

Watch out for temptation, the more you see of it the better it looks

"...Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"—2 Corinthians 3:17

The Baptist Examiner

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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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THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

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



"And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?" (Luke 6:39).

Who are the Blind?

The most intellectual professor at a university could fall among those who are considered by our Father as being blind. He or she, in other words, is blind because of their being blind to spiritual things. I know a man who could not read or write, yet he was not blind relative to the truths as they are set forth in God's Word. It is interesting to note the man who is described in John 9:25. It is said of this man's testimony: **"...One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."**

A Carnal Person Cannot Rise Above that which is Carnal

The natural, or carnal person, aside from God the Spirit, cannot understand that which is spiritual. It is an impossibility, because the spiritual and the carnal are as far apart as is black and white. Paul, when referring to such, made the following statement: **"For what knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God...But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are**

spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:11, 14).

I, of course, am not saying that the natural person cannot memorize much of the Scriptures. My reference, in fact, is to wisdom rather than knowledge. Wisdom, after all, is the ability to use one's knowledge wisely. A person, for example, may have knowledge of all the parts to an automobile. The same person, however, may not have the wisdom to make a workable machine from those various parts. A person, in like manner, may have an abundant knowledge of the Scriptures and still not be able to rightly divide the Scriptures.

There are Many Blind Pastors in the World

There are many pastors—pastors who have a great knowledge of the Scriptures—who are blind leaders of their flocks. These pastors, even though they have an abundance of knowledge, are not able to rightly divide the Word of God. John, in fact, said: **"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false**

prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). I'm sure that Satan can quote the Bible from cover to cover. The same, to a point, can be said relative to his workers.

The Pharisees were Blind Leaders of the Blind

There were numerous Pharisees in our Lord's day who were blind leaders of the blind. This was true even though they had a great knowledge of the Scriptures. The fact remained, however, that both the leaders and their followers fell into the ditch. We, today, don't categorize blind leaders under the names of Pharisees or Sadducees, but the fact remains that there are many blind leaders out there under other names, even under the name Baptist. It must be remembered that those who are blind relative to the truths which we teach here, may also place us under the category of Pharisees, that is, blind leaders of the blind.

One person, in a letter to me said, "...you must be the most rank heretic in the world today...you must be a lonely man without any

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Eugene P. Helton

THE BLIND SCHOOL

Editor's Note: Please read the excellent article in this edition of The Baptist Examiner, entitled, "The Blind Leading the Blind" by Pastor Willard Willis. There is a solution for spiritual blindness. The Lord's true churches have the Good News of healing for spiritual blindness. One might say the the Lord's churches are "Blind Schools."



FAITH IN CHRIST (PART THREE)

By Edward H. Overbey, Professor at Lexington Baptist College

IV. Faith In Christ Is Caused by the Spirit and the Gospel A. John 3:5

Faith in Christ is caused by the Spirit and the gospel. The beginning of faith or the beginning life or regeneration is caused by the Spirit and the gospel. Without the gospel or message of salvation by Jesus Christ coming to a person and the Spirit doing a work within the person, that person will not believe or be regenerated. The Spirit uses the gospel to regenerate the soul and produce repentance and faith.

Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again by the Spirit. John 3:5 says, **"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."**

"Water" is symbolic of the Spirit at times (John 7:38-39). The Lord emphasizes the absolute necessity of being born by the Spirit by mentioning a symbolic term "water" that represents Him and then the actual term "Spirit." Water is used to bring life to dry ground when seed is planted. So, the Spirit brings spiritual life to a person when the seed of the gospel is sown in his heart. The word "and" in Greek can mean "even" and often does in the New Testament. John 3:5b can be translated, **"Except a man be born of water even of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."**

The Lord goes on to reinforce this truth by saying in John 3:6-8, **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not**



that I said unto thee; Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

B. A Logical Conclusion

In the previous two chapters we have seen that faith in Christ is life and the beginning of faith is regeneration. Since this is true the gospel must come to the person or he will not begin to have faith or be regenerated. Romans 10:17 says, **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing, by the word of God."** Romans 10:14b says, **"And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"** The message about Christ must come or a person will not believe. And, there is no regeneration until one believes and lives spiritually. The beginning of faith or regeneration is caused by the Spirit empowering the message of Jesus Christ.

The Lord gave the command to preach to every creature, to go into all the world and witness concerning Christ because God is pleased to bring people to faith in Christ by the Spirit and message of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 1:8; I Cor. 1:21-24).

When a person receives new life his soul is purified. The blood of Christ is applied in the experience of regeneration. The blood of Christ is applied in the experience of regeneration. There is a cleansing or washing and a renewing. This is a two-fold work. Titus 3:5b brings this out. **"He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."** The Holy Ghost, that is, the Holy Spirit must do this work.

I Peter 1:22a reads, **"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obey-**

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Instead of letting their light shine, some people spend their time trying to put out the lights of others

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

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BLIND SCHOOL

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my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no stranger god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?"

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER

AUGUST 1, 1995

PAGE TWO

Editor's Update

By Pastor Eugene P. Helton, Editor

Greetings to you in the wonderful name of Jesus!

There is good news from the Calvary Baptist Church! We had a wonderful Spring revival meeting. The preaching was excellent and edifying. The singing was inspirational. The fellowship was warm and sweet. The Holy Spirit of God was in our midst from beginning to end.

I wish to publicly praise our great God for a great out pouring of His Holy Spirit upon the Calvary Baptist Church.

I wish to publicly my gratitude to God's servants who traveled great distances to minister to us during our meeting. Thanks to the gospel singing group "Ministry." The preaching and singing was so needed and so well received. Thanks to:

Steve Kittle, the pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Fairborn, Ohio

Jonathan Gordon, the pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio

David Pitman, the pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Together they are the gospel trio "Ministry." They can be contacted by calling Pastor Steve Kittle at (513) 878-9992 or (513) 754-0500.

Thanks also to Jennie Shore Watkins, the wife of Pastor Ronnie Watkins of the East Corbin Baptist Church in Corbin, Kentucky. Jennie sang so beautifully for us during our Saturday afternoon singspiration and fellowship service.

Many others sang and provided music for the glory of our Lord. Our sincere thanks goes out to each of these.

