we have seen and heard from God. We are to tell them about sin against God. We are to tell them about Jesus, the Son of God; a Saviour that died, was buried and rose again. A Saviour that is powerful to save all who will repent of sin and put their entire trust in Him and His finished work on Calvary's cross. Before going to the task, Isaiah asked the Lord a question: "Then said I, Lord, how long?" (Isaiah 6:11). How long do you want me to go and tell the people? The Lord answered: "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate" (Isaiah 6:11). "You're to work until the cities have no people. You're to work until the houses sit empty." As long as Isaiah had life, he was to go tell the people. As long as you and I have life, we are to go and tell the people. If God takes us from this earth, then our work here is done. However, as long as there is breath in us, our attitude should be to work till the Master comes.

I Would Not Trade

I would not trade that matchless love Revealed at Calvary, Where Jesus shed His precious blood An off'ring just for me
A revelation of God's plan To set the captive free,
I would not trade with any man; It means so much to me!

I would not trade the constant peace That dwells within my breast,
A peace serene with full release Which giveth rest, sweet rest.
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled, I cannot anxious be.
I would not trade for all the world; It means so much to me!

I would not trade this lasting joy For any worldly pleasure,
For joy is strength, thus says the Word, And this I highly treasure.
I praise the Lord for this today, This joy beyond all measure.
I would not trade, let come what may; It means so much to me!

By: Richard Dahlen



The Baptist Examiner Bible Study Lesson

By Clyde T. Everman, Deacon
Calvary Baptist Church • Ashland, KY

Direct All Questions & Comments to: Clyde T. Everman • 108 Burdsall Ave. • Ft. Mitchell, KY 41017

Genesis 15:1-6

"After these things." This was after the events of chapter 14. Abraham had pursued the people of Sodom and Gomorrah including his nephew Lot, along with all the spoil which the great army of the five kings had taken. Now that he was home it would seem that Abraham was in fear that the five nations whose army he had destroyed may seek revenge. But it was at this time that the Lord appeared to him in a vision and said **"fear not."** This was the first time the Lord had used these words **"fear not"** to comfort and ease one of His own. But in the remainder of the Scripture the Lord used these words **"fear not"** and their equivalent **"be not afraid"** more than eighty times to assure His own that there was no danger that could harm them.

Why was he not to fear? **"I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."** God is a shield for His children against all their foes. **"But thou O Lord, art a shield for me...I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that set themselves against me round about"** (Psalm 3:3, 6). **"For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly"** (Psalm 84:11).

Not only is the Lord a shield but He is also **"thy exceeding great reward."** Abraham had refused the spoils of the world offered by the king of Sodom but God would not allow him to be a loser. The reward that he received was far greater than that offered by the king. The Lord Himself was his exceeding great

reward.

"What wilt thou give me?" It would seem that upon hearing God say **"I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward"** caused Abraham's mind to turn to his inheritance and the fact that he had no seed of his own to enter into the promise of God. The long wait since God had promised him a seed seemed to cause Abraham to almost complain as he asked what reward there could be for him. Note his disappointment, **"Seeing I go childless."** Ten long years have gone by since he had entered Canaan and since God had promised him a seed and there was no sign that it would be fulfilled. Sarah and he were getting older and everything seemed to go against the promise ever being brought to pass. It would seem that Abraham had almost given up hope of having an heir of his own and had come to the conclusion that maybe after all, his steward was to be his heir and through him would be the fulfillment of God's promise. **"Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir."**

But God told him that he had things all wrong, **"This shall not be thy heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."** When God promised to give the land to Abraham and his seed He meant exactly what He said. The seed was to come from Abraham himself, not just one born in his house. Then to show Abraham what was to be the great number of his seed He took Abraham out and told him to look up into the heavens, **"and said, Look now**

toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them." Abraham had said to God **"to me thou hast given me no seed."** God's reply was, just as you are unable to count the stars in the heavens **"so shall thy seed be."** We need to note that in Genesis 13:16 that God compares Abraham's seed to the dust of the earth which speaks of the natural seed of Abraham, but here the seed is likened to the stars in the heavens, which I believe is the spiritual seed of Abraham. In Galatians 3:7 we are told **"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."** All who have their faith in the shed blood of Christ are the spiritual seed of Abraham. Will this seed be great in multitude? **"After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands"** (Rev. 7:9).

What was Abraham's reaction when he looked into the heavens and saw the stars that he could not count? **"He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness."** Some one has said "Abraham believed when he knew not how." Abraham did not stop to reason how. Naturally this was impossible, but he believed that God would act just as He had said. God had spoken, that was enough for Abraham. Although his body might be dead and Sarah was long past the age of childbearing, yet he was fully convinced that God was able to bring about this event. His faith

was reckoned or counted unto him for righteousness. Three times in the New Testament this statement made by Abraham is spoken of. In Romans 4:3 the emphasis is on the word **"counted."** In Galatians 3:6, the emphasis is on the word **"believed"** and in James 2:13 it is the word **"righteousness."** Faith is God speaking and our believing. Faith is taking God at His word.

