

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." Gal. 5:1

NEWS LETTER

Issue #4

January 2013

Monthly verse: "And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." Joel 2:13

"Cracking Hardshellism"

by Bro. John Fry

If you would I would like for your to turn with me to the book of Romans,

"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:15-17

Now some of you are probably wondering just what hardshellism is? You may be wondering even right now am I a hardshell and not even know it?
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January reading

"The Road To Serfdom" by Fredrich A. Hayek
A Sixth Impression April 1945 edition by The University of Chicago Press with Forward by John Chamberlain will be read & reviewed by Joanna Works this month.

A Jewish economist from Austria who lived many years in both England and the United States, and is widely respected among supports of "Austrian economics" and libertarians, Mr. Hayek dedicated this book originally published in 1944 to "The Socialists of all parties."

In the introduction he states; "It is not to the Germany of Hitler, the Germany of the present war, that England and the United States bear yet any resemblance. But students of the currents of ideas can hardly fail to see that there is more than a superficial similarity between the trend of thought in Germany during and after the last war and the present current of ideas in the democracies. There exists now in these countries certainly the same determination that the organization of the nation which has been archived for purposes of defense shall be retained for the purposes of creation. There is the same contempt for nineteenth-century liberalism, the same spurious "realism" and even cynicism, the same fatalistic acceptance of "inevitable trends." And at least nine out of every ten of the lessons which our most vociferous reformers are so anxious we should learn from this war are precisely the lessons which Germany did learn from the last war and which have done much to produce the Nazi system.... Although

one does not like to be reminded, it is not so many years since the socialist policy of that country was generally held up by progressives as an example to be imitated,"

With both the Democrats & Republicans of today debating over keynesian (the most widely excepted economic philosophy in the USA today) economic policies and our "fiscal cliff" there is much to be learned by looking at Mr. Hayek's economic, historical & political views. Look a complete review of "Road To Serfdom" on our website this month.

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Sermon: "Cracking Hardshellism"



by Bro. John Fry

(Continued from front page)

The term itself is usually used in a derogatory manner. Though some wear the term proudly. Hardshellism is the underlying belief that the gospel is not needed for the salvation of man. It takes the doctrines of grace that we faithfully hold two and takes them to extreme, what some would call hyper-Calvinism. It is just as extreme in difference to what we teach and believe as Armenianism is. The hardshell believes because God is the one who is doing the saving that the Spirit works in the life of one to bring them into regeneration, apart from the preaching of the gospel. They do not believe faith in Christ is necessary for regeneration. They believe that regeneration occurs in the subconscious of the mind and that man can be completely unaware of it. Therefore, the heathen can be regenerated and not even know.

The sect therefore rejects any of man's efforts to convert the lost as the devices of men. Therefore they typically soundly reject Sunday Schools, mission works, and seminaries. The growth of this group really came in the early 1800's when the split in thinking really became evident. The early leaders of the movement taught that this was the original position of the Baptist church and therefore called themselves Primitive Baptist. Today there are different divisions of the Primitive Baptist based on how much they hold to certain doctrines. It is not my intention to give you a history on the group that today wear the badge of Primitive Baptist. My concern is in fact that many Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist have developed tenets of these doctrines without even realizing it.

We know many brothers in the faith today that soundly reject any Sunday School as being something they consider to be unscriptural because it is not mentioned in the word of God. I had a brother to remark to me one time who was on the road to this line of thinking without knowing it when we were holding a Bible School that we need to watch what we say after all we weren't trying to get anyone saved. It maybe true that I do not want to coarse a decision out of a child that doesn't understand Christ at all. But would we really be opposed if the Lord would use the words of a Sunday School teacher or a Bible School worker to sow the seeds of salvation in a child's heart? I certainly wouldn't. I know preachers who refuse to close a service with any kind or form of invitation at the end of the service. I know where these thoughts come from. They flow from a rejection of Armenianism. That is the desire to force someone or persuade someone to make a decision to be saved. For

those that have been involved in those kinds of services you know that often the altar call, as they call it, is as long as the preaching service. The call is built around emotion with hymns going on in the background pleas to accept Jesus, raising your hand, while everyone's head is bowed in case your too ashamed to come down front.

And let's just face it people are emotional creatures and they react to the pleas and they come. But within a short time you see they are right back to life the way it was because there has been no real change to the heart. It is like the seed that was cast on shallow ground that sprang up quick and then withers away.

Sovereign Grace preachers have become so afraid of being called an Armenian that they will not utter any words that remotely sound like an invitation.

You know when we close services I nearly always make some kind of invitation. I don't know who the Lord is working on or has been working on. I will tell you this we make an invitation not for someone to come up and get saved but rather we make an invitation for one to come whom the Lord has saved and desires to profess it before men and follow after the Lord in scriptural baptism. That is the pattern of God's holy word.

Folks there is nothing magical about the front of this church that saves people. God does the saving and he can do it anywhere at anytime, but that being said it will never take place without the preaching, teaching, or instruction of the gospel message. Whether it be here in this church or over dinner with a friend or even lying in the bed at night talking to your children. And yes, let me clarify that as well everyone has the ability to witness the gospel message to another for the saving of the soul. We soundly reject the notion as well that a person can only be saved by the preaching of an ordained preacher.

This morning though I want to look with you in God's word. Let's see together was the early church as the Primitive's might suggest or even the hardshell's of our ranks really not missionary minded. Were they really against the preaching of the gospel for the saving of souls?

Let's first turn to the book of Matthew in the last chapter. *"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 alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* Matthew 28:18-20

Here we have Christ giving what we call the great commission. Christ told his church to go, teach and baptize. Now Christ told the church here that he was going to be with them from then till the end of the world or the end of the current age. Folks if this be the case then it ought to be the desire of every church of the Lord to take the word of God as far as they can take it using whatever ways they can do it. This just seems simple to me. The anti-mission idea seems to strike great difficulty with this scripture for they practice not the Great Commission but rather the Great Omission.