We had many visitors during our meeting. One of the visitors returned on Sunday morning, June 11th, at which time he consented to preach for us. Brother Paul Kirkman, long time pastor of Grace Baptist Church, in Fairborn, Ohio, and now pastor emeritus preached on "The Electing Love of God." What a great message by one of God's great preachers.

As we close this writing, our prayer is that God will bless you and your church as you faithfully serve Him.

(Isaiah 43:8-13).

Most states have a blind school. Many blind young people find help in these schools. They learn how to live and cope in this world with their blindness; but, they still go away blind. In a sense, the Lord's true churches are blind schools. We can bring in the blind and some of them will go away seeing.

God's People, in Church Capacity, Identified (Isa. 43:10)

We see in Isaiah 43:10 the Lord identifying His people and instructing them to prepare to be His servants and His witnesses.

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." Everyone saved by the grace of God should be a witness for the Lord. Those saved and members of His churches have been given clear instructions to be missionary and evangelistic.

"Ye are...my servant." No one was ever saved by God not to be a servant. Everyone has a service to

perform and a place to perform that service. If you're saved and not serving the Lord, then I must ask you, why not? Where are your works that prove you have experienced true saving faith?

"Ye are...to know me." We have been chosen to be servants of God and witnesses for God and we are to know Him and know about Him. If we do not study to know about Him, our witness will be weak and ineffective.

"Ye are...to believe me." Some do not want to believe many things in God's Word. If God said it, then it's true. We must believe everything God has given to us in His Word. We must believe simply because He said it.

"Ye are...to understand me." We are to understand the Word of God and the will of God. This is accomplished by yielding to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to guide us unto all truth.

The Commission Identified (Isa. 43:8)

The Lord clearly tells His servants what to do in regard to those who are spiritually blind.

"Bring forth the blind people that have eyes." The message is simple; the message is clear. These people have physical eyes, but are spiritually blind. We are to bring them forth. This is just another way of stating the Great Commission.

"Let the people be assembled" (Isa. 43:9). The wonder of the Lord's Church; the assembly; the congregation. The local visible body of called out baptized believers. We're to invite the blind to come to the place of the assembly of the saints of the local community.

"Tell them that I am God" (Isa. 43:10, 12). Our message is a message of God. To know God is to speak of God. How the world needs to hear of the true God and His plan to save a portion of fallen man.

"Tell them I can and will save" (Isa. 43:11). This is what we're to be witnesses to; the great salvation to be found only in the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on Calvary's cross.

"Tell them I will keep them saved" (Isa. 43:13). The great doctrine of salvation first and then the great doctrine of eternal security. What a great message we have! What a great Lord we have!

What Shall We Do When We Bring in the Blind?

We shall preach to them from God's Word. "Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way..." (Jer. 36:6-7). Speak God's Word in God's house and "It may be they will...return every one from his evil way..."

We shall be eyes to the blind. "I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame" (Job 29:15). The Ethiopian eunuch was asked by Philip, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30). The eunuch replied, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:31). "Philip opened his mouth...and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). Philip was eyes to the blind Ethiopian eunuch. We too should be eyes to

the blind.

The Lord will open the eyes of some of the blind. Just as the Lord opened the blind eyes of the Ethiopian eunuch at the preaching about Jesus, he will do the same for others. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind..." (Ps. 146:8). "...They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God" (Isa. 35:2). "...He will come and save you" (Isa. 35:4); "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened" (Isa. 35:5). "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them" (Isa. 42:16).

Yes, the Lord said: Bring forth the blind. Preach to them the Word. Be their eyes for awhile, then He will open the eyes of many. "...Many that were blind he gave sight" (Luke 7:21). "...One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isa. 9:2).

Is your church a blind school?

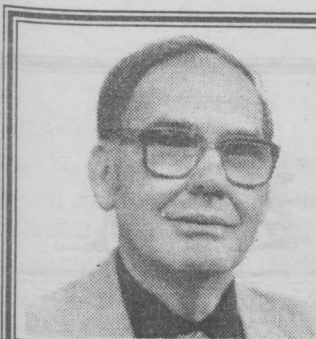
The great essential of the missionary is that he remains true to the call of God, and realizes that his one purpose is to disciple men and women to Jesus.

The key to missionary devotion means being attached to nothing and no one saving Our Lord Himself, not being detached from things externally.

The basis of missionary appeals is the authority of Jesus Christ, not the needs of the heathen. Go on the revelation of My sovereignty: teach and preach out of a living experience of Me.

By:

Oswald Chambers



The Baptist Examiner Bible Study Lesson

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

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Fellowship with God Genesis 18:1-21

Between chapter 16 and chapter 17, there is a time period of 13 years. Abraham heeding the advice of Sarah had attempted to help God in keeping His promise. As a result Abraham was out of fellowship with God for this long period of time. But when God appears unto Abraham and again after telling Abraham that He needed no help, **"I am the Almighty God,"** He then tells Abraham he is to **"walk before me and be thou perfect."** Again God reminds Abraham of the covenant that He has made with him and his seed. Here, for the first time Abraham is told that Sarah is to be the mother of the promised seed. As a seal or sign of this covenant Abraham is to circumcise all the males of his house. Abraham lost no time in carrying out this command. **"In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son."** His obedience to the command was complete obedience, **"And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him."**

"And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day" (18:1). Abraham's obedience to God's commands brought him back into fellowship with God. The apostle John wrote that if we were to have fellowship with God we must **"walk in the light as he is in the light"** (I John 1:6-7). Abraham was now walking in the light and now he can have fellowship with

his Lord.