Note God's response to Abraham's faith **"And it was counted to him."** That is, God accounted Abraham's faith as a channel for the reception of the gift of righteousness. The word **"righteousness"** carried the meaning of "being right with God." Abraham's faith was representative of our faith. We are justified (to be declared righteous) by faith. There is a difference between our faith and that of Abraham in that Abraham had faith that God would give him a son through the quickening of his body. We believe that God has given His Son, and through His death and resurrection from the dead, we have eternal life. Concerning Abraham's faith it is said, **"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him: But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead"** (Rom. 4:23, 24). It is of importance to note that the well known words and phrases **"the word of the Lord came," "fear not," "believed," "counted,"** and **"righteousness"** are first used here and it is here we find the key to the meaning of the words and phrases.

Pray without ceasing

ZACCHAEUS

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can be said of the woman at the well in Samaria, the eunuch and numerous others.

Zacchaeus, since he was rich, could have been enjoying what ever pleasures were available in his day. He, being rich, had a large cup with which to dip from the pleasures of this world and drank heartily from them. He, however, on that particular day, found that his desire was for that which his wealth could not purchase for him. The manner, in fact, in which he acted on that day in history, shows clearly that his heart ached to see Jesus. He, of course, was not aware that he was being drawn, not only to see Jesus, but to embrace Him with the arms of love and faith. The following passage of Scripture gives us the basis for the action which was being exercised by Zacchaeus.

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44).

Zacchaeus Was A Short Man

The fact that Zacchaeus was a short man proved to be a great obstacle in his ability to see Jesus. He, when trying to see Jesus, always found a set of shoulders obstructing his view. A video of the action taken by Zacchaeus, would have, no doubt, shown his head moving up and down as he moved behind the crowd in an effort to see Jesus. He, however, due to the **"press"** was unable to obtain a glimpse of Jesus.

Zacchaeus Had No One To Lift Him Above The Crowd
Zacchaeus, if a strong man would have had mercy upon him, would have been lifted above the **"press,"** but there was no one to help him. All lost people are too short to see Jesus. They, in fact, have all fallen short of the grace of God because of their sinful condition. This fact is pointed out in the following passage of Scripture: **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Romans 3:23).

All of us are much too short to reach God's standard as it was set forth in the life of our Lord Jesus. Our Lord, in fact, measured up to God's standard by keeping the

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THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

MARCH 1, 1995

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit Forum

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT
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**In centuries past, did Baptist churches allow women members to vote in the congregational rule?
What if a woman felt differently on a matter than did her husband?**

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Beginning with the first century, in the first Baptist church we find the women taking part in the business of the church. In the first chapter of Acts, we find that after they had seen Christ go into the heavens, the church went back into Jerusalem and assembled in the upper room for prayer and supplication "with the women." At this time, in selecting one to take Judas' place "they gave forth their lot" (Acts 1:26). As nothing is said that the women were not to cast lots, it must be concluded that the women cast their lot along with the men. Nothing is said to indicate that it was only the men who voted. In Acts 6:5, we know that the women had a vote for it is said "And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith...." In Acts 15:22 "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch...." The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church concerning the man who had committed fornication saying "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together...to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh" (I Cor. 5:4, 5).

As for the centuries following, I have no record as to what the churches did concerning the women. But as Baptists have always stood for a congregational form of government, it must be assumed that the whole church voted on church business.

Even though a woman may feel differently on a matter than does her husband, she must still vote as she feels the Spirit leading. When the apostle Paul wrote the church at Corinth to withdraw the hand of fellowship from the man who had committed fornication (I Cor. 5), if one man had voted against this, he would have been out of the will of the Lord, but this does not mean that his wife must follow him in his sin. If both husband and wife are led by the Holy Spirit, there will be no difference of opinion. This is not only true of husband and wife but of all the members of the church. Note of the churches in the New Testament "the saying pleased the whole multitude" (Acts 6:5) and "it pleased the apostles and elders with the whole church" (Acts 15:22). These were all of one accord, all led by the Spirit, not a dissenting vote. How good it would be if we could say this of all our churches today!

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The last question and this question are asking about Baptist churches in "centuries past." I assume you are talking about churches according to history. Please understand that any history is biased and written according to what the author wants it to tell. You can find history books that will tell you just about anything you want it to say. No history book can be accepted as the true position.

Anytime a question is asked about "past Baptists" I will go to the beginning of the church. The true position of the Baptist will be seen by the Lord and the church He organized in Jerusalem. Let me assure you that from the time He organized His church until He comes for His people, there has

been, and will continue to be churches that have stood firm on His doctrines. At the same time there will be others that will go contrary to the Lord's teachings because Satan is the great imitator and has "copy churches."

Regarding your question about women voting, let us notice the first business meeting after our Lord ascended back to heaven. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14). Acts 1:15-26 tells us of a vote that was taken by the church of 120 members. The need was presented, they prayed about it and they took the vote. There is no indication that the women did not vote, in

(Continued on Page 7)

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"Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40).

