

Psm. 11:3

Baptists For Liberty

Prov. 29:2

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Galatians 5:1

NEWS LETTER

Issue #18

March 2014

Monthly Verse: *"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." - Romans 9:17*

The 2nd Psalm

- 1 *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?*
- 2 *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,*
- 3 *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*
- 4 *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.*
- 5 *Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*
- 6 *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*
- 7 *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*
- 8 *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*
- 9 *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*
- 10 *Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.*
- 11 *Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*
- 12 *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

Our thought this month is "authority."

That's an important concept to us as Baptists, the "good news" that we have to share with the world is effectual because it has authority i.e. power (Matthew 9:2-7), our church history is dear to us because it traces our authority (Matthew 28:18 & 19), and in the political sphere we are taught to respect authority (Romans 13:1-9). As our verse of the month demonstrates God's authority is sovereign even in the affairs of the kingdoms of this world.

We didn't have enough room to cover the news of this month, and there has been a lot going on in our world, yet we find our comfort in knowing that God is on His throne as the Psalm above tells us. We specifically focused on why God allows ungodly people to rule and encouragement to God's people to do the work that He has authorized us to do.

Certainly there is a lot that we weren't able to fit into our limited pages on the subject of authority; however our prayer is that what has been included in these pages will be a blessing.

March Book Review: "From the Palmer Raids to the Patriot Act: A History of the Fight for Free Speech in America"

Author: Christopher Finan

Review by Sis. Regina Duncan

Overview: This book is divided up into 9 chapters. Each topic discusses how it has changed and fought for free speech in America in the 20th Century. Throughout America's history, the government has continually tried to silence the people from voicing their negative opinions of the government and politics. The First Amendment of the Constitution says the people have freedom of speech, but how free we truly are is dictated by the federal government and what it thinks is okay.

Positives: This book was very informative and enlightening to how things occur in the United States. Often we think if just one person tries to do something about an issue, we can't make a change. But this book shows time and again how one person influenced change for better or for worse during the 1900's. Where would America be today without such people as Anthony Comstock or Donald Wildmon?

Negatives: The main thing I didn't like about this book was how it had 2 chapters with sexually explicit wording in them. I understand that this author was telling the way things happened and I suppose he had to say some of those things. But as a Christian, it was hard to read. [Read the full review on our website](#)

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Sermon: "Witchcraft in the Churches"

by Bro. Dr. Manuel J. Seymour, Sr.

Introduction: I Samuel 15:22-23 – "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

1. The Lord has delight in those that obey His voice.
2. Rebellion is equivalent to witchcraft.
3. Stubbornness is iniquity and idolatry (putting self above the Word of God).
4. Rejecting the Word of God causes God to reject you on the grounds of rebellion, which is witchcraft.

Galatians 3:1 – "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"

1. Saints can be bewitched, too!

Ephesians 5: 22-33 – "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

I Cor. 11: 3, 7-10 – "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

"For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels."

God's Biblical Order

1. The head of every child are the parents.
2. The head of every wife is the husband.
3. The head of every husband is Christ Jesus.
4. The head of every church is the Bridegroom – Christ Jesus.
5. The head of Christ is God.

The rejection of the revealed order set by God is to reject, disobey, rebel against His Word. It is open REBELLION! It is WITCHCRAFT!

Is witchcraft in the churches today? Let us weigh the evidence.

I. The Husbands

Deuteronomy 6:5-9:

"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

1. Teach the Word.

Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

1. Train in the Word.

Romans 6:16: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

1. His servant ye are to whom you obey.

Titus 2:2: "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience."

1. Living according to righteousness.

I Peter 3:7: "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

1. Dwell according to the knowledge of the Word.
2. Failure to do so cuts off prayers from God.

Colossians 3:19: "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

1. Love your wife.
2. Do not treat them indignantly, disdainfully, or bitterly.

Ephesians 5: 23, 25, 28-29, 33: Refer to Bible

1. Refusal to fulfill one obligation, as head is rebellion against the revealed Word of God and thus, it is due to having been bewitched and is the sin of witchcraft.

II. The Wives

Genesis 3:16: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

1. God set the order of things in the family.

Colossians 3:18: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord."

1. Fit in the Lord.

Titus 2:3-5: "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."

1. Behaviour that becometh holiness.
2. Love husband first (when children are loved above the husband it is out of natural order), after the husband then the children are to be loved.

3. Obedient to husband as he follows the Lord. (not to obey him in sin)
4. Blaspheming the Word of God.

I Peter 3:1-6: “Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.”

1. Adorning self with a meek and quiet spirit.
2. Whose daughter are you?

Ephesians 5:22, 24, 33: Refer to Bible

Refusal to obey God’s revealed order of things is a REBELLION against God, thus you have been bewitched and are in guilt of witchcraft.

III. The Children

Exodus 20:12: “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”

1. The 5th Commandment

Colossians 3:20: “Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.”

1. In all things.
2. This pleases the Lord.

Ephesians 6:1: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”

1. Obeying parents in the Lord is right before God.

Proverbs 10:1: “The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son *is* the heaviness of his mother.”

1. Heaviness means – to bring grief, sorrow, or depression.

Proverbs 15:20: “A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.”

1. Despise means – to look down on, to disesteem, to scorn, to refuse and reject with contempt.
2. Foolish means – one who is a fool, a stupid fellow, simpleton, an arrogant one.

Deuteronomy 27:16: “Cursed *be* he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.”

1. Cursed children.
2. Setteth light means – to disgrace, to dishonor, to despise; to treat with contempt or dishonor, to treat shamefully.

IV. The Church

As go the family so goes the churches!

Exodus 19:5: “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine:”

1. A peculiar treasure through obedience. (Rare indeed)

Exodus 23:22: “But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.”

1. Obedience brings alliance with God.

I Samuel 12:15: “But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.”

1. If you do not obey it is rebellion against God.
2. God’s hand is against the rebellious who are in the sin of witchcraft.

Jeremiah 7:23: “But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.”

1. Obey then God will be our God and it will be well with us.
2. Rebel and He will not be our God nor will it be well with us.

II Thessalonians 3:14: “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. “

1. Have no company with the rebellious that they may be ashamed of their acts witchcraft.

Ephesians 5: 23, 24-27: Refer to Bible

1. Christ is head over the church.
2. The churches are subject to Christ in everything.
3. Jesus will only have a church presented to him without any blemishes.
4. He will not have a rebellious wife indulging in witchcraft.

Deuteronomy 28:62: “And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.”

1. Few in number are left because they will not obey His voice.

Revelation 2:4-5: “Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

1. Leaving the first love (love of the bridegroom) is rebellion.
2. Repent, or else.
3. Removing the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion: Rebellious individuals produce rebellious families that produce rebellious churches. Thus, witchcraft in the churches will result with fewer in the churches and the loss of the Holy Spirit’s empowerment upon and presence within the churches. Why should the Lord empower a church given over to the sin of witchcraft?

Jeremiah 12:17: “But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.”

1. The rebellion of God’s people will naturally overflow onto the nation scale.

Invitation:

Jeremiah 26:13: “Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. ”

1. Amend your ways and that which you do.
2. Obey the voice of the Lord.
3. Will the Lord turn away the evil He has pronounced against you?

Forum: "Why Do Evil Men Rule?"

Why does God allow wicked men to be in positions of authority?