Abraham, after complying with God's command was sitting in the tent door. No doubt he was praying and meditating on what had just taken place and looking forward to the coming of the promised son. While sitting there he had another appearance from God. This time it was in the form of a man accompanied by two angels. Suddenly Abraham looked up and saw three men whom he in some way sensed they were special visitors from God. He immediately ran to meet them and **"bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant."** He urged them to rest under the tree while he had water brought to wash their feet. He hastened into the tent and told Sarah to quickly make cakes for the three strangers. He ran to the herd and obtained a calf and had it dressed. **"And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat."**

Then came the question, **"Where is Sarah thy wife?"** showing that the strangers knew her name and the words which followed left no doubt in Abraham's mind Who was speaking. **"And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son."** This announcement of the near birth of a son was received by Sarah with astonishment of unbelief. How on earth could this

happen? **"Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"** When Abraham was told that Sarah would bear him a son he laughed (17:17). It was a laugh of faith and joy, but Sarah's laugh was a laugh of unbelief and she was taught a severe lesson. First, she was reminded of the Lord's power. **"Is any thing too hard for the Lord?"** And when she denied her laughter she was reminded of God's knowledge **"Nay; but thou didst laugh."**

Abraham a Friend of God

A friend is one with whom one can walk in close fellowship and share thoughts and secrets with. Christ told His disciples that **"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you"** (John 15:14-15). In James 2:23, Abraham is said to be **"the friend of God."** Genesis 18:16-21 show this to be true. As Abraham accompanied the three visitors on their way as they left his hospitality and as they walked and looked toward Sodom, the Lord said **"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?"** Abraham as God's friend had a right to know what was to be done. The reasons God revealed His purpose unto Abraham was because he was to be the means of blessing to all nations (v. 18), therefore, it was necessary for him to know the reason for the destruc-

tion of the two cities—Sodom and Gomorrah. Also because of this judgment upon these two cities Abraham could use this as a lesson in teaching his children and those of his household. **"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord"** (v. 19). God now tells Abraham, his friend of the terrible sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, **"the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know"** (vv. 20-21). The sin of which these cities were guilty is described in Romans 1. It is stated that those who commit such are without excuse, **"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened"** (Rom. 1:21). These cities had seen the power of God demonstrated in their deliverance by the divinely empowered Abraham. They had heard the testimony of Melchizedek. Yes, they were **"without excuse."** Is there not a lesson here for America who is fast following down the same road that led Sodom and Gomorrah into destruction? How long will it be until God brings down judgment upon this nation as He did those cities? **"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"** (Ps. 9:17).

FAITH (PART 3)

(Continued from Page 2)

ing the truth through the Spirit." One aspect of regeneration is referred to by the words, **"Ye have purified your souls."** This is caused by the Spirit and the gospel. The gospel is spoken of as "the truth" here. Obeying the truth is believing on Christ to save your soul. To do otherwise for salvation is disobedience.

In the next verse the Bible teaches us that the gospel must come to a person before he will be born again. **"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"** (I Pet. 1:23). The message of the Bible is likened to seed which when planted and empowered by the Spirit which is likened to water will produce life, that is, belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour. Jesus likened the message of the Bible to seed in the parable of the sower. New life or regeneration didn't come in the parable until the gospel seed was planted (Matt. 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-29; Luke 8:4-15).

Jesus is called "the Word of God" in a few places in the New Testament for He is the subject of the Bible and reveals God and His salvation. One cannot know God but through Jesus Christ and one cannot know Jesus Christ today but through the Bible. In this verse, "the word of God" is referring to the Bible which is about Jesus Christ. The context makes this clear. Verse 25 explains what is meant by the Word ("logos") of God in verse 23. The "word" in verse 25 is "rhema" in the Greek. They ("logos" and "rhema") are synonyms when referring to the written word.

Since "rhema" is used it is obvious it is the written word that believers should preach to every creature which of course is about our Saviour Jesus Christ. But this verse goes on to be even more specific that it is the written word when it says, **"And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you"** (I Pet. 1:25b).

C. Acts 16: 30b-31a

The jailor at Philippi after hearing Paul and Silas asked, **"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"** The answer was **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou**

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AUGUST 1, 1995

PAGE THREE

My life is drawing near the end
My race is almost run
But I'll look to God and trust in Him
For my faith is in His Son.
Soon the pearly gates will open wide
And I'll be welcomed in
To see Him in whom I now confide
Who saved me from my sin.
If I could live my life again
Many changes I would make

To avoid the scars left by sin
Even the forgiven for his sake.
The love of Christ is greater far
Than man can ever think
It reaches from earth to the stars
And can reach us in a wink.
What a wonderful thing it is to know
Your sins are all forgiven
When all has gone except your soul
It will have a home in heaven.

By: James Perdue, Largo, FL

Some people make enemies instead of friends because it's less trouble



The Baptist Examiner Pulpit Forum

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



Please explain the time element concerning Ezekiel's temple. Is it the same one mentioned in Revelation 11 or will it coexist with the New Jerusalem? Who is the prince of Ezekiel's temple?

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I believe that a careful study of the two temples will show that they are two different temples, one in the present Jerusalem and the other in the New Jerusalem. Each city is called the holy city (Neh. 11:1, 18; Isa. 52:1; Matt. 27:52-53).

In John's vision, he was told to measure the temple, **"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months"** (Rev. 11:2). The statement **"the holy city shall be tread under foot forty and two months"** by the Gentiles lets us know that the time this is to be done is in the middle of the seven years of tribulation. In Luke 21:24, we are told that **"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."** The times of the Gentiles will come to an end at the battle of Armageddon which takes place at the close of the seven years of tribulation.

From this we see that the temple in Revelation 11 is the temple which is to be built by the Jews during the seven years of tribulation.

A study of Ezekiel's vision from the mountain top, beginning with Ezekiel 40, will show that this is a prophecy concerning the New Jerusalem, as it will be in the millennium. A large portion of Ezekiel's prophecy is devoted to the temple, its structure, the priesthood, and its ministry.

There is much speculation as to the interpretation of these chapters. I believe they are a prophecy

that is to be fulfilled during the Millennium when Israel will be restored by the Lord and the temple will be built and temple worship of the King will be established. It would seem that Ezekiel's temple is a literal future sanctuary to be constructed in Jerusalem during the Millennium.

It is unclear as to whom "the prince" of Ezekiel's prophecy refers. Some believe it is the Christ but in Ezekiel 45:22, it is said that the prince offers a sin offering for himself. This would rule out Christ as the prince. It would seem that the prince has a king-priest ministry under Christ the Ruler. Some believe it may be resurrected David.

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Before I begin, I must confess that the visions of Ezekiel are and have been a great mystery to me. I will give an answer but it will not be a scholarly answer. Perhaps the other writers will be more versed in this than I.

First, let me remind you that this is a vision given to Ezekiel when he had been in captivity for about 25 years. God was giving him a vision of heavenly things to encourage him. When we are at our lowest God speaks to us in some way to strengthen us. It was true when Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up (Isa. 6). It is true today, not by vision now that we have the completed Word, but by reminding us (or bringing to our remembrance) what God has said.