Now let's look into the early movement of the church. Let's look at how they presented the gospel message. Let's turn to the first gospel sermon recorded in the word of God following the ascension of Christ.

Act 2:14 *"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and*

hearken to my words:"

From the beginning of the sermon Peter calls their attention to hearken to my words. Now the people are there because of the great sound that was heard when the Spirit filled the house where the Apostles were. No where are we told these men were regenerated before they heard the gospel. In fact I can't find that anywhere in the New Testament. For the sake of time I'm not going to read the entire sermon, but if you would look down with me to,

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Act 2:21

I'm afraid I know a lot of men that because of the Armenian abuse of this verse would steer away from ever quoting it.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Act 2:22 -24

What is he doing here folks? He is presenting the gospel of a crucified and risen Savior. Why because that is the heart of the gospel message that calls men to salvation. Now look down with me to verse,

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:36-39

Folks I want you to look at verse 37. Pay close attention. When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart. They were not pricked in the heart before the gospel was preached. They were pricked in the heart because it is the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. Is the message apart from the working of God? No the gospel message is powerless unless the Holy Spirit breaks the hearts of sinful man so that the calling of the gospel might be made effectual.

Peter then offers the invitation of baptism to those who have been saved. Peter is not a hardshell.

We learn in the word of God how the gospel of Christ was first preached to the Jews and then it was preached to the Samaritans who were kind of like half Jews and then lastly the Gentiles.

So let's look at the message that was taken to the Samaritans. Was it anti gospel and anti missionary. Well the fact that Philip a deacon from the church at Jerusalem was sent there ought to tell us that it wasn't anti missionary, but look with me to what was preached.

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." Acts 8:5 &6

So the first thing Philip did was to preach to them Christ. That is preach to them the gospel message. And the people once again were converted because of the power of the gospel and the working of the Holy Spirit.

Look down in verses, Act 8:12 *"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."*

Folks I'm convinced that Philip didn't have to beat a confession out of them. When God is truly working in ones heart to make effectual the gospel call then no one has to beat a profession of faith out of anyone. Here these people gladly were baptized following their salvation. So that brings us to the Gentiles. Were the Gentiles saved without hearing the gospel? Were they saved and didn't even know it? The answer is no of course. The Gentiles were saved through the preaching of the gospel of Christ. In the word of God there is no greater missionary to the Gentile people than Paul. Now in the beginning I opened up where he had written that the gospel was the power of God unto salvation. That is to say that the gospel was the means in which God uses for the conversion of men. However, let's see if this is what Paul truly believed and practiced what he preached.

Look with me in the book of 1 Corinthians, *"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."* 1 Corinthians 1:17 &18

Now Paul was addressing the division of the church there over baptism. Some feeling they were more important than others because some were baptized by Peter and others by other saints. Paul makes it clear here by the way that baptism is not needed for salvation, otherwise he would have baptized everyone he could get his hands on. But look what Paul says in verse 18. As foolish as it seems for men to tell the story of Christ it is what God uses to save his people. There is no other way.

Look down in verse 21, 1Co 1:21 *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."*

So that was the message Paul preached to the people there at Corinth. Look with me now to the book of Romans. Let's see what he told them.

We want to turn to a very familiar piece of scripture here. One that is often half quoted in so called alter calls. But in its entirety it is the truth of God's word.

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:8-17

Notice here that faith cometh by hearing. Hearing what? The word of God, the gospel of Christ of course. One will never come to the knowledge of Christ unless the message is brought to them.

Listen Paul knew that God has a chosen people. Paul understood predestination and election. He writes many wonderful words about these doctrines. But Paul understood that God chose the hearing of the gospel as the way to bring salvation to man. Paul no where or for that matter any of the Apostles teach that man can be saved without it. To believe in any other way goes against the clear teaching of the Great Commission. Now I believe whole heartedly in the sovereignty of God and God could have chosen not to use man in the calling of his saints. But he gave man the privilege and honor to be able to tell another person about Christ and the Spirit use those words for salvation. Hardshellism is anti Great Commission. Hardshellism causes churches to begin to wither and waste away. Hardshellism creeps into good churches when people become so bent on the preaching of the Doctrines of Grace that they begin to think that the Doctrines of Grace is the gospel message instead of Christ. I love the Doctrines of Grace, but because of the Doctrines of Grace I know I have a people to preach the gospel too.

Now this morning I have talked a lot about the danger of theological hardshellism and how it stifles the preaching of Christ and the cross. I think most of you would agree. And you might think for a moment that you in no way could ever agree with the hardshell dogma. I don't think any of you could.

But as much as we disagree with the premise of their theology, do you know we very often in our lives exhibit practical hardshellism. There is a difference. Theological hardshells believe there is no need to go. The practical hardshell is the one who knows the message must go forth, but does nothing themselves to promote its spread. Church members, when was the last time you told someone else about Christ or invited them to church? When we button our lips and are two ashamed or timid to speak about Christ, we are living a life of practical hardshellism. We know in our hearts that God is always going to bring the gospel to his elect so he can send someone else. God forgive us if this be our attitude.

God does have a chosen people and you are his chosen people to deliver the message of Christ. Tell all that you can. Invite them to church. And be missionary minded. We can't go to the whole world, but support those who are being sent of God by your prayers and by your offerings.

"A Biblical Look At Gun Control"

by Bro. David M. Green

"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 22:36) Today, we want to look at what the Bible says about gun control. The first thing that will come to your mind is that the Word of God is silent on guns. This is true, but only because there were no guns in the time the Bible was written.