Bro. Curtis Pugh, (*Missionary to Poteau, Oklahoma*): The Bible does not teach that God allows wicked men to be in positions of authority. It does not teach that at all. Instead it teaches that God sets them in the places He wants them. A part of Daniel the Prophet's prayer is found in Daniel 2:20-22. He prayed thus: "*Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.*" Subsequent to his prayer, Daniel went into the king and a part of his message was as follows: "*Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory*" (Daniel 2:37). Later in Daniel 4:17 he said, "*This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.*" God sets up rulers over men according as He pleases!

If we would be consistent with the Scriptures we must say that all who rule do so because God set them in their respective places. Wicked rulers are often used to try the saints of God. These trials and tribulations promote spiritual growth in the children of God. We are taught this in Romans 5:3-5. There are written these words: "*And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*" While Satan and evil rulers may think to wear out the saints of God and even to destroy all of them, tribulations only work spiritual growth and graces within those who are persecuted and troubled.

The crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ was a sinful act on the part of those who agitated and plotted His death. All those who had a part in it committed a terrible sin. But we can learn much about how God operates from studying that act. Even in Christ's crucifixion God was accomplishing His purpose although He had no part in the sin of those who did the evil. Peter, speaking of Christ, said, "*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*" (Acts 2:23). Sometime later, in a prayer, Peter prayed this way: "*For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together; For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done,*" (Acts 4:27-28). Nothing is by accident or "happstance." God works all things according to His plan and pleasure. (See Daniel 4:35; Ephesians 1:5). There is such a thing as "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge or fore-ordination of God. Somebody said it this way: God always has His hand in where the action is, but never in the sin where the action is. This includes who wins elections, wars, military coups, revolutions, etc. Right does not always win, but God always does for His will is always done.

God does not always remove a king or president or prime minister and replace him or her with another person. With God all things are possible. He need not exchange rulers: He can just change their minds and wills if He has chosen to do so. After all: "**The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will**" (Proverbs 21:1). This was written when kings were sovereign. If a king wanted a man or woman killed, all he needed do was speak to one of his court or even a common soldier. Nobody replied saying, "But Your Majesty, he has not had a trial," or, "Oh Sir, she is my sister." No, the king was sovereign. Whatever he decreed was done: no questions asked. There was no constitutional monarchy back

then: no parliament or congress to approve or disapprove. The king was answerable to no one! And yet, of such sovereign rulers the Bible says God is able to turn the King's heart. God can change the mind and desires of a sovereign ruler.

Rulers are sometimes promoters of reform and good government. In such times when they are in power, good laws are passed and God's children may have a time of relief from persecution and relative ease. Freedom to travel, preach and do good in the kingdom of God are often possible in such times of freedom. During times of good government often prosperity is increased and God's people have the ability to give to mission works and thus the distribution of the Scriptures and other worthwhile writings are available to a wider range of people around the world. Such things are beneficial not only in the conversion of sinners and the growth of the saints, but also can have a good effect upon the moral tone of a society. It is sad to say that because of the depravity of men, often in such easy times heretics have arisen. During such times people devise new lies to tell on God. Regarding good rulers God says: "**When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn**" (Proverbs 29:2). We observe and experience this in our own day for today God's "people mourn" over the way things are going – the direction our own country is heading. A recent poll showed that seventy-percent of Americans think our country is headed in the wrong direction. This is a special grief to God's children.

Nevertheless we ought to give thanks to God for His hand in the affairs of men – including thanking God for those men and women who are in places of power and authority. They are there because God put them there. Whether they be good rulers or evil ones, they are not in their positions by chance nor by the design of Satan. God may allow the devil to think he has elevated his rotten politicians to places of power, but he can do nothing more than that which pleases Jehovah! In Proverbs 8:16 God says: "**By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.**" Those who have the right to vote ought to do so, but only after much prayer and consideration. We ought not be discouraged when our candidate loses. Nor should we foolishly place too much confidence when our candidate wins. These things all come to pass. They shall not last forever.

Oh! But there is a time coming according to the prophecy of Isaiah who said, "**Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment,**" (Isaiah 32:1). Now is the time for God's people to prove themselves faithful for, perhaps sooner than we think, the Lord will say – according to the parable - "**Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities**" (Luke 19:17). There is coming a time when the King will reign in righteousness and His princes will rule fairly. Besides this, His disciples who have proven themselves faithful will rule over "ten cities." Then this world will be governed properly for the first time since Adam fell. Let us be faithful in all things under all kinds of human governments whether good or bad - all for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Bro. Hansel Villazor (*Pastor Providence Baptist Church San Carlos City, San Carlos, Philippines*) God is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. He is sovereign. He has the full control of all things here. No single happenings in our lives that is brought out of neither luck nor misfortune. All is in accordance to His will and plans. For example, He knows when we born and when we die because He all knows (Psalms 104:29-30). He knows whether tomorrow is a bad or a good weather, a good day to go out or stay inside and He has control of the weather (Psalms 148:8). He also sets who will rule to us whether it be a good leader or a corrupt man (Daniel 2:20-21). God also establishes the government (Romans 13:1)

Historically, there are some points when the ruler that God sets persecutes His children. For instance, in 2 Kings 20:17-18, God used Nebuchadnezzar to punish Judah because of idolatry. We can see, then, that He has reason why He set evil men to rule. And this reason is to bring judgment or chastisement on His children who do not adhere His

call. He did that also purposely so we can be awakened from our deep sleep that make us disinclined to His work especially doing the Great Commission. In other point, I shall say, too much silence and calmness on our lives made us insensitive to the needs of the lost people. Consider this thing that when evils persecute us for believing the Lord, His children will be more eager to serve Him even if services may be done secretly on caves or out of comfort. But when it is time where we are free to worship Him as our God, in a well air conditioned and ventilated buildings, we see vacant pews.

"Give a strong wind and the squirrel will hold strong on the branches of the tree. Give a cool, wind breeze and it will sleep and fall."

Does might make right? Why or why not? How does this relate to authority?

Might does not make right. On the contrary it creates confusions, misunderstanding and divisions. The Lord Himself sees it when He established His church. There are many instances that He rebuked disciples for thinking that being in authority is a good thing. Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. Here probably Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children (Mark 15:40) undoubtedly believed that sitting in authority is a rightful thing. But Jesus rebuked and taught them as He further stated, that, But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Matthew 20:26-27. Furthermore, Jesus is not in agreement with what Scribes' and Pharisees' way of using authority they have. Matthew 23:2 says, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. This verse clearly supports that these men are in the authority but their might does not makes right as seen in the preceding verses. Matthew 23:3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. Matthew 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

"But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Matthew 23:5-12

Since force (might) doesn't equal to being in authority (right) yet God does allow wicked men to rule, how does a Christian discern what forces to yield to?

Every believer could discern what forces to yield to when he/she tried it on the Word of God as his/her measure. Psalms 12:6 *"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."*

In His words we found hope. *"Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word. Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope."* Psalms 119:114,116

We could have orderly lives when we rest on his words, too. *"Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."* Psalms 119:133

God's word, further, serves our guide. Without it, our lives will never be aligned with God. Psalms 109:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Historical Marker

"Studies in Esther Part 2"

by Bro. Jeff Short

INTRODUCTION

The previous article was an introduction to the Book of Esther. This book is remarkable in teaching the providence of God. We noted there are no extraordinary miracles or supernatural events. Rather, this book sets forth the glory of God in the mundane. As we study this book, we want to be careful to pay attention to the details and seeming incidentals. In this article, we wish to begin looking at the verses of the first chapter. *"Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)"* (Esther 1:1)

This Ahasuerus that is mentioned, the king of Persia, is most generally believed to be Xerxes, and there are some arguments to be made for a couple of other kings, but this is the most likely. He reigned over Persia from 485 to 465 BC, until the time of his death. He *"reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces."* We get a glimpse of the vast scope of the Persian empire at this time. In the reign of Darius over Persia, there were 120 provinces. So, if this is Xerxes, I believe he would have been after Cyrus (Daniel 6) since the Persian empire increased from that time to 127 provinces. Josephus reported the expansion of the Persian empire during the reign of Darius and Cyrus and Xerxes. He also reported that at its very peak, the expansion of the Persian empire was up to 360 provinces. We are given a glimpse, in this first verse, of the grandeur and the power of this earthly kingdom. The Persians were the world power at the time. This kingdom preceded the golden kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel's vision. It would be the silver kingdom referred to as the Persian kingdom.