I'm inclined to think the temple was that mentioned in Revelation 11. (It could, however, be the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21, 22). But as I said I am inclined to believe that it is the temple of judgment. **"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the**

ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." Satan is cast out and great tribulation takes place. God was saying to Ezekiel, "see I'm on My throne, your captors will be dealt with." Obviously the prince is Jesus Christ.

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In the twentieth year of the captivity of Israel, Ezekiel was given a vision of a temple. The angel gives him a tour of this temple area, measuring with a measuring rod. This was a vision of the coming glory when Jehovah's worship would be re-established in the land. I feel this temple will be built during the millennium when Christ comes back to earth. In fact, Jesus Christ will build it Himself. Consider carefully the prophecy of Zechariah: **"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is THE BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, AND SHALL BUILD THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD. Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord, and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you; And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God."** Christ and possibly His bride will be involved in its construction. I believe this will be a future temple built in the last times. Chapter 47 confirms this: **"Afterward he brought me again into the door of the**

house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar." In reading the preceding verses one can see that these waters flow into a river that extends to the land of Arabia, bringing life and fertility to the barren areas of the dead sea. Such a river is unlike anything ever known in Judea or elsewhere in the world. To reach the Dead Sea it would have to run up hill, and how could it sweeten the waters of this sea when this sea has no outlet? Well, it could very well happen in a new, renovated world where Christ is ruling and reigning. Compare this with Joel 3:18: **"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim."** Compare this passage with that of Zechariah 14:8-9 **"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there be one Lord, and his name one."**

It is also evident that the Antichrist will have some kind of temple during the tribulation time. We can only surmise that Israel will build a temple again. The Scripture indicates that this final satanic world ruler will sit in this temple usurping the authority of our Sovereign Lord. **"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"** (II Thess. 2:4). There is much evidence that they are certainly planning to do so in the

future. They have already gathered the materials. I feel the only thing keeping them from coming (Continued on Page 8)

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I must confess this to be a hard question to answer with a lot of certainty. At least for me. Perhaps my fellow forum writers may give more insight on this question than myself. Ezekiel is given the vision in explicit detail of a future temple to be built (Ez. 40-46). Some may take this to be the great millennial temple that will be filled with God's glory during Christ's 1000 year reign on earth. However, since Christ has fulfilled the Old Testament types, the sacrifices, etc., then why should they be reinstituted and practiced. A mention of animal sacrifices for burnt offering and sin offering is made in Ezekiel 40:39. Ezekiel was told to reveal these plans for the temple to the people to make them ashamed of their sins and rebellions (43: 10, 11).

Some think that the temple is to be a memorial of the work of Christ to the Jews, similar to what the Lord's Supper is to the churches today. In any case, it is hard to imagine that saved Jews will want to exchange their close fellowship with Christ for ancient rituals that belonged under the law.

When God creates the new heaven and earth there will be no need for a temple. The new Jerusalem described by John (Rev. 21-22) will far surpass anything envisioned by Ezekiel.

The temple mentioned in Revelation 11 is connected to the time during the great tribulation period and therefore I do not believe it is the same as Ezekiel's temple. The prince mentioned in Ezekiel I believe to be Jesus Christ.

I AM A BAPTIST

By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe, First Baptist Church, Harrison, Ohio

I am part and parcel of the sect called Baptist. I was born in a Baptist home. I was raised with basic Baptist principles. I was taken regularly to a Baptist church, and I regularly heard Baptist talk.

But I am not a Baptist for that. I belong to the sect called Baptist because of the conviction which came to me after my conversion at the age of thirteen. When upon the visit of one of the pastors of our local church I was approached to consider my position as a lost sinner, I considered the Gospel that I had heard through the years and contemplated that I had never been brought to a personal choice of the matter of trusting Jesus Christ. The gospel was generic to me before this time, but this day the power of the Holy Spirit enslaved my person to the realms of heaven and to the beauty of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for my sins. My faith almost immediately came upon this contemplation, and I was born again into the kingdom of God.

My life after that was to include my submission to baptism, Baptist baptism as it was, because I was in a Baptist family. Even then I did not know all reasons for which I was baptized, but I submitted upon a general knowledge of the ordinance. As I grew older, I became more emotionally and intellectually involved in the religion of the Baptist church as it related to my personal life and as I visited regularly at my local church and heard the Bible proclaimed and explained time after time.

I remember as I grew older my interest deepened concerning the things of God and the Bible. I listened to Christian and pagan alike, on the airwaves of radio to hear something more interesting, more eloquent and deeper in the Word than what I had already heard. I also continued on a daily basis to read the pages of my own Bible.

When I grew to the age of 17, I graduated from high school (1962), and I attended business college in Lexington, Kentucky. I also attended Ashland Avenue Baptist Church there in that city. I also became a member of that church in a very short time after going to Lexington. While there, I heard about Lexington Baptist College and enrolled in some classes. There I learned more

about the Baptists. I learned of their apostolic lineage, their deeper doctrines, their evangelistic enthusiasm, their contribution to the world and especially to America. The more I learned, the more I loved the Baptists. But neither did this knowledge nor this love make me the Baptist that I am today.

In studying comparative theology, I began to weigh the doctrines of each proclaimed Christian religion. Each one has its own identity or practice of its theology. In comparing these to the Bible, I saw and nearly felt the weight of evidence press upon my soul that these people called Baptists are beyond question the group of Christians to which I wanted to belong.

I do not want to belong to a group (who may be called Christian or not) who baptize for salvation. I do not want to be part of a group who baptize babies or who attempt to have their salvation kept and preserved by communion or other religious rites. I do not want to associate with groups who believe that salvation is a part-time association with God and that salvation can be lost by God as quickly as it was supposedly gained by man.

I am part and parcel of a group of men, women, boys, and girls called Baptist. These are the saints unto which the faith was delivered once for all. These are the church which meet on the first day of the week to commemorate the resurrection of the Christ of God, Jesus of Nazareth. These are they whose shadows lengthen through the dark halls of history to the apostolic pages of the Holy Scriptures. These are they who have walked the dark hills of persecution and have been cast into the valley of the shadow of death till their blood has flowed as water down the hollows of time into the ocean of God's remembrance book. These are they who have been given and who solely hold to the veracity of church perpetuity, a truth which flows from Scripture as the effervescence of a soda drink and tickles the nose of the reader. These are they who are tenacious in their guarding of precious Bible doctrines which have been abandoned and maligned by pagan and Christian alike.