Of what Baptists have done in past ages as to their business meetings and the particulars of those meetings, I have very little knowledge and relatively little exists of the details of these meetings. Particulars as to who attended these meetings and how they were conducted have always been at the discretion and practice of a particular church. There have always been differences.

In more modern times churches vary in practice of business meetings as well. I am aware that some churches do not allow women, or children to even attend business meetings of the church. Still other churches allow them to attend business meetings, but not to vote, or have any participation. Although I

realize that a church has a right to its own practices in this area, I do not agree with not including every member in a business meeting.

It is my conviction that every member of an assembly should have the right to attend a business meeting and to have a vote in every decision to be made. If they are a member of an assembly, they should have all rights and privileges of a member, including attendance of every meeting of a church and the right to vote and have a part in governing the church through that vote. I see no prohibition in Scripture against sex or age in attending business meetings. I see no reason to prohibit any member from attending or voting in a business meeting. Although women do not speak in meeting of a church, including a business meeting, I do not see that as a problem in participating or voting. An uplifted hand is sufficient when a vote is asked. Men may make motions for the ladies if they wish to bring something up.

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I believe from a Scriptural perspective women have the right to participate in the decisions of the church. For instance in the very first business meeting of the New Testament church, a replacement was chosen to fill the apostleship of Judas Iscariot. The Bible tells us in Acts 1:14-15 "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and

twenty)." So we see the women were there in active participation of the matter. Then notice in the same chapter in verse 23, "And THEY APPOINTED two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias." Verse 26 states "AND THEY gave forth their lots." In both places where it says "And they" the Greek grammar indicates the third person plural. If the subject of a verb is the person or the thing of the group spoken of, the verb is in the third person. This would lend us to believe that the entire 120 disciples cast their lots in this vote.

As far as the practice of women voting as it relates to Baptist history, I am not sure. I have no doubt that some churches in the past, as well as in the present, limit women from voting. I don't agree with that kind of position. I do believe however that Scriptures confine their bringing up and seconding motions. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." Anyone who stands

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First, in answer to part one of this two part question, I believe the intent of congregational rule was to allow all church members the privilege and responsibility to vote on matters of business. We must, however, recognize this rule is based upon the premise of church membership made up of born again, God fearing, loyal,

(Continued on Page 8)

THE MESSAGE OF THE ANGELS

By Pastor Jim Orrick, Storm's Creek Baptist Church, Ironton, Ohio

About 2,000 years ago there was born in Bethlehem One who would have a greater influence on mankind than anyone who ever had been or ever would be born. This One was Jesus Christ, God's Son who came into the world to save us from our sins. Being who He was, we might think that He would be born in a stately palace in a famous city, surrounded by wealth and luxury, but this was not the case. He was born in a small country village to a poor peasant maid who had nowhere to lay Him that first night but in a manger in a cave where animals were kept. Although His birth went unnoticed by the masses of people on earth, the angels of glory took note of it and announced His birth to a group of shepherds who were in the fields watching over their flocks. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

A MESSAGE OF COMFORT

The first words the shepherds heard the angel say were "Fear not." No doubt we can all remember times in our youth when we were frightened in the night, perhaps by a bad dream. At such times it only took a gentle word from one of our parents to assure us that all was well and that we had nothing to fear. Before Jesus came to earth there was much about God that men did not understand and that filled their hearts with fear. At Mount Sinai when God manifested His presence to

the people, there were sights and sounds that caused them to be filled with fear. "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that were in the camp trembled" (Exodus 19:16). God seemed so terrible and so unapproachable at Sinai, but when He came among men in the person of His Son, the message was "Fear not." We could never have dreamed that God loved us had it not been for the coming of Jesus to this world. By His coming we learn that God has a love for us that is beyond our ability to understand. The message of the angel was not only a message of comfort to the shepherds; it is a message of comfort to every member of Adam's race.

A MESSAGE OF JOY

It wasn't long after God made the first man and woman that sin entered the human family, and with it came all kinds of sorrow. Since all have sinned, all are subject to the sorrows caused by sin. But when Jesus was born it was a time of joy. Now the long awaited seed of woman who was to bruise the head of the serpent had come. The virgin-born One whose name was to be called "Wonderful" was no longer in a prophecy waiting to be fulfilled; He had now come into a world of sorrow to do the Father's will in redeeming a people from sin. A birth announcement should always bring joy, but the birth announcement to cause the greatest joy was that which the angel made to the shepherds so long

ago.

A MESSAGE OF SALVATION

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). Did you ever say upon receiving something "this is just what I needed"? When God gave His Son to be our Saviour, He gave us that which we needed more than anything else in the world.

Some unknown author has said, "If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. But our greatest need was for forgiveness, so God sent us a Saviour."