This verse gives us an idea about why there were so many Jews in Babylon, even though they had been released from their captivity and could have returned to their homeland. Many had chosen to enjoy the prosperity and the success they had and the lifestyle they enjoyed in the kingdom of Persia around Babylon rather than to return to their homeland. Their homeland of Palestine and Jerusalem lay mostly in ruins at this time. Even though the temple had been rebuilt, the wall was not yet rebuilt and to leave Babylon where they had homes and businesses, friends and family, would have been a pretty hard journey. Here the Persian empire was growing, succeeding, and flourishing on its way to the pinnacle of power. It was very prosperous and a good place to live as far as your pocketbook was concerned. The Jews had chosen to stay rather than to go to Palestine, though they were free to go.

"That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him" (Esther 1:2-3)

Historically, King Xerxes was characterized as being "despotic, capricious, fickle, reckless of human lives and immersed in sensual pleasures" (Jamieson Faussett, & Brown, Bible Commentary, Vol. 1, p. 633). This is precisely his character throughout the book of Esther. He acts very much in accord with the picture that has been painted of him secularly. The king is here sitting on the throne of his kingdom in Shushan the palace. He instituted a feast for himself, attended by the nobles and princes. This large feast was for all of the important and notable folk that were around, those that were in positions of authority, delegated positions underneath the king and all of the royal people. It was a scene for the elite of high society.

“When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days” (Esther 1:4)

There was no real reason for this feast. It was not a normal observation of the people. There is no knowledge of a particular special occasion that was being celebrated. The feast was only for one purpose. King Ahasuerus was intent on making an exhibition and celebration of his own power and glory. He brought in all of his princes and important people so they could behold and celebrate with him what a great and powerful king he was. He made it for no other reason than his own personal aggrandizement. The feast lasted for 180 days. This was a continuous 180 days. It was lavish and the grandest production the kingdom could afford. The feast’s longevity shows us something of the indulgent nature of this king. This sort of indulgence is condemned by Solomon. *“I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?”* (Ecclesiastes 2:1-2). Solomon sought to pursue nothing but earthly pleasure and satisfaction, happiness and frivolity. He learned very quickly though that *“behold, this also is vanity.”* It is vanity. Solomon is condemning the very excess and pursuit of fleshly gratification these people were doing. These parties were well known for their drunkenness and indulgence in food and various other things. For an extended time, they were involved in this party. They were indulgent, excessive. The flesh must have been somewhat exhausted. If we indulge ourselves day after day in some extravagance, no matter how much we enjoy it, we seem to grow tired of it after time. We get weary of it. The flesh has to have some variety. Here was nothing but ease, revelry and all sort of partying for 180 days. I imagine there were quite a few folks that were becoming unhappy in this situation, but yet, they could not quit.

Excess and indulgence are likewise national sins of the United States of America today. It can be seen all around us. We want bigger, faster, more, etc. God’s Word says: *“All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith”* (Proverbs 15:15-16). Our society pursues fleshly gratification in all the means provided in this day. But the Bible says *“He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.”* Sin never satisfies but he that has found enjoyment and true happiness in God, *“hath a continual feast.”*

There was no real enjoyment at Ahasuerus’s feast, proving the proverb, *“Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.”* It is better to have little with joy in God than to have a lavish feast of mere earthly things for many days. It is better to have a meager supply and fear God than it is to fare sumptuously every day. The Bible tells us about the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus sat begging for bread with the stray dogs, competing with them for dinner. But, *“the rich man fared sumptuously everyday.”* However, now he is *“tormented”* and Lazarus is *“comforted.”* That is still true today. That rich man is still tormented in that flame. He besought father Abraham that he would send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool his tongue. He is still wanting a drop of water. He has found no relief. Lazarus is still comforted today. He is still feasting today. True enjoyment comes from God and can only be had from Him.

Solomon said, *“Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding”* (Proverbs 9:4-6). The Persians were known for mingling their wine and strong drink and coming up with various concoctions of drinks that were heavily intoxicating. Here the wisdom of God says, *“Come, eat of my bread.”* Come and eat of My table and *“drink of the wine that I have mingled.”* True enjoyment is found through the enjoyment of God rather than the pursuit of fleshly gratification. We might find some things that for a time make us a little more comfortable, but we know that they perish with the using. The

things of God are always satisfying and he that has a *“merry heart”* with God has a *“continual feast,”* rather than the party of Ahasuerus that was actually unsatisfying to its attendants.

“And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king’s palace; Where were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble. And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king” (Esther 1:5-7)

After his 180 days of feasting ended, he proclaimed another seven days to feast and, this time, it is not only the princes and noblemen but it is extended to all the poor people. This is like a politician courting favor with the lesser class. I imagine he had an ulterior motive in this, even though it made him look good politically and socially to his people. It made a way for him to be sure of displaying his might, even to the very ends of his kingdom. Politicians love to come in and do a project or help out a rural community so that their names are attached to the project. They are visible doing their good deeds and they earn the praise of men. Notice, the king had 180 days for all his friends and only 7 days for all of his lesser folks in the kingdom. Notice also the great expense of the whole affair. No expense was spared. All of the royal fare was brought out. He put out his very best. Usually when we entertain some guests, we will try to put out the best that we have. We will hide the shabby ware that we use everyday and the king was doing no different. This king was wanting to make a display of his wealth and power and all his glory. He even let his peasants drink out of his golden vessels some of the very best royal wine he had. Mark here the great waste of his nation’s industry. The nation had afforded him a very comfortable living and this capital was spent for the king to search his own glory. How many long hours had been worked by his countrymen in order to produce the money or the vessels and all the things for him to enjoy with his friends. He is wasting the goods of his country. The Bible says, *“for men to search their own glory is not glory”* (Proverbs 25:27). The king was involved in self-exaltation. He was displaying and searching his own glory.

This sort of display is common even for men today. If they have a nice home or car, they want to display and show-off these things to others. If a young man is gifted with some athletic abilities, he wants to show-off what he can do. This king was doing this on a much larger scale. Feasting for 187 days is excessive and sinful.