The topic of gun control has recently come up as a "knee jerk" reaction to the horrible shooting that took place in Connecticut. There are some who misinterpret the Bible to say that a good Christian would never own a gun.

So what we want to do is look at the Bible's viewpoint on other weapons to see what our Lord said about them. In our passage, he instructed His followers to sell their clothes to go buy a sword if they did not already have one. In His day, a sword was the best weapon money could buy.

"Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:10-11)

Peter, when he realized what was happening to his Lord and Saviour, took his sword (which he obviously carried with him) and cut off the high priest's ear. This took a lot of skill, showing us that he knew his weapon well. Christ did not condemn him for having the sword, He did not tell him to get rid of it, but He instructed him to put it back in his sheath.

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." (Luke 11:21-22)

Christ illustrated the importance of being well armed here in this passage.

"Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses." (Nehemiah 4:13-14)

The people of God defended themselves against their enemies.

"If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him." (Exodus 22:2)

Just two chapters past Exodus 20:13, we read this passage. If a thief is found "breaking up" - doing the things that thieves do, if he dies there will be no blood shed for his life.

Guns have become a modern day controversial debate. Many modern nations have enlisted gun control of some form or another. Here are some examples:

- In 1938, Adolf Hitler began confiscating guns from Germany's citizens, and from 1939-1945 the Nazis murdered 13 million Jews, gypsies and other groups of people.
- In 1999, Australia passed harsh gun control laws. Law abiding citizens surrendered more than 640,000 firearms for destruction. The year 2000 showed the results of this crime reducing legislation: Australia-wide homicides are up 3.2 percent, assaults are up 8 percent and armed robberies are up 44 percent. In the state of Victoria, homicides committed with guns are up 300 percent!

America would do well to remember the following warnings:

"Laws that forbid the carrying of arms...disarm only those who are neither inclined or determined to commit crimes. Such laws only make things worse for the assaulted and

better for the assassins; they serve to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man." (Thomas Jefferson)

"Before a standing army can rule, the people must be disarmed, as they are in almost every country in Europe." (Noah Webster, 1787, Pamphlets on the Constitution of the US)

How, then, do we handle the problem of violent acts committed by people with guns?

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Genesis 9:6)

This passage tells us how to handle those who would use a gun (or any weapon) for murdering people. The death penalty is to be their punishment. Guns are neither good nor bad. Instead of gun control, we need people control.

In order for a human to be killed by a gun, another human must operate that gun.

Murder will happen whether there are guns in this world or not. Murder does not come from guns, it comes from the human heart. America doesn't need any more gun control; she needs harsher punishment to the murderer. If America would get right with God and follow His word, this country would be a much safer place for everyone.

As a closing thought I would point out that the shooting that happened in Connecticut occurred in a "gun free zone."

Whenever guns are outlawed the outlaws will still carry guns. The best way to stop a bad guy with a gun is to allow the good guys to carry them too!

NEWS

The 113th Congress:

The bar and expectations are set very low for our new congress, some say "the 112th congress had the lowest approval ratings in history."

After all the campaigning, voting, and inaugurations are done the Republicans kept control of the House of Representatives while Democrats maintain control of the Senate.

Some new faces to keep an eye on;

Senators Thomas Massie (R-KY) & Tom Cruz (R-TX), Tim Scott (R) who was appointed to take Jim DeMint of South Carolina's seat upon DeMint announcing leaving congress for a position with The Heritage Foundation. House of Representatives; Patrick Murphy (D) elected to replace Allen West (R) from Florida, Randy Weber (R) who was elected to take the seat of retiring Congressman Ron Paul of Texas.

Fight for Speaker of the house; John Boehner's leadership was challenged in December because of his actions at the RNC and his handling of the debt crises. Rep. Justin Amash who has openly opposed Boehner posted on his Facebook page on January 3rd "Proud to vote for Congressman Raul R. Labrador for Speaker of the the House of Representatives. Raul would defend liberty and work honestly with Democrats on debt reduction. We must act now for the sake of our next generation." However Boehner did successfully win the vote.

Never the less they did manage along with President Obama to "save us from the 'fiscal cliff'" Or did they?

Economics:

That dreaded 'fiscal cliff' is finally behind us, right, so what happened? Here is a statement from the White House's official website about the deal made;

- 1) *As the President promised, income tax rates for middle-class families will stay low permanently. That's good news for 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses.*
- 2) *As the President promised, for the first time in 20 years, a bipartisan agreement will increase tax rates on the wealthy. That rate increase will be immediate and permanent. Individuals making more than \$250,000 will be asked to pay a little more to help reduce the deficit through a combination of increased tax rates and reduced tax benefits.*
- 3) *This agreement cuts the deficit. It builds on the \$1 trillion of spending cuts the President signed into law in 2011 through the Budget Control Act. This new agreement cuts the deficit by \$737 billion by asking the wealthiest to begin to pay their fair share. Moving forward, the President is committed to reducing the deficit even more, splitting savings in a balanced way between spending cuts and even more revenue from the wealthiest*
- 4) *As part of this deal, a group of tax cuts that help middle-class families keep more money in their pockets and afford to pay for higher education was also extended. The Child Tax Credit, Earned Income Tax Credit, and the new American Opportunity Tax Credit will stay in effect for at least the next five years.*
- 5) *We'll continue making investments that create jobs in domestic clean energy and innovation because the agreement extends the Production Tax Credit and the Research & Experimentation Tax Credit.*
- 6) *Lawmakers agreed to extend emergency unemployment insurance for 2 million people looking for work.*
- 7) *This agreement doesn't cut Social Security benefits, Medicare, or Medicaid. That's because the President stood strong against reducing our deficit on the backs of seniors, students, the poor, and working families.*

Economist & Radio talk show host Peter Schiff had harsh criticism for the debt deal in his 25 minute video titled ["Congress Sells America Down The River to Avoid the Fiscal Cliff"](#). He explains the "inflation tax" will take away the buying power of the dollar even more. The description of the video says: "In a disgraceful show of political expediency, Congress puts its own political self-interest ahead of the national interest. They 'saved' us from a contrived crisis of their own making, only to condemn us to far more horrific fate when the real crisis arrives. This one will come not because we went over the fiscal cliff, but because we avoided doing so. Going over the fiscal cliff merely represented a small down payment on the solution. By failing to make it, the ultimate price we will inevitably pay will be that much higher." You can hear more from Mr. Schiff by listening to his radio show "The Schiff Report" or looking up his youtube [channel](#) which houses video segments of his radio program and more.