In all of history, God has sent but one Saviour. In John 14:6 Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." This statement is as true today as it was the day that Jesus spoke it. For almost 2,000 years men and women from every nation and of every language have come to Him and found Him to be the Saviour. If you have not found Him to be such in your life, then receive Him as your Lord and Saviour. You will find that He who long ago came into this world will come into your heart, and you will become a new creation in Him.

(Article taken from: The Storm's Creek Baptist Witness, December 1994.)

ZACCHAEUS

(Continued from Page 3)

ten commandments.

Zacchaeus Climbed Up A Tree

The Lord's sheep, once they are being drawn to the Master, will not be hindered by any earthly obstacles. The "press", in fact, will not keep them from seeing their Master. I'm saying that the call of God is irresistible. Zacchaeus, in fact, even though he was a chief and rich, was not ashamed to climb a tree in order to see Jesus. Many, no doubt, recognized the little short rich fellow up in the tree, but that was secondary to him, since he only wanted to see Jesus. We, in fact, read the following regarding the action taken by Zacchaeus: "And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way" (Luke 19:4).

The Lord's Sheep Treed By God the Spirit

A good coon dog, when hunting coons, will soon have one treed. The coon dog will keep the coon in the tree until its master arrives. God the Spirit, in a sense of speaking, treed Zacchaeus and caused him to remain treed until the Master arrived on the scene.

The Lord's Sheep Are Found In Strange Places

You will recall that our Lord found one of His sheep at Jacob's well. He found another at the Pool of Bethesda, and here, in the text which is before us, He found one up in a tree. The tree being that of a sycamore.

It would be interesting to know the history of the subject sycamore tree. We, however, can be sure that our Lord caused the subject tree to have been planted in the exact spot that it was lo-

cated. Perhaps our Lord caused one of His birds to drop a seed in that exact location, or perhaps His wind blew the seed there.

Jesus Passed Through Jericho

We, in verse one of the subject text, read that "Jesus passed through Jericho." There is something to be gleaned from the Lord's action, since all Scripture is profitable for us. We, no doubt, are to glean from our Lord's action, that He did not stop in Jericho, because He had an appointment, in a sense of speaking, at 2 p.m. with Zacchaeus whom He would find in the sycamore tree. Jesus, when arriving under the sycamore tree, looked up and saw a little short fellow there on a limb. Jesus proceeded to call Zacchaeus by name and asked him to "make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house." Some may wonder how it was that Jesus knew the name of Zacchaeus and how did He know that he was up in that particular tree. There, after all, were many people in the area. Let me add that Jesus knew the name of Zacchaeus from eternity past. We, in fact, read from Ephesians 1:4, that Zacchaeus was chosen to be a recipient of God's marvellous grace, even before God laid the foundation for the earth.

The Master Calls His Sheep By Name

Jesus, when admonishing Zacchaeus to come down from the sycamore tree, called Zacchaeus, His sheep, by name. Zacchaeus was quick to respond to his Master's call, since our text informs us that "...he made haste, and came down...." This fact bears out the following passage of Scripture: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

Jesus' statement to Zacchaeus was "...I must abide at thy house." Why was it that Jesus desired to abide at the house of this chief of sinners? It was because this chief of sinners was now a son of God. He, in fact, had been adopted into the family of God and was now a brother of our Lord. John, in fact, states: "Now are we the sons of God...." Jesus, then, by visiting the home of Zacchaeus, was visiting the home of His adopted brother. Zacchaeus, of course, at a later date, (Continued on Page 8)

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

By Jack Whitt

"Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). This is good advice to the Christian. In fact, it is good advice to the non-Christian, if only to make him consider first God's Word to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31) then his affections on things above would come more readily.

Likely most of us could concentrate more on setting our thoughts and affections on heavenly things. In reality, setting our thoughts on things above should come easy to all who are truly born again. Think about it! Had it not been for God's love and mercy in saving and giving us life eternal through Jesus Christ, our outlook for the future would be hopeless. Our hopes, desires and affections were changed when once the Holy Spirit revealed Christ and a new life began.

What should our minds be occupied with? Solomon, the wisest of men, may help to answer this question: "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established" (Prov. 16:3). We may see from this verse how each of us can promote the unity of spirit and mind as we become more committed to the Lord. The mind must be occupied with something be it good or bad. We have the privilege to choose our thoughts. To a large degree, we may choose to be happy or sad. Whatever we feed into our minds produces a like disposition. Again Solomon says "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). The only real and lasting resource to our happiness and peace of mind is found in God's Word, and this only to the Christian who is committed to God and not to the things of this earth.

Say, my friend, what's been on your mind lately?

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DETAILS

(Continued from Page 1)

any more. Before God was quite finished asking Job questions, the patriarch put his hand to his mouth and refused to speak any more because he realized that he had been too hasty. Like Job, we need to assume the posture of man putting his hand to his mouth and confessing, "Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer, yea, twice; but I will proceed no further" (Job 41:4, 5). Instead we find ourselves too ready to question God's sovereignty and his authority to rule in a number of areas.