“And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man’s pleasure” (Esther 1:8)

We mark here the king’s generosity. He has already made a feast for 180 days and now it is the 7 days feast with the poor people around, but he is still being very generous to them. They were eating of the best that could be set out and they were drinking the best royal wine. They are using the best golden vessels. None were turned away empty-handed. No one went home hungry or thirsty. As much as they wanted they had. They were not restrained. However much wine, food and partying they wanted, they had. On the other hand, none was restrained and each did *“according to every man’s pleasure.”* They were not turned away but were given just as much as they wanted. No one made any reasonable judgment. A man could have drank himself to death and no one would have intervened in any way. They were not permitted to. This is typical of fleshly indulgences in the world. They are usually solicited or encouraged. When we consider some of the things in our youth we got into, that we should not have been in, there was usually someone there to help and encourage us into trouble. We will get into trouble enough

on our own, but many times we will be encouraged into this indulgence by others. The king and his people were complicit in the sins of others. The world may set no limits, but the Word of God certainly does. The kingdom allowed the men to drink until their hearts were content but this is not acceptable for the child of God. **“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls”** (Proverbs 25:28). If a city is *“broken down, and without walls,”* anyone that comes along, that is strong enough, will rule the city. They are going to overrun it. It has no means of defense and no protection. Whoever wants to set up government is going to do it; there is no resistance.

We are exhorted to exercise self-control. *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”* (2 Timothy 1:7). Consider the word underlying the translation *“sound mind,”* it means *“self-control.”* The Bible talks about soberness, temperance and self-control. A Christian is to rule his own spirit and bring his body into subjection. We should not be *“tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine,”* nor with every invitation of indulgence.

“Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus” (Esther 1:9)

The women were not exempt from the feasting. They had a party also. It was in accordance with the rules of decorum in that day, for the men to feast in one place and the women to feast in another. Vashti was the queen and in some exercise of authority over the king’s harem. Some of the historians have estimated there was as many as 360 concubines in the royal harem of king Ahasuerus. Even though she was the queen with some authority, she was very much subservient to the king. She was like the head servant, but she was still a servant. She was under the direction of Ahasuerus as an absolute monarch. So, she was at least acting with his leave if not with his direct command.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let us observe the providence of God in our text. The first notable event is the feasts of Ahasuerus. We can not find any just cause for the celebrations that take place. The record tells us it was in the third year of the king’s reign that he had this feast. Maybe this is because he felt there was no viable threat to his kingdom any longer. The timing of the feast is remarkable because this event facilitates the removal of Vashti as queen, which opens the way for Esther to be promoted. The promotion of Esther was necessary because God was going to use her to deliver the people of Israel. The timing is also remarkable because there was no great miracle or Divine intervention that prompted it. There was no hand that appeared and wrote on the wall. There was no prophet coming to the king, as Elijah did. There is nothing unusual that happens here. It is just the normal, ordinary course of things. This makes it so remarkable. We can see God throughout working, shaping, using all these events to effect His purpose and His glory.

Note His operation in ordinary agencies. Solomon said, *“The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil”* (Proverbs 16:4). God can and does use even the wicked devices of the world to bring about His purpose and His plan. Here we have a very wicked man, King Ahasuerus. This king is all about self, indulgence and success. He is a very wicked man. However, *“The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithsoever he will”* (Proverbs 21:1). God did not intervene in any miraculous way to change the course of events here but God is working through the normal progression of events. He is working all the time to bring about His will, purpose, good, and blessings on His people. We see His operation of providence in ordinary agencies working through Ahasuerus, the princes, the queen, and on all sides.

Lastly, there are two notable contrasts that I wish to draw from these verses. First, King Ahasuerus is the earthly king searching his own glory. He is going to great extents to be celebrated, congratulated and

praised by men. Contrast that with the Heavenly King making Himself of *“no reputation.”* The earthly king did everything in his power to make a display and a show. The Lord Jesus Christ, the King of all kings, came to earth and He humbled Himself, was made in the fashion of a man, took upon Himself the form of a servant, and made Himself of no reputation. He did work some miracles and wondrous things. However, when He had a great feast He had the people sit down in the grass and He fed them with barley loaves and with fish. Later, at another feast, He washed the feet of the disciples.

The second contrast we see is the earthly king doing according to the state of the king (vs. 7). He is exercising all of his power and authority. He is wanting to do things to make a show. Contrast that with the heavenly King content behind the veil, working out His will all the time. It is amazing that some have stumbled at this book because God’s name does not appear in it. I believe that makes it more remarkable. What greater contrast does that set between this earthly king, who was doing everything for the promotion of his name. But God can simply let His name remain silent from these pages though He is seen all the time working, and exercising His will. Here we see a restraint on the part of God. He does not need to make a great show of Himself. He is content to work His own purpose behind the scenes. *“Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known”* (Psalm 77:19).

The Bible talks in many places about God’s wrath being *“slow.”* In fact, the Bible says, *“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil”* (Ecclesiastes 8:11). We see that God’s wrath at many times is perceived as slow, but it is always sure. John Gill described it as a great, vast wheel that turned ever so slowly but always surely, moving on and forward. God has seen fit to conceal His name from this book and thereby make a greater statement, contrasting Himself against the earthly king and content to work out His will and purpose without some great show of power or intervention of Divine agency. *“This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes”* (Psalm 118:23).

“What Would Jesus Do?”

by Bro. Dr. Manuel J. Seymour, Sr.
E-mail: pastorsey@bellsouth.net

A new era demands a secured anchor in the past. All things are built upon that which has been. Biblical wisdom is the one stable and immutable truth that is forever settled in the heavens. As the world evolves the mind of God remains constant. Therefore, the matter of prudent defense of self and family would also be contained in the Holy Scriptures. Cold-blooded murder is a gross abomination in the judicial balances of God, but preservation of self and family God has built into the good common sense of all His creatures.

Much has been said of “What would Jesus do?” Well, let us consult Jesus! Jesus reminds His disciples of the past then warns them of the future. “And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.” (Luke 22:35-36 KJV) This is Biblical proof of what the Lord Jesus would do. It is simple and definitive. Jesus also said, “... whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.” (John 12:50) This is the mind of Jesus and the Father concerning self-defense.

If the Son of God gave the importance of carrying a weapon for self-defense, which He received from His Father, then can we not understand that bearing arms for self-defense is a God given right and responsibility? Nowhere in the Bible does it tell the Christians to be

dumb little sheep waiting for the slaughter. Let me be clear, the Bible does not give anyone the liberty to murder others, but the safeguarding of self and family is not murder, it is God ordained self-defense. The Christian must do all that is humanly possible to avoid the use of any drastic measure. Verbal abuse may hurt the pride but it does not imminently threaten life and limb. Most verbal afflictions can be endured and offer plenty of opportunity for walking away to escape any escalation that would lead to the need of self-defense. Wisdom dictates this to be the prudent course of action.

Rarely, the need to exercise measures of defense does occur, but when it does the Christian must rise to the challenge. Humility coupled with preparation will smooth the feathers of aggression. Let us not lose sight of the fact that preservation of love ones and self is commanded of God. To bear arms is a right and a responsibility ordained of God and is instructed by the Son of God. May we be faithful to God and our duty in the depths of His love and mercy! This is what Jesus would do.

"Why Go?"

by Bro. David M. Green.



Matt 28:16-20 *"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

Here we read of our Lord's command to his church to go into the world, teach, baptize, and teach the saved. It is a command, and we read here of why He gave us this commandment. In verse 18, He says *"All power is given unto me in heaven and earth."* In the original Greek, the word "power" could be translated "authority" His authority reaches everywhere! (Dan 4:35) We as God's people should desire to go simply because He told us to!

Notice a couple of things about this commandment: (1) It was given to the 11 disciples as representatives of His church. This means Baptists are the only people who have the authority from God to preach and baptize. While there may be many other groups and organizations preaching, they so not have the authority to do so. (2) It was not given to those it disciples as individuals, but as a church. Had it been to the 11 only, the command would have died w/ them and Christ gives us the order. We must not change it.