I am part and parcel of a group of people called Baptist because

of conviction of soul that supersedes compromise and laziness. Conviction supersedes convenience. Conviction supersedes luxury or money or fame or any earthly gain. Conviction through study of Scripture and through prayer and meditation can be replaced by nothing human or earthly or mundane or scientific or empirical or logical or governmental or societal. These hold nothing for me as a Christian and a Baptist.

I am a Baptist because of Scripture, because of God, because of His Holy Spirit, because of the love of these people whom Jesus loved and who love me. I am a Baptist through and through. My bones could not be more, my ears could not hear more, my eyes could not see more, my mind could not comprehend more, my meditations could not extend further than Baptist. We are the children of God by faith, and Baptists are people of faith, people of duty, people of dedication, people of honor and holiness, people of just practices and honorable judgments. They are people of home and happiness, of joy and enthusiasm, of worship and singing, of listening to the Word of God. They are people of giving and loving and helping and learning and caring. I am a Baptist. What else could I be but a Baptist?

I am a Baptist by God's grace. Grace is the crown jewel of God's salvation and His leading. The Lord adds unto the church those whom He will. I am a Baptist by His own loving, kind, undeserved, enduring, incomprehensible grace. Thank God for Baptists and for His grace and for a promise that His kind of church will never cease to exist on this earth until He comes with the clouds to take away all true saints from the surface of this earth and acclimate those believers to His beautiful and eternal heaven where we will once for all live together where shadows of history do not haunt our hearts, where martyrs stand clothed in white robes rather than on the moth-eaten and faded pages of dusty books on library shelves, and where Jesus will be seen as He is and not as we may think He is; and I will forevermore thank Him for having made me a Baptist on earth.

(Article taken from: The Baptist Defence, May/June 1995).

FAITH (PART 3)

(Continued from Page 3)

shall be saved" (Acts 16:30b-31a). In Titus 3:5b we are told "He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." These verses make it clear that regeneration and conversion come at the same time. God saves a person by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and a person is converted and saved when he hears the word and believes. One is not saved until the Spirit regenerates and one is not saved until one hears and believes the gospel message.

D. The Raising of Lazarus and the Dry Bones

The truth is seen in the raising of Lazarus. Jesus raised Lazarus and yet Lazarus heard and came forth. The power of Jesus enabled Lazarus to live and as soon as he had the power to live he heard the word of Jesus and came forth. There was no time between the giving of life by Jesus and the living of Lazarus by hearing the word of Jesus.

The living of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37 teaches the same great truth. The Spirit gave life so that the bones might live but they didn't live until they heard the preaching of Ezekiel.

E. The Withered Hand and Other Scriptures

Faith in Christ is caused by the Holy Spirit using the message of Christ. The Holy Spirit works within the person and someone tells the person about Christ and urges the person to believe on Him. When he believes on Jesus that is the very moment the Spirit gave the power for the dead sinner to have spiritual life. This truth is seen throughout the Bible many, many times. Many miracles illustrate this. The man with the withered hand cannot move his hand but Jesus speaks and says "Stretch forth thine hand." The man had no power to move his hand. Jesus gave the power to raise it like the Holy Spirit gives the power to have new life in Christ. Jesus spoke and asked him to obey at the same time He gave power to move his hand and he did and stretched forth his hand just as the gospel is spoken and the person is told to believe on Christ and he obeys by believing on Christ at the moment he is born again (Matt. 12:9-13).

Note a few other Scriptures and some comments concerning this subject.

Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek." The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. God in saving or giving new birth to a soul uses the gospel message as His power. The one saved believes the gospel message.

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

The word of God must be heard and believed for a person to have everlasting life. John 6:63 says "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

The Bible message is spirit, non-material, and is life and produces life. God the Spirit uses it to bring forth life.

Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The Bible message is quick, that is, living, and it convicts and brings life. It reveals all about us because its Author, God, knows all about us (v. 13).

II Timothy 1:10 says "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

The gospel message tells about Jesus' life, death and resurrection and in doing so brings to light or our understanding what life and immortality is.

The gospel does many things: it saves (Rom. 1:16; James 1:21); it brings life to the spiritually dead (John 5:24; 6:63); it brings understanding concerning life and immortality (II Tim. 1:10); it comforts, it corrects, etc. These things are accomplished in an individual when the Holy Spirit uses the Bible to accomplish them

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THE BLIND

(Continued from Page 1)

friends, since there is obviously no one who believes the heresy you teach. I'm sure that your mother and father are ashamed of you, and your poor wife, if any woman will have you, must consider the name idiot to be good for you. I pity her...I'm sure you are hopeless...I'm going to pray for your dear wife if you have one."

Let me assure you that I, through God's grace, will remain strict relative to the teaching of His Word so long as He gives me the ability to do so. I, for example, will lay hands suddenly on no man who claims to teach God's Word. My guide in such matters will always be the following passage of Scripture.

"Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (I Tim. 5:22).

How to Recognize Blind Leaders

We, in order to recognize a leader of the blind, must examine their teaching in the light of the Holy Scriptures. This was the instruction that Paul, in the following passages of Scripture, gave to Timothy. **"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself"** (I Tim. 6:3-5).

Blind Leaders are Under the Curse of God

It is interesting to note from the following passage of Scripture that blind leaders are under the curse of God. **"Cursed is he that maketh the blind to wonder out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen"** (Deut. 27:18).

There will be multitudes of ministers, when they stand before God, who will wish that they had never claimed to represent God while they were on the earth. They, rather than assisting themselves and their followers, only led them further and further from

the truth or in the ditch. Those, for example, who teach infant baptism, baptism by sprinkling, etc., would have been better off if they had been a drunkard rather than a leader or a spokesman for God.

Let Us be Thankful for God Given Leaders who could See

Paul, in Ephesians 1:15-18, points out that he never ceased to give thanks for the fact that the eyes of their understanding had been enlightened, and for the fact that they knew what is the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Paul, in Ephesians 2:1-7, also points out that we, at one time, were also blind. He, however, proceeds to point out that **"God, who is rich in mercy, hath quickened us together with Christ."**

A Blind Man will Walk among Rattlesnakes

A blind man will walk in front of a speeding car or in a field that is infested with rattlesnakes. A person who is blind spiritually will walk over the great precipice into an eternal hell.