We Question God's Rule in Our Lives

We often ask, "Why me, Lord?" when troubles seem to come our way. It is interesting that we don't seem to be able to apply the lessons of life in our youth to the experiences of our adult lives. When a coach has a number of players on a team, he is unable to devote an equal amount of attention to all of them. Instead, he concentrates on those players who show the most drive and ability and devotes little attention to those with little ambition or talent. But what is the nature of the attention? Does a coach take his best players and give them the softest seats, the easiest practices, the simplest drills? Of course not. Those players who are the most able are the players who will end up working the hardest and suffering the most at the coach's hand. Yet when it comes time for the game, it is those same players who will receive the playing time and the glory. The whole team may win the championship, but it is the players who suffered the greatest hardship in practice who will enjoy the victory the most.

The Christian life is no different. It is the tree that is producing fruit that gets the most pruning. It is the child that is most loved that gets the corrective attention from the father. These forms of attention may seem severe, but they are exactly the kinds of things we need in order to become the most productive Christians God can raise. When we are "suffering" at God's hand and we find ourselves asking the question "Why me, Lord?" we need to answer it with

the response, "Why not?" Who better able to determine our welfare than God himself? God's attention to detail and concern with events that have no direct influence on human lives forces us to see that if He cares so much for things of small value like brittle starfish at the bottom of the sea, how much more will He care for us whom he bought with the precious blood of His Son Jesus Christ? If God knows the number of the hairs of our head, He certainly knows the details of the difficulties of the lives we live. If He is involved with caring for the welfare of bacteria, then He certainly cares about the welfare of His children.

We Question God's Rule in Other's Lives

One of the most baffling features of the Christian life is that there are a lot of believers both in the ministry and in the pew who feel that they have a fairly good handle on how other people ought to be living their lives. It seems a small step from obvious applications of God's moral law in the lives of sinners to making minute judgments about the will of God in the way other people reach decisions or act on convictions. Jesus Christ spent a great deal of time in the sermon on the mount and in His rebukes of the Pharisees correcting the harsh criticism and merciless judgmentalism of those who would become critics of others. The reason for such preaching was to prevent the emergence of hypocrisy in His children and to castigate it in the lives of those who were not His children. Today, we continue to face this challenge. It is necessary for us to recognize that our purpose in life is not to straighten everybody else but to make sure that we are in conformity to Jesus Christ ourselves. If our job were to straighten everybody else out, then everybody else's job must be to straighten us out!

Job's three friends all had the answers to Job's problems in life. He needed to get the sin out of his life, he needed to get close to God, he needed to straighten out his attitude and a host of other pearls of wisdom that are commonly offered up by well meaning Christians today. God said of Eliphaz and the others, "My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath" (Job 42:7). It is a stern rebuke to those of us who

freely dispense advice that Job was the one who was right and the friends were the ones who were wrong in the eyes of God. A careful reading of the words of Job indicate that he said some harsh things about God, yet he is praised for speaking that which is right while the friends who seemingly come to the defense of God are chastised for being wrong. We need to realize that well intentioned advice and undeserved rebuke are worse than not saying anything at all. We need to weigh our words carefully before sending them out. We also need to evaluate the place of suffering in our lives and the lives of others in relation to our preaching of the nature and workings of God.

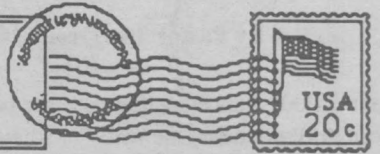
Another point to note about the experience of Job is that his friends assembled in order to help out Job who was "less fortunate" than them. Actually they were the ones who were the less fortunate because of the lack of wisdom found in their words. Job, who was suffering at the hands of Satan and by the permission of God, was the one who was actually more fortunate because the trial served to increase his faith. God told the friends that Job was the teacher and they were the ones who needed to learn the lesson, not the other way around as they supposed. How often do we find ourselves in a position where we were attempting to help someone whom we thought was less fortunate only to find that we are the ones being helped. Nursing home ministries and numerous hospital visits will serve to convince even the most immature Christian that the world's standards of comfort and our common perceptions of how things "ought to be" don't explain the majority of experiences in the lives of God's people. When growing Christians discover that there is more to the Christian experience than what is offered by the health and wealth gospels of televangelists and popular authors, it's as foreign to them as the concept of whole communities of organisms huddled around thermal vents at the bottom of the ocean. It's an undiscovered world that has just opened up to them.

We Question God's Rule in the Church

It seems that every one knows what is wrong with the church. There is a very clear consensus that things are not going right. People aren't being saved, there

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Letters to the Editor



Dear Brother,

The Beverly Manor Baptist Church of 209 Vohland Street in Washington, Illinois is having a Bible conference on April 3-5, 1995. All are invited to attend. For more information, call the church office at (309) 745-8927.

In Christ,

Pastor Michael McCoskey

Dear Brother Helton,

Thanks for placing our conference notice in your paper. The Lord truly blessed with great crowds, great singing, and great preaching. We had over 345 people on Friday night. We also had 64 Baptist preachers in attendance but the greatest blessing was to see the Lord call 4 men to preach, 2 people added by letter, and 13 people came for prayer and rededication! To God be the glory!