US-Moscow relations:

If you where to google "Russian Adoption Ban" or a similar phrase you will find articles, blogs, and even tv news clips of families from all over the United States who are fighting to complete the adoption proses they've begun before Russia passed the "Dima Yakovlev Law" in December 2012, banning adoptions of Russian children by US citizens.

The law is named after a Russian boy who was adopted and then died as a result of neglect and abuse from his adoptive American father in 2008. Naming this law after a victim of a horrible crime goes to show that US politicians aren't the only ones willing to play on people's emotions to get support for dangerous legislation.

On the political playing field the passing of this ban is just

another part of a series of tit-for-tat between the US government and Russia's leaders. It is a retaliation for the US "Magnitsky Law." The Magnitsky Law also known as the Magnitsky Act, Magnitsky Bill or, by its formal title, the Russia and Moldova Jackson-Vanik Repeal and Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012, passed by the U.S. Congress in November–December 2012. The bill was signed into law by President Barack Obama on December 14, 2012.

In 2009, lawyer and auditor Sergei Magnitsky died in a Moscow prison after exposing massive fraud involving Russian tax officials.

The main intention of the law was to punish Russian officials that were thought to be responsible for the death of Sergei Magnitsky by prohibiting their entrance to the United States and use of their banking system. The bill was sponsored by Senator Ben Cardin. The list of Russian officials who are supposed to be subjects of the bill was soon published.

In November 2012, provisions of the Magnitsky bill were attached to a House bill (H.R. 6156) normalizing trade with Russia (i.e. Repealing Jackson-Vanik amendment) and Moldova.

Many Russian leaders, such as Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, Foreign Affairs Minister Sergey Lavrov, Education Minister Dmitry Livanov, and others opposed the Dima Yakovlev law. Not likely they will gain traction in this battle.

Mean while there is much posturing in the middle east as both Russia and the U.S. Draw lines in the sand, and questions of Russia's involvement with the events in Benghazi on September 11th 2012.

All the future ramifications of this adoption ban are unknown at this time, but it is certain that it is already effecting many American households who where expecting an addition to their family, and many Russian children who need good homes will remain in orphanages.
(News sources: Heritage foundation's [article](#): & [Wiki Magnitsky Bill](#))

Legislation Rising:

To stay alert to legislation on issues that matter to you, you can subscribe to: [Majority Whip](#), which gives daily e-mail updates to the Schedule of the House of Representatives. The link for the weekly updates is not working at this.

To stay up to date on the Senate you can either visit the Republican Senate [website](#) or the Democrat Senate flour [website](#). Each one keeps calendars and information on legislation important to them.

Stay alert on legislations in your state you can find your state legislature's official website listed [here](#).

Some important issues that we'll be facing this year are; Gun control, Abortion regulation, Defunding Abortion, and state nullification of Obamacare, nullification of NDAA, and more.

While regulating & defunding abortion isn't the ultimate goal of anti-abortion movement and organizations, they are steps that will help save lives and have had some success or still battling it out in the states of Michigan, Ohio and Texas.

White House Press releases:

January 07, 2013

"President Obama will host President Hamid Karzai and his delegation at the White House for bilateral meetings on Friday, January 11. President Obama looks forward to

welcoming the Afghan delegation to Washington, and discussing our continued transition in Afghanistan, and our shared vision of an enduring partnership between the United States and Afghanistan."

Israel:

Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) is currently on a trip to Israel, he made this statement on Jan. 9th "Israel shouldn't have to get permission from the U.S. to defend themselves. I'm also concerned that some of the weaponry we are currently giving to Egypt may one day be used against Israel. The history and results of our foreign aid system certainly makes this more possible than not." Sen. Paul has been speaking about ending foreign aid for at least the past year.

Sermon: "Law and Grace"



by Bro. Timothy Works

John 1:17 *"The law came by Moses"*

Moses and Joshua; type of the relationship between Law and Grace. Both play a role in bringing lost sinners to salvation in Christ. Moses stands in type of the law; Joshua (which means savior) stands for grace. As we think of these two men and their relationship to each other and how their work/ministry relates to each other we see a type of Law & Grace.

Notice:

I. Law- Came by Moses John 1:17 *"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."*

A.) Shows us the righteous requirements of the Holy God.

B.) Condemns all who fail to keep the whole Law.

C.) Reveals our sins & guilt before God,

Romans 3:19-20 *"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."*

II. What the Law can not do:

A.) Can not fulfill those righteousness of God in us, Romans 8:3 *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:"*) Weak through the flesh. Moses smiting the Rock the 2nd time, could not lead the people into the promised land.