The Light of the Body

The following passages of Scripture point out that the light of the body is the eye. **"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"** (Matt. 6:22, 23).

The subject passage of Scripture, when speaking of the "light of the body," is referring to the lamp of the body. The eye is the receptacle by which light enters the body. We may say, then, that the activities of the body are dependent on the light that is received via the eyes. The eye, when functioning properly, enables one to see things as they really are, rather than in a distorted manner, or not at all. We, if our eyes receive sufficient light for the body, will walk without stumbling. Defective eyes, on the other hand, cause us to stumble, and even lose our way. This fact is set forth in the following passage of Scripture. **"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"** (Isa. 5:20).

Jesus Had 20/20 Vision

Our Lord Jesus had 20/20 vi-

sion. There has never been another human who has even come close to the vision that was His. Paul was given a superior spiritual vision or insight (understanding). He, however, could not even be compared to the vision that was our Lord's. Paul, in fact, said **"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known"** (I Cor. 13:9-12).

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

We are to understand, then, that Paul and the rest of us fall very short of 20/20 vision relative to spiritual things. This fact is set forth very clearly in the following passage of Scripture.

"And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (I Cor. 8:2).

Our Spiritual Eyes are Opened By Way of the New Birth

The first object which spiritual eyes see is Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The quickened person sees Jesus as the sacrifice for his or her sins. The believer is given understanding relative to his or her depraved condition and Jesus Christ as Saviour. The spiritual eyes which we receive via the new birth act as a receptacle of light, or understanding from God's Word as His Word is studied. This fact is set forth in the following passage of Scripture. **"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Tim. 2:15).

The Lord's Church Ordained To Increase Our Vision

The following passages of Scripture point out that the Lord's church has been given the assignment to increase our vision.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets: and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the

SOMETIMES LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT

By Jack Whitt

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: They shall walk, O Lord in the light of thy countenance" (Ps. 89:15).

How often we give little thought to appearance when in public places. I mean the way we look, the way we act and even the way we dress. Recently, I decided to have breakfast at a restaurant in my hometown. I had on a T-shirt my daughter, Lynn, had given me sometime ago. I especially like it because the front has a large picture of the earth with large, bold words reading: **"This world is not my home."** The back also displays a poetic message to this effect: **"This world is not my home, though it seems to be, my home is with my God in the place He made for me, He's coming back real soon, the signs are very clear, so when the trumpet sounds, I'll be outta here."**

I often wear this shirt to places in my neighborhood and many people have remarked about the message it gives. I guess I enjoy the attention but too it has opened doors to witness.

While being seated in this restaurant, a lady sitting in a booth smiled at me brightly and said, **"I like your shirt."** I thanked her and sat down in a booth behind her. As I waited to be served, I decided to give her a gospel tract which also contained our church address that I had in my pocket. She read the tract then turned to say to me that she knew where my church was located. This led to some good conversation and also leads me to the main point of my message.

In further conversation, this nice lady said to me: **"Your church has a nice-sounding bell"** relating this to a time when as she walked along the street and how she was impressed in hearing the pleasant sound of the bell in the still of the Sunday morning. I invited her to visit our church and hope that she will.

Sometimes we may easily overlook the little things that other people notice. Things like a pleasant countenance. Things like a kind word. Things like a good Christian attitude. Maybe we should be ringing our church bells more often. Perhaps the moral of this story is: if we have a song to sing, let's sing it. If we have a bell to ring, let's ring it. If we have a message to give, let's give it. **"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).

ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

It becomes obvious that the eyesight is greatly hindered if one does not utilize the means which our Lord has placed in His church for increasing our vision.

Failure to Study God's Word Distorts Our Vision

The spiritual vision of some is so poor that they even place the Masons above the Lord's church. The eyes of some are so poor that

they baptize infants and sprinkle for baptism rather than immerse. They even believe in many doctrines which do not recognize God as the Sovereign that He is. God, in fact, has said: **"The way of the fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise"** (Prov. 12:15). **"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"** (Prov. 14:12).

We Are Admonished to Follow in Jesus' Steps

The following passage of Scripture admonishes us to follow in the steps of Jesus. **"For even**

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AT THE CROSS OF CHRIST

By Pastor Edward G. Graff, Central Baptist Church, Mansfield, Louisiana

"At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light." The light of Christ. In Christ is all light, and from Him comes all light. In His light we must walk, or we are in the darkness of the world. The light of Christ, we are to preach, and teach to all those we encounter. Because, it is the light of Christ: the blood soaked cross of Christ that cleanses from sin.

Walk in the light of Christ because in Christ is unlimited light. I John 1:6-7 says **"If we say that we have fellowship with him [Christ], and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin"** (text verse 7). If we really are living, and walking in the light as He is in the light, we have true, unbroken fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses or removes us from all sin and guilt—keeps us clean from sin in all forms and manifestations (Amp. Bible). We are washed clean from the indwelling principles of sin.

Here Then At The Cross

Our fountain of cleansing. Psalm 36:9 says **"For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."** In Christ, do we see light. In Christ, light is fellowship that comes from the washing away of sin, through the blood of Jesus Christ. In this washing away of sin, we are given living water. Drink deeply of this Water of Life.

Christ is the Fountain of living water—eternal life. John 4:14 says **"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I [Christ] shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."** A spring of water, flowing, bubbling continually within him unto eternal life. "At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light." And the Water of Life washed my sins away. The Water of Life is within me as a continually flowing eternal life giving water.

From the cross we are refreshed, and we will thirst no more! Because Christ is our Fountain of life which springs from His veins.

At the Old Rugged Cross

Christ died as the Divine sub-

stitute (in our stead) for your sin and for mine. He took our deep, dark, and black sins to Himself, for our sake, that we will have eternal life. I Peter 3:18 **"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."** Christ, the Messiah, died for our sins once and for all time—the just for the unjust; the innocent for the guilty. Why? So that Christ might bring us to God! For that reason, Christ was in His fleshly body, put to death. But, Christ was made alive, by the Holy Spirit. Yes, Christ is our Divine substitute. On the old rugged cross, Christ died for you and for me. Thank the "great I Am" that He chose to be your Messiah!