I have some other news to share with you and all who receive your wonderful paper. Our church, the First Baptist Church of Alexandria, Kentucky, has stepped out by faith to expand our radio ministry. We have purchased 30 minutes of radio time every Sunday night from 12:00 to 12:30 a.m. on WSAI. This is a 50,000 watt station that covers over 28 states from Canada to Cuba, from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean.

Our program, The Independent Baptist Hour, can be heard Monday through Friday at 10:30 a.m. and Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m. on WIOK 107.5 FM in Falmouth, KY and Monday through Friday at 1:30 p.m. on WCGW 770 AM in Lexington, KY. We are also on cable television in Lexington, KY every Monday and Tuesday evenings on channel 6 and in Boone, Kenton, and Campbell counties of Northern Kentucky we can be seen every Tuesday and Thursday evening at 8:00 p.m. on channel 17.

If any church would like to help in this mission work of preaching the Gospel to one third of the nation on this powerful station, it would be greatly appreciated. Support can be sent to the First Baptist Church, 104 Washington Street, Alexandria, Kentucky 41001.

Please pray for us and with us that we can preach the Gospel of sovereign grace to many more people this new year of 1995 by the means of radio and television.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Carl Morton

THE IMPORTANCE OF POSSESSING THE MIND OF CHRIST

By Edwin B. Fountain, Member of Landmark Baptist Church, Lyons, Georgia

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

All true Christianity must be connected with Christ. He revealed its doctrines, He exhibited its principles, and He provided its blessings, these are all seen as promises in His Word, promises that are kept, promises that are not made in order to manipulate. I have even known ministers of the Gospel made promises they have no intention of keeping.

Not only did Christ do those things mentioned above but where Christianity is concerned He enforced its duties and always manifested its spirit. The Christian, then, is one who believes these doctrines, he is influenced by the principles, and enjoys these blessings, he discharges these duties and he demonstrates this spirit. This is recognized fully in the text, where the apostle says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Meditate sometimes on all the things that might have been in the mind of our Lord as He walked the roads and pathways of the land He gave to Abraham or as He walked the streets of Jerusalem.

What is that mind which was in Christ Jesus? It was a mind distinguished for spiritual knowledge.

He was the true light. He knew all things. We use the word omniscient when teaching this doctrine. But consider just what we are saying, for to say that He knows all things means that He knows the beginning and the end as well as what goes on in between. He knows all about you and all about me. He knows all.

In Him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Not only were the treasures hid in Him but He was all wisdom and all knowledge, He was the Word, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:1-4).

His was a mind of holy obedience. He loved God's law. It was His delight and should be ours. In Psalm 1:2 we read "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." His every desire, purpose and thought was in pleasing conformity to the spotless mind of God.

His was a mind of pure and fervent devotion.

The entire life of our Lord on this earth was made conspicuous by this, as ours should be. He held the closest possible communion with the Father. He spent whole nights in prayer. All of His miracles and discourses were connected with prayer; contact with the Father. It was displayed when He was baptized, when He was tempted, when He was transfigured, when in the garden and when He was on the cross. Devotion was the element in which He lived, and in which He died.

His was a mind of the greatest possible self-abasement.

Though He was the Creator, one with God, blessed forever, yet He gave Himself to the work appointed to Him by the Father and became a servant, the very servant of servants. With love He served His enemies. He served the world, the poorest and the most vile of men. He condescended to the lowest of offices. He washed the feet of the disciples, "...he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8).

His was a mind of constant energy and activity.

Work was His meat and drink. He was about His Father's business. His whole life here was to go about doing good. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). His whole ministry was one of constant engagements. He was absolutely faithful to His work, the work given Him by the Father. His work on this earth and His life on this earth terminated simultaneously.

Our Lord knew why He was here. He was aware not only of

His coming death but of all His sufferings. In Luke 12:50 He said "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

His mind was one of unexcelled benevolence, tenderness and pity.

It was because of the mercy represented by a mind with these attributes that He engaged in the redeeming work and what He began He finished. He was God and God does not, as men, go back on His promises and as far back as Genesis He had promised a Redeemer, a Saviour, the Messiah.

He loved mankind. He gave His life for their ransom, and thus manifested to the world a benevolence without parallel and beyond description. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10) and "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

His life was love embodied and exhibited. His words, His thoughts, His prayers, His miracles and His death all attest to the fact that His love is incomprehensible to us.

His was a mind of infinite patience.

He was never known to utter one murmuring word. He was prepared in Himself to accomplish all of His Father's will. He gave Himself willingly. He was "the Lamb of God" whom the High Priest and other priest searched out and found without spot or blemish and so He was worthy of sacrifice. He was examined as an actual lamb would have been examined before being accepted. God accepted His sacrifice.