B.) The Law as a schoolmaster brings us to Christ, Galatians 3:23-25 *"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that*

faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

1. Moses led the children of Israel up to the boarders of the land- could look into it but could not enter in himself nor lead the people into it, Romans 3:30 *"Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."*

2. I Timothy 1:8 *"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;"* Only Grace (Joshua a type of Christ) not works (Moses a type of the Law) could do that: Ephesians 2:9 *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Romans 4:4-5 & 16, *"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."* & *"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,"*

Romans 6:14-15 *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."*

& Romans 11:6 *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."*

III. Grace Jesus

A.) Grace provides a perfect righteousness through faith, Romans 4:5 *"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."*

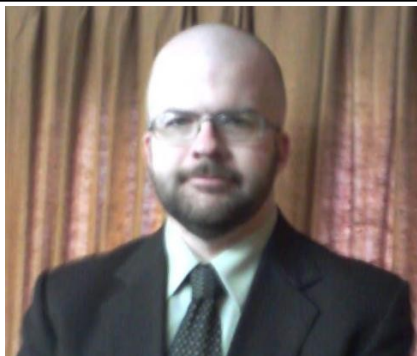
B.) Grace provides a perfect atonement for sin through faith, Romans 3:24 *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"*

C.) Grace provides the quickening- new birth by the Holy Spirit, Repentance of our sins, faith in the Son. Ephesians 2:1 & 8 *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;"* & *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"*

Grace not only leads us into the promise land- Salvation Also makes us more then conquers through Jesus, Romans 8:37 *"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."*

& I Corinthians 15:57 *"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

"A Biblical Defense of that Baptist Distinctive Freedom of Conscience"



by Bro. David Green

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (II Corinthians 3:17)

Conscience Defined.

Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language defines it thus, "Internal or self-knowledge, or judgment of right and wrong; or the faculty, power or principle within us, which decides on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our own actions and affections, and instantly approves or condemns them."

The conscience manifests itself in the feeling of obligation we experience, which precedes, attends and follows our actions.

Conscience is first occupied in ascertaining our duty, before we proceed to action; then in judging of our actions when performed."

First, what freedom of conscience is not:

Freedom of Conscience does not mean that we can ignore the commandments and principles of the Scripture and still expect God to be pleased. After all, conscience can be corrupted.

Titus 1:15 speaks of a defiled conscience and Hebrews 10:22 speaks of an evil conscience. So, we know that it is evil to murder, but some folks are not bothered by that. Their conscience has been corrupted.

Freedom of Conscience does not mean all churches have equal standing before God. After all, according to the Scriptures, Christ started His church during His earthly ministry. Anything else was not started by Him and logically then cannot be on equal footing as His church, spiritually speaking.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)

Some folks erroneously say that the church was built upon Peter or Peter's confession, but when we compare Scripture with Scripture, we must conclude that Jesus Himself is the Rock upon which He is building His kind of church. There is a reason He called it "my church."

Notice:

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11)

"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner," (1 Peter 2:6-7)

The other "churches" we see in the world today cannot trace themselves back to Christ.

Notice a few of them:

1. Roman Catholicism: Developed over a period of time between 251 and 610 AD in Rome. Gregory the Great is their founder. They claim Peter as their first pope, but there is no proof of this either in history or the Bible.
2. Lutherans: Founded in 1520 by a Catholic named Martin Luther.
3. Episcopal Church: AKA Church of England, founded in 1534 by an adulterer known as King Henry VIII.
4. Presbyterians: Founded in 1536 by that Catholic named John Calvin.
5. Methodists: Started by John Wesley, a member of the Episcopal Church in 1729.
6. Campbellites: AKA "The Church of Christ" started by Alexander Campbell in 1827.

Freedom of Conscience is not merely Toleration. Toleration is mere permission, sufferance, and endurance, and implies the right to withhold or grant, to control or regulate. Liberty of Conscience is not mere permission to enjoy religious opinions, doctrines, and worship, but it is the right of conscience responsible only to God, and beyond the control or regulation of any human being or government.

Now, what freedom of conscience is.

Freedom of Conscience is a Baptist Doctrine.

"There was not a government in the world that allowed full liberty of conscience to all men until a Baptist established the colony of Rhode Island.

At a great dining in England John Bright asked a Baptist statesman beside him: "What special contribution have your people made to the world?"

"Civil and religious liberty," replied the statesman.

"A great contribution," replied John Bright.

Bancroft, in his history of America, declares: "Freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind, was from the first the trophy of the Baptists." - Distinctive Baptist Principles By B. H. Carroll

"That the Baptists have been the pioneers and peculiar champions of religious liberty is a fact admitted and established by historians of other denominations. ...John Locke, to whom Lord Chancellor King attributes the doctrine of religious liberty, says, in his "Essay on Toleration," "The Baptists were the first and only propounders of absolute liberty, just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty." The first modern treatise ever written on the subject of religious liberty was by Leonard Busher, a Baptist, in 1614. It is entitled, "Religious Peace, or, a Plea for Liberty of Conscience." It was no plea for mere toleration, but for liberty of conscience in matters of religion for every human being. Here are some of its words: "That it may be lawful for every person or persons, yea, Jews and Turks, Pagans and Papists, to write, dispute, confer and reason, print and publish, any matter touching any religion, either for or against whomsoever." The Baptist "Confession of Faith," which was published in 1611 declared, "We believe the magistrate is not to meddle with religion or matters of conscience, nor compel men to this or that form of religion, because Christ is the king and law-giver of the Church and the conscience." - Baptist Principles, Practices and Polity by T. S. Dunaway, D. D., 1882

Rhode Island was the first time true freedom of conscience existed anywhere on the earth.

May 19, 1647, a government for the state was constituted and a code of laws was prepared. The constitution and code were probably written by John Clarke, pastor of the first Baptist Church in America:

The preamble:

"The form of government established in Providence Plantations is democratical; that is to say a government held by the free and voluntary consent of all, or the greater part of the free inhabitants....And now, to the end that we may give each to other (notwithstanding our different consciences touching the truth as it is in Jesus) as good and hopeful assurance as we are able touching each man's peaceable and quiet enjoyment of his lawful right and liberty we do agree, etc..."