So why go? First of all because our Lord commands it. Acts 1:8 *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* Acts 16:9-10 *"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."* Paul, the apostle had a vision of a man in another place saying *"Come over into Macedonia and help us."* It says that Paul immediately

endeavored to go there. He didn't wait to double-check his expenses, bank accounts; he didn't ask to see what Luke thought about it. They went to help.

Now, by helping the people of Macedonia Paul didn't bring them canned food, money, or clothes. He preached to them the gospel. That's the help they-needed-Not handouts from the missionary. Acts 8:26-40

Philip sent to desert, Euich baptized into Jerusalem church. 1 Corinthians 1:17-25

God could have chosen any other method He wanted to use to save His people, but He chose preaching. We believe in a sovereign God who saves all of His elect. We believe that they will all come to Christ and none will ever get to fell, but way too often we forget how they will be saved. It is by the foolishness of preaching. Romans 10:8-17

We as Baptists will emphatically say "amen" to the fact that "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." But when someone asks, "how shall they preach except they be sent." There is an order to everything.

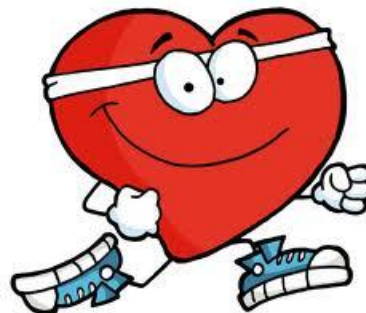
The fact that most would prefer to preach in the church building 3 times a week does not change this passage! This building is not the mission field. Our work does not stop at the door- It's just begun. You and I have the responsibility of preaching the gospel to a lost and dying world! 1 Corinthians 9:14-18

"Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" Can everyone here say that? Is the desire to tell others about Christ burning in your soul? It should be. Your coworkers, friends, family members, and the people you pass on the street are dying and you know the cure. Preach the gospel and do it willingly. Romans 1:14-17

Go and preach the gospel because it is the "power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." There's no other way to be saved. The so-called "gospel tracts" won't do it, radio programs aren't enough, sending money to foreign missions does not take away our duty. John 4:35 Luke 10:1-3

In our country, we have probably the most neglected mission field of the world. I've seen it time and time again...many want to go to other countries to serve. Most churches will not support a "home missionary" when they can support a foreign one. Lift up your eyes, the field is white unto harvest, but the laborers are few. The heathen is America need to hear the gospel just as much as the heathen in Papua New Guinea or South America. We may not be able to go to another country, but let's not neglect our own. Isaiah 6:8

We have a great duty- May we be willing and ready to do it.



Point Of View: Bro. Craft Missionary to Mexico



(The Craft family)

About Bro. Bert Craft:

“Born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, on January 7, 1964, I am the oldest son of my parents, Berton Roger Craft and Karen Kay Kreiser. I have one younger blood sister, Tracey Lynn Craft. I married Heather Jane Williams, the love of my life and a wonderful helpmeet, on December 27, 1990. The Lord has blessed us with seven living children: Joanna Esther, Berton "Bertito" Roger, Ruth Elisabeth, Lydia Anna, Sarah Grace, Micaiah David, and Hananiah Ariel.”

How and when did the Lord save you?

“In His mercy and grace, the Lord called me to Himself at about the age of 16, when I received an invitation to attend the Calvary Baptist Church of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Totally ignorant of the Bible and virtually all spiritual realities, the Lord used the message to awaken me to my spiritual need. I began to read the Bible daily, particularly the Gospels, and began attending some of the church services. There was a war within my soul as I learned of my need to turn away from my sin which I really loved and turn to Christ and love Him with all of my heart. I praise my Redeemer God for calling me out of darkness and into His marvelous light a number of months later. He granted me repentance, a loathing and turning from my sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who really loved me and gave His life for me on the cross of Calvary. By His sustaining grace, the Lord has preserved me until this day through many personal failings, through temptations, through afflictions, and through many trials and tribulations. I praise the Lord with all of my heart for what He has done in me and for me.”

How and when did the Lord bring you to a Baptist church and church truth?

“While I was engaged to Heather, I finished up my theological studies at the Historic Baptist Bible College and Seminary in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada. At that time, I was a member of a congregation that my father-in-law pastored. My father-in-law was grooming and preparing me for ordination, when one Sunday evening in his living room I asked him how I should answer the question in my ordination if the church is local and visible or universal and invisible. My father-in-law had no answer for my question so I began a prolonged study of the Bible related to the doctrine of the church. During the next several months, the Lord made me a Baptist by conviction, but I still did not have Baptist baptism (Scriptural baptism). Heather also began to study and embrace these truths, so we started to pray for her father that God would open his eyes and allow him to see the need to reorganize the congregation he pastored and seek authority from a Scriptural church so that all could be properly baptized. One day after a confrontational situation where I was required by my father-in-law to accept his congregation as a Scriptural church and their baptism as authoritative baptism, Heather and I cried out to God to lead us to a church with

Biblical convictions, Scriptural authority, and historic perpetuity. In the providence of the Lord, we joined an unaffiliated, independent Baptist church, whose pastor when I first met him asked me if I was a John the Baptist Baptist....How often do you get asked that question? After we were interviewed by him and the church, we were received into their fellowship by Scriptural baptism.

As many are aware of our testimony, in 2001, while on the mission field and teaching through the Book of Revelation and a Bible Institute course on the Godhead, the Lord brought me to embrace the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God in all things. Upon informing my pastor and without causing any division among the church body, our sponsoring church (where we were baptized) revoked my ordination to the Gospel ministry and labeled the Gospel that we preached a false Gospel. Because of this harsh criticism, we deemed it necessary to seek another Scriptural church and unite with her via baptism (true churches only accept members from other churches of like faith and practice). We united with Newby Baptist Church in Richmond, Kentucky, on May 1, 2002, where I was eventually ordained once again to the Gospel ministry.”

The Mission Work:

“We are sponsored, sent, supported and supervised by the Cadillac Baptist Church of Cadillac, Michigan where Elder Ryan Austin is pastor.”

“Being a foreign missionary in Mexico, I am not permitted to hold a job whereby I would be "stealing" work from a national laborer. Before going full time into the ministry, I was an employee of Federal Express and was prospering in my own business that I had started.”

“Our greatest need is prayer....fervent, effectual, believing prayer of righteous men and women that avails much. Our mission work has not been with the idea of just starting one church, but rather we have aspired to pattern our work after the mission principles of the Apostle Paul and the early churches.

When Paul and Barnabas left the Antioch church, they were sent forth to a work not to a geographic place. Paul went many places preaching the Gospel and in only some of those communities were N.T. churches founded and established. We have preached the Gospel in dozens of communities and the Lord in His grace has raised up two churches that are now organized and have national, ordained leadership (Chetumal, Quintana Roo and Elder Narciso Martinez and San Agustin Mixtepec, Oaxaca and Elder Guadalupe Hernandez). Presently, we are working with a mission in Oaxaca City, Oaxaca and two other preaching points (Nochixtlán, Oaxaca and Comalcalco, Tabasco) in which it looks like there are going to be baptism real soon and will become mission works with the intent that they become autonomous, independent Baptist churches.

Our evangelistic ministries consist of public, open-air preaching, house to house visitation, tract distribution in marketplaces, events, bus stations, parks, etc. Our literature includes an invitation to receive a free Bible study course which we send to all who respond. We are involved in the translation of good, sound books into Spanish (in November we started the book, "Three Witnesses For The Baptists," written in English by Elder Curtis Pugh). We are also involved in the printing of these books and other evangelistic and discipleship materials. Since 2000, we have had a Bible Institute for the training of men who have surrendered to the ministry.”