These then are some of the features that distinguish the mind of Christ. This is the mind which should also be in all who are called by His name and profess Him as Lord and Saviour.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

A Woman's Touch

By Wendy Barkman



Widows (Part III) Little is Much When God is in It II Kings 4:1-7

This woman was a widow who has been married to a man who "did fear the Lord." Most authorities agree that her husband had been a disciple of Elisha. Many believe that her husband was Obadiah, the one who hid the prophets in a cave during Ahab's reign (I Kings 18:3-4). Though one did write that Obadiah was not a prophet, nor was he the son of a prophet, but a governor in the king's house. Whoever the man was, whatever he did, he had died and left a wife and two sons. There were debts to pay and nothing to pay them with. Her husband had not been slothful, nor had he been a wicked man, but he had been a fearful servant of the Lord. He had not pleased the king and suffered poverty because of it. And now, one of the creditors was threatening to take this woman's precious sons, making them his very own slaves, or selling them to others (See Ex. 21:2, 7; Lev. 25:39; Neh. 5:5; Amos 2:6, 8:6; Matt. 18:25). Also cuneiform records (Egyptian writings) attest to this practice of buying and selling those in debt into slavery. Her cry, her plea, her complaint, went out to Elisha. She had nothing in her house, but a single pot of oil. Doing as Elisha had commanded her, she borrowed empty vessels (pots, jars, etc.) from her neighbors. She entered her house, along with her two sons, and shut the door behind them. They filled the empty vessels with oil, enough to pay all of her debts and then some. Imagine the look on the face of her enemy, the creditor, as she handed him the payment, in full. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies...my cup runneth over" (Ps. 23:5). The one pot of oil had filled all of the empty vessels. There was plenty of profit left over, from the sale of the oil, for the woman and her sons to live. Sound familiar? Remember how Jesus multiplied the loaves of bread and the fishes to feed four thousand hungry men, women, and children, then doing the same to feed five thousand, and there was food left over? (Matt. 14:14-21, 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:5-14). Trust the Lord with your "little", whether it be your talents, your abilities, or if it means your possessions are few, or your bank account meager.

FORUM

(Continued from Page 4)

HOBBS

fact the way that this entire passage speaks it is obvious that they did vote.

In your question you ask a hypothetical question: "what if" she felt differently than her husband. Too many people base their beliefs and actions on "what if's." We are to take our doctrines and practices on what saith the Lord and not on "what if." In answer to your question, if they both are seeking the will of the Lord in the matter, there will be no difference. If one of them is not in the will of the Lord there will be differences, but they must both vote as they feel led by the Lord. The majority of the church will rule.

LENEGAR

What if a wife has a different opinion, or vote from her husband? Then she has a different opinion and she must vote according to her conscience. We vote our consciences, not what others think or desire. Although it happens, one is not obligated to vote in family blocks because the head of the family dictates the vote. We are to vote as we feel the Lord would have us to vote. What we feel after we have prayed and considered a thing is what is important, not what others want us to do. Whatever is to be voted or decided upon should be pre-

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PRAY FOR YOUR PASTOR TODAY!

FORUM

(Continued from Page 7)

LENEGAR (Cont.)

sented in a way that will be understood from the youngest to the oldest member. Each member then votes as he or she feels the Lord is directing them.

SLEDD

up in a business session to make a motion is taking some degree of authority. That is the nature of business. A woman according to Scripture would be prohibited from speaking in the church meeting relating to business matters to the attention of the pastor, elders, or deacons. This should be done. I feel it is appropriate for women to write up their motion and give it to the moderator. Some might disagree with me on this.

Our practice has been to have men's meetings the week prior to our monthly business session. Usually if a woman has a matter she wants addressed we bring it up in this men's meeting. I find this works best for us! I print up the matters we discuss and post them for the benefit of our ladies to examine. This gives everyone the opportunity to discuss church matters. I feel it both honors the Scriptural injunctions and the respect of our women in the church.

WHITT

church loving people seeking always to please Jesus their Head.

To be a member of any true church it must be reasoned that every such member, be they male or female, has equal responsibility to help govern the church. How else could it be considered congregational rule? There should never be, as some so-called Baptist churches have done, the allowing of pastoral or deacon dictatorship. I believe, however, that the pastor, as the spiritual leader, may present to the church his opinion or desires and these should be prayerfully considered by the membership.

The problem, likely in most churches, is that some, though members, are unsaved and therefore are incapable of spiritual reason. This fact, along with some, even though saved yet are backslidden or neglect prayer and may be just as incapable of voting

on some issues. This may often be the cause for division and conflict during church business meetings. In any case when a church majority has ruled on a matter it should be settled without dispute, conceding to keep the unity of the spirit and the will of the Lord.

I have known of churches who forbid women to vote and exercise pastoral authority. The expected results have been evident: no spiritual growth and lack of zeal in doing the Lord's work.

As to the matter of wife and husband differing on a church matter. This is where the issue should be discussed at home if possible, but if not, there still should be no problem if both rely on seeking the will of God with an unprejudiced attitude as they cast their lots.

ZACCHAEUS

(Continued from Page 5)

would go home to be with Jesus in a land where he would never grow old, or suffer any adversities.