It closed with these words:

"Otherwise than thus what is herein forbidden all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, everyone in the

name of his God. And let the saints of the Most High walk in this colony without the molestation, in the name of Jehovah, their God, forever and ever."

Our own constitution of the United States of America has this first amendment in the Bill of Rights:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for a redress of grievances."

What many folks may not realize is that this amendment was secured by Baptists. Particularly, John Leland and the Virginia Baptists had a lot to do with this... We shall leave that for another study.

Liberty of Conscience is Bible Doctrine.

"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." (Matthew 23:8-10)

In this passage, our Lord explicitly forbids His disciples, in all ages and nations to recognize the right of anyone to dictate to them in matters of religious faith or practice. And further there is a positive command that His disciples – no one who recognizes Him as Lord – should presume to usurp or favor the usurping of authority by someone else (such as a governmental authority.)

"...Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (Matthew 22:21)

It has been a Biblical practice of all the Lord's people to recognize a separation of church and state. Notice from the petition to James I in 1620 by the Anabaptists when they wrote: "The vileness of persecuting the body of any man only for the cause of conscience, is against the Word of God and law of Christ."

"And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:18-20)

It was soul-liberty, inspired by the law of Christ which enabled Peter and John to make such a bold stand before the rulers of the Jews in their day.

Freedom of Conscience grants to all men every the civil right to exist and practice their religion as they see fit. Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, etc all have the civil right to exist even though Spiritually they do not have the right to call themselves churches. Baptists have never denied to others the right to exist and preach the way they see fit. However, we must hold and deny they have any Scriptural right to to exist as churches of Christ. We also deny their right to be called or treated as churches of Christ.

This Baptist Distinctive comes from Almighty God, and as such it is an unalienable right. As such, the government has neither the power to grant the right, nor the power to remove the right.

Point of view with Elias from Peru



(Sis. Amanda when she first arrived in Huanuco)

Hello, my name is Elias. I am 28 years old. I am from Peru and live in a small city called Huanuco. I am a son of God. My family includes my mom, dad, two brothers and three sisters. Seven of us are saved and faithfully attend church. I am an English teacher, but not currently. But I used to teach English in a school called San Luis Gonzaga where I worked for five years. I am married to my beautiful wife Amanda whom I love so much. She is a wonderful woman. She is a Christian woman and a big blessing in my life.



(Elias Teaching)

I accepted Jesus as my Savior when I was 12 years old during a conference here in my city. Victor Bruno preached at that conference. Currently he is a pastor at one of the churches in Huanuco, Peru.

I decided to join the church when I was 14. I understood the importance of being a member of one of the true churches. It is a step of obedience.

Now I am a member of a mission church here; the name of it is Calvary Baptist Mission Church. The name of the missionary is Sheridan Stanton; the co-pastor is Teofilo Prudencio. The mission was started in 2007 and now is meeting on the second floor of the Central Baptist Church of Huanuco. We have services there Saturdays, Sundays, and Thursdays. Right now we have approximately 45 members. Most of the people are from the mountains. They are hard-working, loving, nice people. Right now we have a principal need to buy property for the church since the mission is doing so well. We are praying God will give us property soon so we can congregate in our own place.

Are there many ethnic groups or native languages spoken in Huanuco?

Not many really. Aymara, Ashaninca, and the most prominent is Quechua.

The religious atmosphere here is mostly Catholic, but God is blessing this country by saving more people and making them into true Christians.

Are there any churches nearby with whom you fellowship?

Central Baptist Church of Huanuco whose pastor is Eli Poma, Sion Baptist Church who pastor is Victor Bruno, Grace Baptist Church whose pastor is Rusel Julca.

I thank God we have democracy here, so we are free to have our own religion.

The country is ruled by a democratic thought where our voices have a place, and we have the freedom to decide. Sometimes this freedom gives us the opportunity to talk to other people about Christ, but sometimes people take advantage to do bad things.

We think of Americans as good people in a good country. Like in every country, we have good and bad ones. So if you come to Peru, you will meet nice people and bad people, too. We believe God has blessed the United States and now God is blessing Peru, too.



(Picture of Huanuco taken by Sis. Amanda)

The economy is good. We don't have many rich people, but we have people working hard to make a living. There are poor people, too. We produce fruit and vegetables here and export them to many countries. We also have minerals, wood, etc. We have seen lately here that the economy is

getting better. I can say just in this year I have seen many people building new houses, stores, restaurants, and on top of this, the city has a new supermarket and a mall that will be opening soon. My wife and I have been surprised how the city has improved a lot.

We like immigrant people; they bring money into Peru! We like new culture and being able to talk to them and interact. We have people from many different countries. They come mostly for tourism.

We are not that worried about thing happening in the U.S. since every country has their own issues. We are kind of busy with ours, too. But I know some who think things happening in the States affect every country. When we talk politics, corruption is the principal problem here.

When we have elections here, we have the candidates visiting every city of Peru trying to get the people to like them and convincing them to vote for them. We have tons of posters stuck to the walls of the house encouraging people to vote for their favorite candidate. We have to vote; if not we have to pay a \$100 fine. One must be 18 years old to vote. I have voted each time, and I am 28. The elections take place every five years.

Between answering questions for this column, Bro. Elias and his wife have to the States to visit with Sis. Amanda's family and had this to say:

I think the country is cool and I don't know for how long we will be here. Only God knows. We are moving here. It's cool being here with the new family!