Observe and understand this, God the Son died for you and me. It must be understood that Christ is God. John 1:1 **"In the beginning was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."** In verse 14 of the same chapter and book we read, **"the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."** Christ is, was, and always will be God.

At the Cross the Chains of our Slavery were Broken

Galatians 4:4-7 **"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."** Paul, speaking to the Jewish Christians in Galatia, says: "When the proper time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born subject to the regulations of the law—Christ was reared in conformity to the Mosaic Law. Now, take notice, the Law brings a curse, the curse of slavery to the Law. The Law was and is slavery. But because of Christ who became a curse for us, we have been delivered from slavery to the Law. Therefore, we are sons of God, joint heirs with Christ. Yes! We are redeemed by Christ because He went to 'the old rugged cross'

for the elect.

The Jews, Christ's own nation, as a nation, not a people, turned their back on Him, because the cross is a shame to them. But "the old rugged cross" is an honor and a glory to us. It was "at the cross that I first saw the light, and the burden of my heart rolled away." Free from the law of sin and death am I. And it is my hope that you are too.

Christ was made in the form of a mortal, in all things, but one. Christ felt pain, joy sadness, and love; His body needed food, and rest, but praise God He knew no sin. It is because that Christ knew no sin, that He is the only One that could make us free from the law of sin and death. But this could only be done by the way of the old rugged cross. "The way of the cross leads home, the ways of the cross leads home, it is sweet to know as I onward go the way of the cross leads home." Because of the cross, we are sons of God, and the Spirit of Christ in our hearts, cries Abba Father. "Heart" in Scripture is considered the very center and core of life, just as "the cross of Christ" is the very center and core of the Word of God.

Your Eyes Have Been Opened

Ephesians 1:17-19 **"The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."** Your eyes of understanding have been opened that God may grant you the spirit of wisdom and revelation—of insight into the deep, and intimate knowledge of God. How? By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light so that you can know, and understand the hope to which God has called you, and the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, those He has set apart to Himself.

"Oh, he touched me, and oh, the joy that floods my soul." This I can sing, as well as "I've been to Calvary, I can say I've seen the" (Continued from Page 8)

A Woman's Touch

By Wendy Barkman



Widows

Part VIII

A Widow For Only Three

Hours (Acts 5:1-11) - The saints of this early church at Jerusalem had come together and voluntarily agreed to give up their possessions, sharing all the money, gained from the sales of land, providing for the needs of the people as each situation dictated (Acts 2:44, 45; 4:32, 34-37). There was a man named Ananias, apparently a Jewish convert to Christianity and part of this group of saints at Jerusalem. Ananias and his wife Sapphira did not want to be left out of the "spirit" of things, and so they found a way to make it appear as if they were doing the same as all of the other saints, and yet they would not have to give up everything, just make it look that way. They would sell "a possession" (a field or farm, a vineyard, Sapphira's dowry) and claim to lay all the profits at the feet of the apostles. They both agreed on this plan of deception, and so the wicked deed was done. Their possession was sold, and the money was laid at the feet of the apostles, but the great error and wherein lied their gross sin, was in their hypocrisy, professing to be giving everything, when they were, in fact, holding back a part. We must be careful to notice that Peter did not rebuke Ananias for keeping back part of the profit, from the sale of the land, for any and all giving was done on a voluntary basis, but Peter's displeasure was in the fact that Ananias had attempted to deceive the Holy Ghost, that is, Ananias had sinned against God. After Peter had spoken, Ananias fell down and died. We read that **"great fear came on all them that heard these things."** Ananias was taken out and buried. Three hours later, Sapphira returned, unaware of what had taken place. Peter questioned Sapphira, just as he had questioned Ananias, and found that she held to the same story, the one which her husband had told just three hours earlier. Once again, Peter's disapproval, his indignation, was evident, for both husband and wife had been in one accord in their

deceit. Just like her husband, three hours earlier, she fell down and died. Sapphira was taken out and buried by her husband. **"And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."** Twice in one day, only three hours apart, the saints of the church at Jerusalem had been stricken with fear, for they had seen His immediate and direct judgment upon sin, the sin of a brother and a sister in Christ.

Greek/Hebrew Widows (Acts 6:1) - One interpretation of this passage of Scripture is that the Hellenists (Greek speaking Jews) were complaining that the Aramaic (Hebrew) speaking Jews were showing favoritism in the daily distribution of alms and food to the poor (widows, children, etc.), neglecting the poor among the Grecians. Several authorities believe that the Hebrews did consider the Greeks to be inferior to themselves. Others believe that the Greeks were finding fault with the Hebrews, because they were neglecting their own poor in the daily distribution of alms and food. This dispute was the basis for choosing the first seven deacons (Acts 6:2-6). Once again, it becomes necessary to remind ourselves that the very essence of one's faith, the faith of the members of a family, whose mother or grandmother has suffered the loss of dad or grandpa, the faith of the member of His local churches, with widowed members, the faith of the citizens of our nation, is seen in our willingness to comfort and aid the poor suffering widows of our family, of our church, of our nation (Job 29:13; Ps. 68:5, 146:9; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 7:6; I Tim. 5:3-16; James 1:27). Like it or not, people are influenced by what they see. When others see our faith in action, when they see Christ in the things that we say and do, they are more likely to believe what we say about Him. Why even **"a great company of the priests were obedi-**

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FAITH(PART 3)

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(I Cor. 2:14).

Faith comes by hearing the message of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:17; John 17:20; 8:30).

I Corinthians 4:15 says **"For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."**

Paul in a figurative sense is the "father" of those that were saved through his ministry of the word. They were regenerated "through the gospel" he preached. Since God used him in the beginning of their new life, he is their "father" figuratively speaking. The Holy Spirit with the gospel causes new life.

Philemon 10 says, **"I beseech thee for my son Onesimus whom I have begotten in my bonds."**

The same truth is taught here as in I Corinthians 4:15.