Zacchaeus Made Haste and Came Down

The phrase "made haste" implies that Zacchaeus probably grabbed a limb of the sycamore tree and quickly swung himself to the ground. He, after swinging down to the ground, received the Lord joyfully. His quick exit from the sycamore tree, then, was obviously motivated from his great joy to be by the side of his Lord.

Jesus Visited The Home of the Chief of Sinners

There was a multitude of people following Jesus during the subject day which is before us. The multitude, in fact, was so large that Zacchaeus, as our text states, was not able to see Jesus because of the "press" and because of his being "little of stature." Jesus, then, had a multitude of people to choose from relative to whose home He would visit. He, however, chose the home of Zacchaeus as the place in which He would visit. You will recall that the decision made by Jesus caused the wrath of the crowd to be upon Him. The crowd, in fact, said: "And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner" (Luke 19:7).

Zacchaeus was not only filthy in the eyes of God, but he was also filthy in the eyes of the people. He, in fact, was an elected sheep

that had become very dirty in that he, through Adam, was totally depraved. The people, however, were not able to see that he, after being washed in the blood of the Lamb, was in the eyes of God, as white as the driven snow. His sins, in fact, had all been cast into the depths of the sea, never to be remembered again. God, in fact, has said: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

Zacchaeus, the prodigal, had returned home, and Jesus would visit his home and dine with him.

The Response of Zacchaeus

Zacchaeus, by his response to Jesus, showed by his action that he believed Jesus to be his Lord and Saviour. Zacchaeus, in fact, called Jesus, "Lord." It is not likely that any of those who murmured, would have called Jesus, Lord. Zacchaeus, then, was a changed man. He, in fact, who had robbed the poor, was now willing to return one half of those goods. He stated further that he would return fourfold to anyone he had robbed by way of false accusations. The exact words of Zacchaeus are as follows: "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and, if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8).

Zacchaeus' strong to desire to see Jesus and the action taken to fulfill that desire, showed that Jesus, as far as he was concerned, was much, much more than a mere man. We may say that Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus because of his having been made a new creature in Christ. The following passage of Scripture explains the desire and action exercised by Zacchaeus.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

God's Children are Known By Their Fruits

Zacchaeus, in essence, said to his Lord: "Lord, not my will, but thine be done. Mold me and make me after thy will. See if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."

Zacchaeus' Salvation Not Dependent on His Works

The fact that Zacchaeus made certain promises of good works added nothing to the great salvation which was already his. He, in fact, already possessed eternal life, or he would not have responded as he did. The following passages of Scripture point plainly to the fact that salvation from an eternal hell is by way of God's marvellous grace.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

DETAILS

(Continued from Page 6)

haven't been any baptisms in a long time, the Sunday School program is flagging, the spirit seems to have gone out of the church. All of these are problems associated with many churches if not the one you're in. Many times what is wrong with the church becomes a point of discussion whether at business meetings, fellowships of simply when people just get together to talk. Sometimes a discussion of the problems becomes a point of dissension, especially when solutions are being discussed. We certainly don't want to be seen as being soft on separation or even the least bit liberal so we sometimes make ourselves obnoxious to one another in an attempt to appear more sanctified and holy than any one else.

Instead of focusing on the problem, we need to focus on solutions. If the youth are being neglected, don't just complain and whine about it, become a youth leader. You may not have the experience but it will certainly keep you from complaining that no one is doing anything about it. If there is a lack of regular visitation, don't complain to the pastor that nobody shows up for visitation, just start visiting people. Certainly we all know how to pay a visit on friends. If there isn't any power in the church because of a lack of prayer, don't gripe about all the people who don't pray, just start praying. If there is no enthusiasm, get enthusiastic about something, if there is no fellowship then start inviting

people over to your house. Whatever the problem, either become the solution yourself or encourage someone else who is more talented to become the solution. Remember, you might not be the answer to prayer. Don't rest until God's will is done. It is also important to note that if no one in the church is doing anything, you are included in that group because you're not doing anything either and that makes you part of the problem. Don't just stand there, do something.

It is important for us to take note of a number of things. First, if God is concerned with the details of life at the bottom of the ocean where the sun never shines, then He is most certainly concerned with the affairs of His children. Second, God will not be put on trial by men who feel that they know more about what is in the world than the God who created it. That is true in our personal lives, our social contacts and our church participation. The challenge we face today is to make sure we don't put ourselves in the same position Job did. God does not expect to take the place of jury and executioner in putting Him on trial and He is not likely to tolerate for long. Third, make sure that we are not the cause of the source of problems in our lives and the lives of others. We should become the solution or at least part of the solution that makes a church function together in peace and harmony. If that means being quiet when we feel like giving inappropriate advice, so be it. It means stepping out in faith to see to the needs of a new minister so be that as well. Whatever the task is that God has assigned to us, we need to be ready to jump in and fill the need.

Be careful not to judge someone too quickly "...For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" I Samuel 16:7