Historical Marker: ***“A Biblical and Historical Defense of the Doctrine of Grace”***

by Bro. David Green

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” (1Corinthians 1:27-31)

Introduction. By the term doctrines of grace, we mean what is commonly called “The Five Points of Calvinism” in the religious world. They are as follows, with the Biblical definition as given by Brother Tom Ross, in his book *Abandoned Truth: The Doctrines of Grace*:

1. Total Depravity – Refers to the fallen state of the natural man who inherits a sin nature at conception. Every sinner is spiritually dead, with no capacity or desire for spiritual things. He is incapable in and of himself to come to a saving knowledge of Christ apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Every faculty of the sinner has been corrupted as a result of the fall of Adam. In short, man has been completely ruined by sin without any hope of restoration apart from the distinguishing grace of God.
2. Unconditional Election - Refers to the sovereign

choice of some men unto salvation by God the Father, before the foundation of the world, not according to any foreseen merit or faith that he saw in the sinner, but according to his own good pleasure and purpose of grace.

3. Limited Atonement - Refers to the teaching of the specific intent and extent of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. He died only for the elect. He came to redeem and reconcile only those whom God chose. He acted as substitute and surety only for those whom the Father had given Him before the world began. Christ did not shed one drop of blood in vain. He did not die for the devil, reprobate angels, or for any sinner who dies in unbelief and goes to Hell. (Notice: Some folks will call this Particular Redemption)
4. Irresistible Grace - Refers to the fact that all whom the Father elected and the Son died for will assuredly come to salvation through the power and work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. When the Spirit draws in the effectual call the sinner most willingly comes to Christ, as it is impossible to resist the will and power of God. (Notice: Some folks will call this the Effectual Call)
5. Preservation and Perseverance of the Saints - Refers to the fact that all the elect are preserved from final apostasy in hell by the power of God, and that all true children of God who have been changed in regeneration will preserve in holiness. Simply stated, it is impossible for one of God's elect to be kicked out of His family, become a child of the devil, lose God's salvation and go to Hell.

Five Points or None. These five points cannot be broken up. You either believe all of them or you really believe none of them. A person cannot break these up just because they do not want to believe in one part or another. Three and four point Calvinists are simply confused Arminians!

The Origin of the Doctrines of Grace. Most folk assume this system originated with John Calvin, that famous reformer who lived from 1509 – 1564, however that is wrong. John Calvin was a French Catholic who was a key figure in the Protestant Reformation. He knew some truth about the Doctrines of Grace, and he wrote books about them. He had done so much to expound and defend these views that the term Calvinism has become the common name for this system. However, these truths originated in the Bible. Jesus and the Apostles were preaching and teaching these sacred truths long before the Protestant Reformation.

Here is a sampling:

Matthew 1:21 (limited atonement)

John 6:37-40 *“All that the Father giveth me (election) shall come to me (irresistible grace); and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing (preservation of the saints), but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

John 6:44 (total depravity)

Acts 13:48 (unconditional election)

Romans 3:10-12 (total depravity)

Romans 8:38-39 (preservation)

Romans 9:11 (election)

James 2:5 (election)

I Peter 1:2

I Peter 2:9 (election)

Ancient Baptists and the Doctrines of Grace. First of all, we need to remember the ancient Baptists were not always known as Baptists. They had other names:

- Novations of Italy
- Donatists in North Africa
- Bogimils and Paterines of Europe.
- Albigenses and Waldenses in France
- Anabaptists in Germany.

These all were the Lord's true churches who never baptized babies and never identified with Catholicism.

Secondly, we must remember that up until the late Nineteenth Century, it was rare to see anything published by a Baptist because they were poor and persecuted. So, most of what we know about these ancient Baptists was written by the enemies of the truth.

Thirdly, the five points were not put into a concrete systematic form like we know them until the Sixteenth Century.

Peter Allix, in his book entitled; Remarks Upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of the Albigenses, quotes a Friar Inquisitor who wrote concerning the heresies of the Albigenses in 1461:

"First, They say it is clear, that when God pardons sin, he doth it not with any respect to the merit of any man, but of mere grace; whence it follows evidently, that the remission of sins cannot be attributed to a man's confession of them; for if it were so, we must own that the remission is no longer of free gift, but that it is a recompense given by God to the merit of him that confesseth. Secondly, they say, if it be confession that procures a man the pardon of his sins, what will become of that passage in the third chapter of the Epistle to Titus, where it is expressly declared, that God hath saved us of his mercy, and not according to the works of righteousness that we have done? Or how shall we explain that in the ninth of the Romans, that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy: We know, that the first grace that God works in us is the remission of sins: now if this grace be absolutely the effect of the mercy of God, it cannot be the effect of confession, which by consequence is not necessary to salvation." 5

(The confession he refers to is the Romish practice of auricular confession where the parishioner confesses his sins to the priest.)

W.A. Jarrell wrote in Baptist Church Perpetuity concerning the Paterines;

"They were Baptists on the doctrine of election and appealed to the texts in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, employed by others also in proof of the doctrine of unconditional predestination."

The Waldenses of France wrote the "Noble Lesson" in 1100 AD. The following quotes are in S. Moreland's book, The Churches of the Valley of Piedmont:

"Now after the Apostles, were certain Teachers, who taught the way of Jesus Christ our Savior. And these are found even at this present day (referring to church perpetuity), But they are known to very few, who have a great desire to teach the way of Jesus Christ, But they are so persecuted, that they are able to do but little, so much are the false Christians blinded with error, and more than the rest they that are Pastors, for they persecute and hate those who are better than themselves, and let those live quietly who are false deceivers... 'And give us to hear that which he shall say to his Elect without delay; Come hither ye blessed of my Father, Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the World, Where you shall have Pleasure, Riches, and Honor. May it please the Lord which formed the

World, that we may be of the number of his Elect to dwell in his Court for ever. Praised be God. Amen."