V. Faith In Christ is the Result of Election

A. No Accident

The believer in Christ is not saved by accident but according to God's eternal plan. Before the world was created, God chose to save the ones who are saved by grace. Not only were the persons chosen to be saved but also the means whereby they would be saved. The means are the gospel and the Holy Spirit. A person cannot take the attitude that if one is elected to be saved, he will be saved regardless of anything else. Election is not salvation but into salvation. The elect are not saved or children of God in reality, until the plan of God is carried out. The elect are saved in God's plan but they are not saved in fact or reality until they hear and believe in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Although one may be elected to salvation and new life in Christ, he is lost and God's wrath is upon him until God's plan is carried out in his life. God's plan for the elect is that they might hear the gospel and believe on Christ as their Saviour by the power of the Spirit. We know that God's plan for the elect will be carried out. His faithfulness, power and knowledge make it certain. But, the plan must and will be carried out. God's people have a responsibility

ity and have a part in God's plan as God leads us to witness to the lost everywhere. God's Holy Spirit will make the witness of God's Word effective in the life of every one of God's elect in His time. The witness is not to figure out the elect but to witness to everyone and urge everyone to believe on Jesus Christ as Saviour. God will carry out His plan perfectly. That is His business alone. Many passages of Scripture teach this.

B. II Thessalonians 2:13b

II Thessalonians 2:13b says **"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."** God's plan for the ones chosen is revealed in this verse. They were to be saved by the work of the Spirit and believing the truth.

C. John 6:37a; James 1:18a; Acts 13:48b

John 6:37a teaches that the elect will come to Jesus. To come to Jesus in this passage means to believe on Him as Saviour. **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."** **"All that the Father giveth me"** are those that God elected to come to Jesus.

James 1:18a teaches that God willed or planned to give new life through the hearing of the message of the Bible. New life believes on Jesus as Saviour immediately.

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth."

Acts 13:48b reveals that everyone ordained to eternal life will believe in Christ. **"And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."**

Our responsibility is to go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone. As far as we know all living at this time may be God's elect. Those who die in unbelief we know are not God's elect or they would have believed the gospel while in this life. God knows all whom He has elected. We only know them as they believe on Jesus Christ as their Saviour from sin.

Paul preached and suffered to get the gospel to the elect that they might "obtain the salvation" which is eternal. These people were chosen to be saved eternally but they did not obtain the eternal salvation until Paul preached the gospel to them and they believed on Jesus Christ as their Saviour (II Tim. 2:8-10). God has elected a people to be saved and has given us a responsibility to preach the gospel to every person. Those

that believe on Christ do so because God elected them before the foundation of the earth. The plan is not carried out nor the salvation obtained until a person believes on Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

FORUM

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SLEDD

mencing the work is the current Middle East peace accords. We will wait and see what happens!

Will this temple co-exist with the New Jerusalem? I believe that it will at least for 1,000 years. It is worth noting however that in Revelation 21 when the New Jerusalem descends from heaven to the new earth John tells us, **"And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."** It could be that when the New Jerusalem and the new earth converge that the temple will be done away with.

Who is the "Prince of Ezekiel's temple"? Ezekiel a few times makes reference to the "Prince of Jerusalem" assuming the throne of David. I believe this is our Lord Jesus Christ who indeed will sit upon the throne of David in His coming kingdom. I know that this Prince is depicted as both receiving and administering sacrifices in this temple. However, we must remember that some prophecy is symbolic in meaning. I do not embrace the idea of a restoration of literal sacrifices in the millennium. Christ made one sacrifice for sin, once and for all! I believe these references are symbolic of the Prince (Christ) who will lead us into a far great and more glorious worship than we could ever imagine in our limited frame on this earth.

THE BLIND

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hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving an example, that ye should follow in his steps" (I Pet. 2:21).

We, before stepping in the steps of Jesus, must be able to see those steps, or to understand by way of study relative to what His Word teaches us on every matter.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness!

A WOMAN'S

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ent to the faith," when they witnessed the apostles laying their hands on the deacons, also having witnessed the preceding events, those concerning the care of the widows (Acts 6:7). These priests, who had been offering their sacrifices and performing their many and various priestly duties, now understood that Jesus was the One they were representing in their work. Jesus was the Messiah (Christ). He had done the work. He had come and finished His work.

Dorcas' Widow Friends (Acts 9:39, 41) - **"Then Peter arose and went with them...they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them."** And now, Peter entered the upper chamber, where he saw the dead body of Dorcas. There were, in this room, grieving widows, who had been the recipients of Dorcas' kindness, her charity. Dorcas had labored with her hands and had given away those things, which she had made, to aid and comfort the poor and needy, specifically these widows. Dorcas had become sick and died. Her body was tenderly cared for, according to customs of the time, and placed in an upper chamber. And now, Peter, having asked everyone to leave the room, **"kneeling down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes...And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive...and many believed in the Lord."** Where did Peter learn such things? He had watched the Master Himself resurrect the dead body of a young twelve year old girl, astonishing her grieving parents. Peter's own mother-in-law had had her physical health restored by our Lord. He had also seen our Lord raise the dead body of a widow woman's only son and deliver him to his mother (Matt. 9:25-26; Mark 1:31, 5:40-42; Luke 7:11-15, 8:54-56). And now Peter, by the same power of the same Lord and Master, whom he had observed, the One with power over life and death, was able to command the dead body of this woman, whose life had been characterized by acts of benevo-

lence, to arise and then present her alive to the grieving widows and saints, those who had been recipients of her kindness.

THE CROSS

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Lord. I've been to Calvary, through the witness of His Word." Can you sing this with all your heart (your very center, the very core of your being and soul)?

It was at Calvary, at the cross of Christ, that the eyes of your heart were flooded with the light of Christ. At Calvary we came to know, and understand the hope to which God has called you. Only the saved, the very elect can have this understanding. The unsaved do not know the hope of Christ. Therefore, we must preach Christ, and His cross. Because the cross of Christ is the light that brings one out of the darkness of this world. We must tell them, "Kneel at the cross, Christ will meet you there."

It was at the cross of Christ that "Heaven came down, and glory filled my soul. When at the cross the Saviour made me whole; my sins were washed away, and my night was turned to day. Heaven came down, and glory filled my soul."

Preach the Cross of Christ

Let us be as Paul. He said **"I preach Christ, and him crucified"** and **"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."** If we be as Paul we can turn this world upside down. Victory in Christ can then be ours. Walk therefore in the light of Christ, and preach the cross of Christ, everyone of you, to the world for the glory of Christ.

Pray for our brothers and sisters being persecuted for their faith today!