Where in Mexico do you live?

“We are presently in the state of Oaxaca for two more weeks and then we will be living in the state of Quintana Roo.”

What is the religious atmosphere like in Mexico?

“The religious atmosphere in any country is never stagnant but always changing and throughout one country there can be different religious climates. Historically, Oaxaca is traditionally a strong climate of Catholic fanaticism and one where martyrdom is a possibility any day of the year, but some days it is more probable than others. The Catholic fanaticism of Oaxaca is not based on Biblical knowledge and study of the Scriptures, but rather on the traditions and customs of the local people. The Catholicism of Mexico is many times a pretext for drunkenness y debauchery of all sorts.”

What if any problems or dangerous to being a genuine Christian do you face in Mexico?

“True, fervent Christians in Mexico still suffer persecutions of varying degrees. The society is culturally Catholic, so a true Christian is immediately at odds with his family structure, upbringing, traditions, and parents and grandparents. They can be ostracized, rejected, disinherited, and disowned. In some communities where there is Catholic dominance, they can be deprived common services of electricity, water, and even buying in their town stores. The persecution escalates when the Catholics gather in larger numbers, are intoxicated with alcoholic beverages or ebriated with their idols. This persecution results in physical assaults, beatings, humiliation, and at times actual death. Our brethren have been subjected to some of these sufferings and virtually all of them have had their lives threatened.”

On Politics:

What kind of political system does Mexico have? How does this effect life there positively or negatively?

“Mexico is a federal republic. Its governmental authority is centralized in Mexico City and the 31 States that make up the country are virtually puppets of the federal government. What comes out of Mexico City is what permeates the rest of the country. In the predominantly Indian areas of Mexico, like in Oaxaca, many of the indigenous communities do not recognize any government outside of their local communities which they declare are governed by traditions and customs, which is nothing more than what they declare they have done for hundreds, yea thousands of years. Both of these types of government lead to extreme corruption as the authorities have no one to check their powers.”

How are relations with Mexico's neighboring countries like?

“Surprising to most Americans is the reality that Mexico blames all of its problems on their neighbor to the north. The mass media always portrays Americans in a negative light. They love American money and benefits but they really do not respect or appreciate the American way of life. There are exceptions to this, but the common person typically has many prejudices against or even despises Americans due to the hatred-saturated media that has brainwashed Mexicans toward Americans.”

Is Islam spreading in Mexico like it is in the USA?

“The spread of Islam is not generally reported on in Mexico. However, what is actually very prevalent in Mexico is communism and socialism. The universities and virtually all educational institutions are replete with staff and teachers that have been thoroughly indoctrinated in this radical way of thinking and living. These influences breed anarchy, rancor, hatred of capitalism, distrust of the wealthy, and liberation theology within the Catholic church. This is a constant cancer within the country that produces many negative aspects of life.”

What is the immigration policy like in Mexico?

“The immigration policy was radically changed within the last two years, making it seemingly easier for Americans and other foreigners to enter Mexico and live within her sovereign borders. It seems that the reason for this loosening of the immigration rules is the national hope that the United States will take into consideration their liberal policy to foreigners and grant the multiplied multitudes of their own countrymen in the United States the same courtesy, and ultimately grant the undocumented aliens legalization and/or citizenship.”

Is there a very nationalistic spirit in Mexico? In what ways is nationalism the same or different from the USA?

“The nationalistic spirit of the Mexican people is very palpably different from the United States. The Mexican/Prehispanic culture is much more ancient than the culture of the relatively young United States of America. The nationalism of the United States has been forged through the last 250 years by taking a melting pot citizenship from every nation of the world and making them one united nation under the principles of the founding fathers and common interests. The Mexico culture is thousands of years old (Mexico City is the oldest city in North America) with a binding national pride, culture and way of life. Their nationalism has not been forged, but rather developed for millenniums. Having said that, I believe that hands down, the average American would be more willingly to give his life for his country than the average Mexican. In celebration, the Mexican is more nationalistic; in the defense of his country, principles, and way of life, the American is more tenaciously nationalistic.”

Does the "war on terror" have any effects on Mexico? What are your thoughts on this?

“The war on terror has greatly affected the country of Mexico just as it has affected American life and the liberties of its citizens. Mexico has basically played the role of copycat in its dealings with the war on terror by imitating many of the things that are done in the United States. From the common person's perspective it seems that the measures that are employed to fight the war on terror are more for appearances rather than real security.”

How about the drug war, have you seen anything that may differ from what people in the US are told in our media?

“As I stated in an earlier answer, the drug war that exists and the countless thousands that have lost their lives is the Americans' fault. The Mexican reasons that if the U.S. did not have such an addiction to drugs and the quantities of money needed to purchase the drugs, the problem would not exist in their own country. The reality of the drug wars and the extreme violence in Mexico is much worse than what is reported. There is not liberty to report the violence openly in Mexico as it usually results in the violent murder of the reporter. I have been told by Mexicans who live on or near the U.S. border that they know more of the violence that takes place in Mexico because the U.S. news reports more frankly on what is happening in Mexico. Mexico is a nation that desperately needs the Gospel and God-called laborers to boldly proclaim the Word of God and the liberating salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Remind the Brethren”

by Bro. Stephen McCool, Sr



I Timothy 4:6 *"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."*

In the verse above Paul tells Timothy to remind the brethren of the things that they have been taught concerning good doctrine. In the verses before this Paul warned Timothy of false teachers to come.

In verse 1 Paul says *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter time some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and the doctrines of devils;"* Folks we are in the "latter time" Paul refers

to here. Paul tells Timothy that if he is a good minister of Jesus Christ he will remind the brethren of these things. There are many false teachers out there today preaching the doctrines of devils. Many have strayed from the scripture. They have forgotten the truths that they were taught from their youth and have gone after the teachings of the world. I know of many who grew up hearing good sound doctrine but are now sitting under the teachings of a seducing spirit. I have been told that we are small in number because we teach an outdated doctrine or nobody wants to hear doctrine preached any more. I have been told that if we will teach what the people want to hear they will come. But isn't this what was predicted in the scripture? Did not the Lord tell us that the time would come when they would not hear sound doctrine?

II Timothy 4:2 *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."* Paul tells us to preach the word. Then in verses 3 and 4 he tells us *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* Nowhere does Paul tell us to change what we preach. As in the first verse we looked at he tells us to remind the brethren of the truth. If we are to be considered good ministers of Jesus Christ we are to remind the brethren of the truths. That includes teaching doctrine.

As I have stated in the past, the word of God is doctrine. All of the word of God is doctrine. There are those out there that do not want to hear doctrine preached. All they want is a message that will make them feel good about themselves. They do not want to hear about their sin or about how Jesus is the only way to heaven. They want to hear what they can do to better themselves physically and financially. They could care less about their soul or the souls of others.

II Timothy 3:16-17 *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* If God said the scripture is "profitable for doctrine" then how can we preach and teach without preaching and teaching doctrine. If a preacher is not reminding the brethren of God's doctrines is he not a minister of Jesus Christ. He is neglecting the charge to preach Paul gives in II Timothy 4:1-5.

Labor In Love, part VI

Sis. Grace Brooks from Canada, whom we've interviewed before for the Point Of View column, chatted with us this month on the subject of her work as a writer, if you've read any of her books before you'll be more familiar with her pen name "Heather Radford."