A Waldensian Confession dated 1120 AD states:

"God saves from corruption and damnation those whom he has chosen from the foundations of the world, not for any disposition, faith or holiness he foresaw in them, but of his mere mercy in Christ Jesus, his Son, passing by all the rest according to the irreprehensible reason of his own will and justice."

A Waldensian confession dated 1655 AD states:

"God saved from corruption and damnation those whom he has chosen from the foundations of the world, not for any disposition, faith or holiness he foresaw in them, but of his mere mercy in Christ Jesus, his Son, passing by all the rest according to the irreprehensible reason of his own will and justice."

The London Confession of 1644. Article 3:

"That God hath decreed in himself touching all things, effectually to work and dispose them according to the counsel of his own will, to the glory of his Name...And touching his creature man, God had in Christ before the foundation of the world, according to the good pleasure of his will, foreordained some men to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of his grace, leaving the rest in their sin to their just condemnation to the praise of his Justice." 13

The Second London Confession printed in 1677. Article 9:

"Man by his fall into a state of sin hath wholly lost all ability of Will, to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in Sin is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself; or to prepare himself thereunto."

Selling Out. A multitude of preachers and churches have "sold out" these truths. Not only many Protestants, but some Baptists. Chief among them are the Southern Baptists. Read the writings of J.P. Boyce and B.H. Carroll and compare that with what the Southern Baptists teach today. More recently, compare what some preachers wrote in the Baptist Examiner years ago and compare that with what is today preached and taught. Better yet compare what is preached today to what is found in the pages of the Holy Scriptures.

Nowhere will you find such things as invitations, accepting Christ, the sinners prayer, etc. These are all man-made things. Some churches today have a Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith, but an Arminian pastor and Arminian church members because they have sold out to glorify man instead of God.

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." (Jeremiah 6:16)

Opposition to the doctrines of grace is opposition to Scripture. The god of Arminianism is not the God of the Bible. Do not sell out, not for ANY reason! The doctrines of grace will stand and long as God is on His throne and His Word is preserved. The question is tonight, where do YOU stand?

"His Commandments"

by Bro. Steve McCool

"My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart." Proverbs 7:1-3

Many today want the benefits of the love of God but do not want to obey the commandments of God. Many think that because they have been saved (or they think they have been saved) that they are not under the rules of our Heavenly Father. They think because of the salvation of Jesus Christ that they can go out and commit all the sin they want because they have been forgiven. The sad fact is that they just don't want to give up the sin filled life they have been living or they have not been saved at all.

We in our modern society have fallen to the teachings of easy believe ism. We have been taught by modern religionest that if we are saved by grace then we can sin all we want and we will still get to heaven. The problem with this is Jesus did not teach this. Yes, our Lord taught salvation by grace but He also taught us to follow His commandments.

As followers of Jesus Christ we are commanded by Him to live according to His commandments. John 14:15 "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Jesus told us if we love Him we are to keep His commandments. What does that tell us about ourselves if we don't follow His commandments? Now, as humans and sinners, descended from Adam, we are far from perfect. There is no way possible for us to follow all of our Lord's commandments to the letter. However, our goal should be to try. If we catch ourselves breaking one of His commandments we should ask the Lord for forgiveness. The best thing we can do is to study His word and to keep His word in our hearts and on our minds constantly.

Proverbs 6:23 *"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:"* His commandments show us how we are to live. These commandments are not to be a burden. If we will stay in His word and study His word we will find that it will become part of our daily routine to follow the Lord's commandments. We will start to see that they are for our protection as well as our learning. They will become a way of life for us if we will study His word.

As we begin this new year I would challenge you all to get into God's word and study it like never before. As we near the time when our Lord will return to take us home we will be met with many on this earth that will try to draw us away from our true mission here. The best weapon we can have to fight this opposition is the Sword of the Lord, His Holy Word. By following His commandments that are in His word the better equipped we will be for the fight.

"We Will Be OK"



by Bro. Todd Bryant

"So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.'" - 2 Kings 6:16

One of the greatest comforts for a child of God in this life is the confidence in knowing that we are in God's care. No matter what may come our way, it never takes Him off guard. No matter what this world may throw at us, He is bigger than it is. No matter what may befall our lands and communities, our God upholds us. Those that are trusting Christ have a reason to go forward with much assurance.

In 2 Kings 6, the king of Syria sent an army to capture Elisha. The prophet had been giving the king of Israel information to save him from the Syrian army. So, logically the king of Syria looked to rid himself of that problem. When Elisha's servant *"arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?'"* (2 Kings 2:15)

Do we not often find ourselves in just such a time? How often have we found ourselves at the end of our rope? How often did the end look bleak? And we are tempted (as is Elisha's servant here) to look at things from an earthly perspective. It is so easy to try and solve our own problems before ever seeking the help of God. We look at the problems in America and the world and dismiss that God has any real active part in our future. It's not that we don't believe it theologically. It may even be that we do finally practically grasp it. But, oftentimes, it's not our first thought.

It's so easy to assume that some man is going to "bring America back" or "bring America down". Yet, neither of those can happen without God's sovereign permission. Certainly, we are bound to do right. However, blessings pour down from Heaven - not Montgomery, AL...not Jackson, MS...not Washington, DC. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning"* (James 1:17).

Elisha saw the distress that his servant was in. He realized that his servant was looking at things from a purely earthly perspective. Elisha made the great statement of faith that we see in our text verse - *"...Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them". But apparently that wasn't enough for the servant. "[So] Elisha prayed, and said, 'LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha"* (2 Kings 6:17-18).

Children of God, let us never forget that our Heavenly Father is the greatest Father we have. His eyes see all that is going on and His hand of protection is on us. It is He who says, *"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand"* (Isaiah 41:10). Take this moment to thank Him for His providential care that is over you.