When did you start using a pen name and why?

In the era that I grew up it was expected of authors to use a pen name. I don't think it's quite as common today. I started using a pen name with the series I'm writing now. When I first published the books through LULU.COM, I used my real name. These books are no longer available. I wanted to use the name Heather Radford since I knew I wanted to write.

When and why did you start writing?

I've written almost from the time I started school. My favorite subjects in school were English and Composition. I remember in grade five it made my year when my teacher insisted my composition be posted on the bulletin board for all to read. I was so proud. The composition was about a girl frightened by what she thought was a ghost one dark night. At the end the "GHOST" turned out to be a white birch tree.

What do you write about?

So far, I've written fiction for Young Adults up to adult. The story subjects cover just about everything. For example, The Asquinn Twins:

Frontier Life is about a family that leaves Wales. The Father is a missionary and the family settles in a small Northern Ontario village and starts a New Testament Church. The story covers the twins' lives pretty much as they grow up in Forest Lake. Books Two and Three continue on until these children are grown up and families of their own. So pretty much every age group is included. All my books uphold Primitive Baptist Doctrine, and hopefully, help troubled youth through hard times.

When did you have your first book published? How long had it taken you to get published?

My first book, "A Dog For Keeps" was published in Canada by Nelson, in 1987 and by Charlesbridge in the United States, in 1989.

What other books/series have you written?

I've written "A Dog For Keeps." This story is about fourteen year old Ivy Herman and her Canadian Eskimo dog, Snow Queen. Snow Queen is the lead dog in Ivy's dog team. When the family fall on hard times, Ivy's father tells Ivy they need to sell Snow Queen in order to get enough money to stay afloat. Before this happens, Snow Queen saves Ivy's life in a terrible, horrible blizzard. Ivy gets to keep Snow Queen. This is a grade five school reader and not available to the public.

What kind of feed back have you gotten from readers?

"I enjoyed reading your book, I've been blessed by what I read, the Asquinn Twins Series could be used by anyone in charge of youth in anyway as a manual, and these books should be on the shelves of ever Christian bookstore" are some of the feedback I get from readers.

What are some of the difficulties of being a professional writer?

I don't know if I'm a professional writer. Professionals bring in an income from writing, I don't.

How has God blessed you through your writing?

God has blessed me every time someone tells me they have been blessed by my writing. Each time I check the Bible for scripture verses used in my stories, I feel the Holy Spirit teaches me more, also. Another book I've written is a Children's grade five school reader, 'A Dog For Keeps' This was a very popular book and I lived through several years of fame because of it. God blessed me in writing this book that fame is not to be sought after.

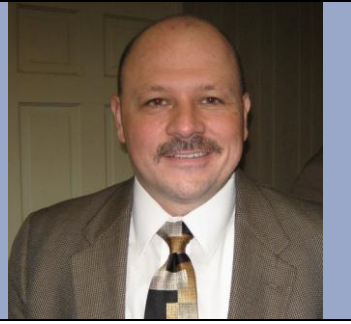


(Sis. Grace's dog Kali reading 'reading' "The Asquinn Twins: Where The Trail Forks: Book Two")

You can find two of Sis. Grace's books on Amazon.com under her pen name or click these links;

[The Asquinn Twins: Frontier Life](#) &
[The Asquinn Twins: Where the Trail Forks](#)

**“Devotion:
He shall choose our
inheritance for us”
by Bro. Jeff Short**



“He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.” ~ Psalm 47:4

I have a particular Bible from which I usually read. It has a couple of markers in it that I move from day to day as I read through the passages. This morning, without much thought, I picked up another Bible, the one I use in devotions with my children. I prayed the Lord to open His Word to me and to give me direction in submitting to His will. I opened the book on the table and began cleaning my reading glasses. When I looked upon the open pages, I found I had opened to Psalm 47. My eyes were drawn to verse four, *“He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.”*

The whole Psalm is about the sovereign power of God. He is named the *“LORD most high”* (Psalm 47:2) and *“God... the king of all the earth”* (Psalm 47:7). His power is seen in execution as He *“reigneth over the heathen”* and *“sitteth upon the throne of his holiness”* (Psalm 47:8). What a just power is God’s and how right it is that He sits upon His throne! *“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter”* (Psalm 45:6). Surely, *“he is greatly exalted”* (Psalm 47:9).

The application of this truth in this particular Psalm is wonderful. The directive in the opening is to His people, *“O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph”* (Psalm 47:1). God’s sovereign right and power is given as reason for this command. God’s sovereign reign is here seen as the victory and rejoicing of His people. The promise is, *“He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet”* (Psalm 47:3). All for which we are to *“Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises”* (Psalm 47:6).

Now let us turn our attention more to our text. We have noted the power of God and His right to rule *“over all the earth”* (Psalm 47:2). His reign is not limited, but extends to all the affairs of men. He did not create a universe and merely set it in motion to move arbitrarily. He not only ‘flung the stars out into space,’ He also ‘holds them in their proper place.’ It is God *“Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains”* (Psalm 147:8). Furthermore, *“He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry”* (Psalm 147:9).

Can we question God’s intimate involvement in the order of the earth and all life upon it? *“He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow”* (Psalm 147:15-18). Here God is seen directing the forces of nature with His word, not leaving things to their own course. *“He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.”* With what part of His creation is He not involved daily? *“Behold the fowls of the air for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them”* (Matthew 6:26). With all this in mind, it should seem no problem that *“He shall choose our inheritance for us.”* In fact, His choice is *“the excellency of Jacob*

whom he loved.” Can we fathom that His choice would not be to our good? *“The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it”* (Proverbs 10:22).

The “inheritance” here is the gift of God to His people. It is His blessing to choose and bestow this inheritance *“as seemeth good unto him”* (2 Samuel 15:26). Our text has to do with our submission unto God—our submission to His perfect will. Some hold to God’s sovereignty as an excuse to live recklessly saying, *“Whatever will be, will be.”* However, it is a very different thing to live by faith and trust Him to *“choose our inheritance for us.”* The latter is to rely upon Him and relegate all of our choice to His infinite wisdom, to want only what He wants for us and to abhor what He would not allow.

O to sing with Fanny Crosby:

I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith, And be closer drawn to Thee.
Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord, By the power of grace divine;
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope, And my will be lost in Thine.

David said, *“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart”* (Psalm 37:4). I do not believe this verse is saying that we will be given what we want if we delight in Him. I believe we are taught here that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the right desires. In other words, He will cause us to want what He wants in all things. A similar thought is expressed in John 15:7, *“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”* The truth here is not that abiding in Christ gives us the power to make our wishes come true, but rather that God’s will shall become our will. This is why we can ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us.

In closing, let us rejoice in God’s almighty power. Let us see the sovereign will of God as our victory in *“the life that now is, and of that which is to come”* (1 Timothy 4:8). Let us trust Him in all things. Then we can say gladly with the sons of Jacob, *“He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.”*

“Every Knee Shall Bow”

by Bro. Wm. Doyal Thomas

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11).

It is a woefully sad commentary that man has refused to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ since the day that Adam first sinned. Yet it is true. Historically and scripturally, none can deny this terrible reality. It is true. To man’s everlasting shame, it is true.

Cain refused to submit, in that he brought forth from the ground the fruit thereof so as to attempt to appease God on his own terms. Is this not a clear and flagrant refusal to submit to God? God had not commanded sacrifice in the form that seemed reasonable to Cain.

And why was Cain a tiller of the ground to begin with? Was man created and brought forth so that he would be merely a *“tiller of the ground”*? Let us for a moment examine the book of Holy Writ so as to ascertain the real facts. This careful audit of Genesis 2:4-9 will reveal some wondrously startling things to us.

“These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it

to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Genesis 2:4-9

These scriptures declare plainly that God had brought forth from the ground every tree and herb. And this was done before He created man. Thus it is, that God in His marvelous provision had arranged, ordained, and brought into fruition all that man would ever need or could ever desire to remain happy, contented, and joyous in the place and duty where His Creator had seen fit to assign him. And that was to serve God. Verse 5 tells us that when God had created the plant life and all vegetation varieties, there was at that time "*not a man to till the ground*". The ground did not need to be "tilled" in order for it to bring forth, for it had been perfectly created and all matters set in order by the Creator, ere man had come upon the scene. Because there was no sin, there was no curse upon the earth. Because there was no curse upon the earth, there was no necessity that the earth be "tilled". This all came about as the result of sin, and not before sin entered was there this requirement.

So, man was not made so that he could or would become a tiller of the ground. And thus it is, that Cain was what he was as the result of sin, and only as the result of sin.

But why did he become a "*tiller of the ground*"? Because his father, Adam, would not submit to the Lordship of his Creator God over him. He willingly agreed to give heed to his deceived wife, thus denouncing his position as a creature servant of God.

Then note God's pronouncement upon Adam and his posterity in Genesis 3:17-19. "*And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it thou was taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."*

Because of Adam's sin the earth was put under God's curse. And Adam was then required to till the ground to receive the fruits thereof. And by the sweat of his face it was to be, and is unto this very day. Why all this? Because of the sin that came from within the heart of Adam as Satan had introduced it there. Adam from that moment refused to submit to the Lordship of God. When Adam ate, his eyes were opened. His eyes were opened, not in the sense that his physical eyes had been closed; but rather, the eyes of his understanding were opened to certain realities. He became acutely aware of the command that God had spoken unto him. He became aware of his own condition, and that is, he is now a criminal, for he has broken God's command. He becomes aware of his own terrible fallen state, for the penalty that God had assigned for commandment breakers suddenly dooms him to eternal separation from God!

The result of Adam's eyes, and the eyes of Eve, his wife, being opened is, they both flee from God. They attempt to appease God by fashioning fig leaf aprons in their vain attempt to cover their nakedness. And they are not merely physically naked, themselves being exposed to all of God's creation. Rather, or more terribly, their exposure to the justifiable wrath of God is now evident.

Adam would not have God to rule over him. He would not submit to the Lordship of God. And it was sin that did that. Adam sinned, and the result is that he became separated from God. And man, to include Cain, has been in that deplorable state since that moment. Likewise Abel, for depravity is inherited, and sin poisons the bloodstream of Adam and his offspring.

Now, all have sinned and all are therefore exposed to God's wrath, and to the judgment of God against their sin. And God has declared by the voice of the prophets of old, and by the inspired men of the New Testament writings that there is coming a time when all shall submit to Him, and that all shall bow the knee unto Him.

"I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." (Isaiah 45:23).

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." (Romans 14:11).

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11).

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever." (Revelation 5:13,14). Thus, we conclude: "*Every knee ...*"

The Elect Shall Bow

When God, in effectual grace (and there is NO GRACE that isn't) brings one of His chosen ones unto Himself, that called one responds, positively. In submission, the called ones come to Him who called, and this without exception.

Let us look at the effectual call of God for a moment so that we may be instructed from God's record.

Abel was led to bring an acceptable and suitable offering, while Cain was left to himself, in reprobation. "*And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."* (Genesis 4:3-5).

Isaac was a chosen one, while Ishmael was passed by and left to himself in reprobation. "*And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."* (Genesis 17:19-21).

Jacob also was God's choice, and not Esau, who was left to himself in reprobation. "*And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger."* (Genesis 25:22,23). "*As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* (Romans 9:13, Malachi 1:2,3).

Saul of Tarsus was God's choice, and not his companions in their united efforts to defeat God and His purpose. Saul heard an effectual call, and they were left to themselves in reprobation. "*And I fell unto the ground,*

and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed a light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." (Acts 22:7-10).

There were two criminals who were put to death on the day that Jesus laid down His own life in sacrificial death upon the cruel tree at Calvary. One of these two evil-doers however, was a chosen one while the other was left to himself in reprobation.

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he saith unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:39-43).

The elected ones, each at God's appointed time are brought to see Jesus, and to be made to know who He is. Each and every one of these submit to Jesus Christ as Lord, and they address Him as Lord. Each of these, without exception, are so brought and so submit.

We sometimes hear much about a general call that goes out to men everywhere. And there is such a call. But no sinner has ever responded to that call to the saving of his soul, or as the result of his soul having been saved. However, the Scriptures are filled with accounts that God has provided of individuals who have been effectually called by the gospel, and they all, each and every one of them has responded. Remember Saul of Tarsus? His response was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

And note this fact also: "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him." (Matthew 4:18- 20).

Now, realizing that this occurrence that Matthew records is a call by Jesus of these two brothers to follow Him into the service that He has appointed, I nevertheless have referred to it to make a further point. Those whom Jesus calls to serve Him are the same ones whom He has called to receive life eternal from Him. And using these two men, we look again to Scripture.

John relates the ministry of John the Baptist in Chapter 1 of his record, and shows that the preaching that he did was sanctioned by the Holy Spirit and men were saved and disciples were called out. Among them was one named Andrew, and he talked with his brother Simon about his experiences. Note: "One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." (John 1:40,41).

These two were effectually called to salvation, and then Jesus Himself called them both to serve Him. The call to life always comes before a call to service.

God's people, for whom He sent His own Son to redeem are known by Him. Else He would be placed in the same position as a mere creature who may be moved somehow to draw a bow at a venture. And this is akin to blasphemy to even suggest.

The Scriptures make it very plain that God knows His people and has always known them. And He speaks of them as His people when He speaks of them at all. Metaphorically, He refers to them as sheep, and as His people. Hear Him so speak: "Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the

sheep of his pasture." (Psalms 100:3). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John 10:27-29).

At regeneration God's people are given life, according to His nature, and they follow Him. And they own Him as Lord. They do not receive Him as Saviour, and then at some convenient time later, decide to own Him as Lord.

May I call your attention to two striking texts of Scripture that are recorded for our learning on this matter?

"Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." (Luke 2:28-30). "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." (John 20:27,28).

And numberless other saints have their record written. And that is, they have owned His Lordship. They have bowed the knee unto Him and have acknowledged that He is very Christ. He is Lord.

The Reprobate Shall Bow

Without going through the Scriptures to verify that all reprobate will one day bow before Him and own Him as Lord, we will simply declare that the Scriptures affirm that they will.

We cite this text to establish the above statement. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:11- 15).

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life ..." Awesome prospect. All reprobate, each and every one of them are here included. Consider these, who according to Scripture were passed by and left to themselves. Will they bow the knee unto God?

What about Cain? And Ishmael? And Esau? And Pharaoh? And Judas? And the unrepentant thief? And all unrepentant thieves?

What about them? They too will one day submit. And they too will bow their knee unto Him and their tongues shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Amen, and amen.

(Previously published in *The Baptist Herald* - March, 1991)

Bonus verses: 1 Timothy 2:1-3 "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;"

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